

'DO I HAVE TO CHOOSE?' TWO CHILDREN VS FOUR CHILDREN IN BALI'S FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

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The Indonesian family planning program has been running for over five decades. Until the present, the implementation of this program still generates debate over important policy issues. On June 14th, 2019, the Balinese provincial government released a new pro-natalist family planning policy No.1545 (*Keluarga Berencana Krama Bali*) to respond to the concerns from the national family planning program two-child policy success. What are the implications for Balinese women's position in response to the political and cultural policies that impact their reproductive rights? This study analyzes the tensions between the national family planning program's two-child policy and the recent local Balinese *Keluarga Berencana Krama* model by focusing on Balinese women's perspectives. Ethnographic research was conducted from January to February 2020 in Bali. This study indicates that the women's fertility decisions were constrained by patrilineal structures, economic stresses, and government population policies. *Krama Bali*, which encourages a four children model according to the Balinese naming system, complicates the triple burden impacts on Balinese women's agency. The new pro-natalist provincial policy explicitly prioritizes cultural values and indirectly exacerbates the pressure to produce inheriting sons. Balinese women had to choose between cultural preservation and economic considerations, which intensified the tensions between their productive, reproductive, and customary (*adat*) obligations. Internal and external pressures imposed upon the Balinese women participants have forced them to navigate conflicting economic, political, and cultural demands with varying degrees of agency.

ABSTRAK

Kata kunci:

budaya Bali,
fertilitas,
gender,
kebijakan
kependudukan,
keluarga berencana

Program Keluarga Berencana (KB) di Indonesia telah berjalan selama lebih dari lima dekade. Hingga saat ini, pelaksanaan program ini masih menimbulkan perdebatan terkait dengan isu-isu kebijakannya. Pemerintah provinsi Bali mengeluarkan kebijakan pro-natalis baru, yaitu KB Krama Bali dalam Instruksi Gubernur No.1545 pada tanggal 14 Juni 2019, sebagai tanggapan atas kekhawatiran yang muncul karena keberhasilan program "Dua Anak" KB nasional. Apa implikasi bagi posisi perempuan Bali dalam menanggapi kebijakan politik dan budaya yang berdampak pada hak-hak reproduksinya tersebut? Studi ini menganalisis ketegangan antara kebijakan dua anak dan model KB Krama Bali dengan berfokus pada perspektif perempuan Bali. Penelitian etnografi dilakukan pada bulan Januari hingga Februari 2020 di Bali. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa keputusan fertilitas perempuan ditekan oleh struktur patrilineal, tuntutan ekonomi, dan kebijakan kependudukan pemerintah. KB Krama Bali, yang mendorong model empat anak menurut sistem penamaan Bali, memperumit dampak "triple burden" pada kemampuan dan hak untuk menentukan pilihan perempuan Bali. Kebijakan pro-natalis yang baru secara eksplisit memprioritaskan nilai-nilai budaya, namun secara tidak langsung memperburuk tekanan untuk menghasilkan keturunan laki-laki. Perempuan Bali dihadapkan pada pilihan antara pelestarian budaya dan pertimbangan ekonomi, yang juga meningkatkan tekanan dari kewajiban produktif, reproduktif, dan adat mereka. Tekanan internal dan eksternal yang melekat pada perempuan Bali memaksa mereka untuk mengarungi tuntutan ekonomi, politik, dan budaya yang saling bertentangan dengan hak mereka.

INTRODUCTION

The family planning program in Indonesia has brought massive changes in the demographic development trajectory of this country. Family planning in Indonesia began in 1968 with the *Lembaga Keluarga Berencana Nasional*, or Family Planning Institute, in response to concerns about the problems of population growth in developing countries. In 1970, the Institute became the Family Planning Coordination Board or *Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional* (BKKBN), recognizing that a single agency could not implement the family planning program. Instead, it would involve the contributions from departments of health, education, information, religious affairs, internal affairs, and a variety of locally-based organizations dedicated to the population issue (1).

Since the 1970s, the "two-child" policy has been a critical component of Indonesia's family planning program and development policy. Government regulation number 38/2007 reiterated the obligation of family planning to implement this two-child policy at all government levels (2). One of the heralded success stories has been implementing the two-child policy campaign in Bali, defying assumptions of demographic transition theory. Bali's total fertility rate (TFR) decreased from 5.8 in the 1960s to 2.1 in 2017, one of the lowest TFR of any province in Indonesia (3–5).

The significant achievement is closely related to introducing the village-based family planning program called "the *Banjar* System." Bali's agrarian culture had previously encouraged large families to ensure security and prosperity (*banyak anak, banyak rejeki* – many children, much luck). This value changed to a new perspective favoring a small family (*keluarga kecil bahagia dan sejahtera* – small family for happiness and wellbeing) (6,7). Its extraordinarily rapid success was demonstrated by the drop in Bali's total fertility rate (TFR) from 5.96 in 1971 to 3.93 in 1980 (8). The small family had become popular through portrayals of the hard life of impoverished women with large families by the 21st century (Figure 1), the increasing cost of living and the pressures of consumerism and globalization (9–11).



Figure 1. Poster of a son encouraging his mother to follow “KB steril” (Tubectomy) ‘so as not to be overworked’ in the Balinese language. Photographed by Carol Warren in 1982, during her visit to Bali.

National Population and Family Planning Board uses the ideal fertility rate of 2.1 as an indicator of population balance and is tasked to maintain it until 2035 as a strategic population goal (12). On this basis, the master plan for the family planning program for 2011–2035 aims to achieve sustainable economic development, education, gender equity, reduction in maternal and childhood mortality, and improvement in reproductive health service access (12).

Due to decentralization in the post-New Order period, national and local governments share the power and management of Indonesia's family planning program. However, family planning policy and practices have, in the process, become the site of conflicting interests. A conflict occurred when, under the national implementation of the two-child policy, the Balinese government began to consider some of the economic, political, and cultural implications of fertility decline in society, especially for Balinese ethnic identity (11,13).



Figure 2. Bali Governor's Instruction No. 1545 in 2019 Concerning Socialization of the *Krama Bali* Family Planning Program

Currently, the implementation of the national family planning program is based on Law Number 52 of 2009 *No.52 Tahun 2009*, about population and family development. The legislation incorporates institutional strengthening through the National Population and Family Planning Board and focuses on population policy as a central element of development. However, in 2019, Bali's new Governor instructed all district heads to reorient the national two-child policy officially. The Governor's Instruction No. 1545/2019 on *Krama Bali* Family Planning or *Keluarga Berencana Krama Bali* (Figure 2) changes the focus on fertility control by promoting as many as four children in line with '*Krama Bali*.' It refers to the local cultural wisdom embedded in the four-child Balinese naming system (14) In addition, the Governor ordered all the local government ranks to stop promoting the two-child policy. This action implies a conflict between the implementation of the national family planning two-child model and the provincial *Keluarga Berencana Krama* policy.

The long-standing two-child policy promoted by National Population and Family

Planning Board became the subject of contestation in Bali, complicated by broader political, social, economic, and cultural forces in society. The new provincial population policy (15–17). It was purportedly prompted by the infrequency of *Nyoman* and *Ketut* birth order names in the contemporary Balinese family and anxieties over a declining Balinese provincial population ratio arising from the immigration of labor for the booming tourism sector in Bali (18,19). But while elites (state and local) are occupied by the family planning program's political, economic, and cultural impacts, what are the implications for Balinese women's position in response to the power relations that limit their reproductive rights?

METHODS

This research took place in two hamlets and one government office in Bali province: Banjar Biaung in Denpasar, Banjar Tumbakasa in Gianyar, and the National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative Provinsi Bali in Denpasar from January until February 2020. The Bali locations are chosen to

represent the experience of urban (Banjar Biaung) and rural (Banjar Tumbakasa) Balinese women with the two-child policy campaign and to assess their views of the recent revision of this policy to encourage a four-child "traditional" family model. After receiving ethics approval from the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (project number 2019/177), the research in the Balinese communities was conducted using purposive sampling.

The following criteria were applied: women were selected who were culturally Balinese-Hindu, aged over eighteen years old, married, and gave their approval to be interviewed. Respondents were selected through a simple random sampling procedure using the Random Number Generator (RNG) application in the two hamlets chosen to represent urban and rural socioeconomic contexts. The particular hamlets selected had previously been researched subjects in the National Population and Family Planning Board family survey (20), which enabled the data obtained from in-depth interviews to be placed in a broader demographic context. The National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative respondents were selected to bring perspectives on policy from women with insider knowledge of state and provincial policy and shared cultural backgrounds.

The in-depth interview focused on these 18 women's perspectives about national family planning policy, recent changes in provincial policies, and self-reflection on their reproductive decisions. The conversations were digitally recorded. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and interpreted to examine their attitudes and experiences of both family planning policies. The sources of quotations taken during the interview for ethical reasons remain anonymous. This study has an identification system for every respondent, consisting of letters and numbers. For example: "Kan01" refers to "Kan" (office participant) and "01" (first respondent). Urban Balinese respondent number three is identified as "Kot03;" Rural Balinese participant number two is indicated by "Des02." In-depth interviews explore these individuals' experience of reproductive decision-making and the meanings, values, and reasoning they present (21,22). At the same time, the quantitative

description in this study complements the qualitative interview responses and, despite limited numbers, suggests changing patterns that deserve attention.

RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the demographic, social, and cultural characteristics of the respondents in this study. The participants were 18 women comprising six rural and six urban Balinese residents as well as six Balinese civil servants from the Bali Family Planning Office. Their ages range from 20 to 59. In this study, the National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali's Representative participants are office-based policymakers, managers, and analysts. Most of the National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative participants have tertiary education (diplomas, undergraduate, or graduate degrees). Most Balinese rural participants had secondary education or lower, while the urban resident participants included an equal number of tertiary and secondary or lower graduates.

Aside from National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative participants, urban and rural Bali respondents mainly worked at home or in the informal sector as retailers, craftswomen, homemakers, and casual farmers. Most participants have two children or less, especially among the National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative staff participants (100%). Five participants from urban and rural Bali cohorts have three children. The common assumption that rural people have more children than urban counterparts is not proven here because four of six (66.7%) Balinese urban participants have more than two children, compared to only one of six (16.67%) Balinese rural participants. Furthermore, seven of eighteen Balinese participants have only daughter(s) in this patrilineal culture, which formally privileges the male line (*purusa*) in matters of descent and inheritance.

Despite characteristic educational and occupational profiles, unanticipated differences in fertility distinguish urban and rural women interviewed. More than half the Balinese urban participants have three children (four of six) compared to Balinese rural participants, where only one of six had more than two children. Urban respondents describe the cultural reasons

which affected their higher fertility outcomes, irrespective of their personal family size preference.

“The [two-child policy] government program helps us. However, there is still a common belief in ‘more kids, more luck’. I agree with the government policy of two children. I don't have two but three kids because Balinese should have a son” said Respondent Kot01 (46 years old, urban Balinese, a small retailer, mother of two daughters and a son).

Kot03 (36 years old, urban Balinese, office worker, mother of a daughter and two sons) also explained, “No, I have three kids.

Yes, it's my choice. I wanted two children, but Balinese families... have *sangghah gede* [core family temples with major ceremonies]. Here there are only a few people, only my husband, and brother-in-law. So, we need to have heirs. Three kids are enough for me because of the economic burden and *adat* duties.”

Kot05 (46 years old, urban Balinese, a nursing home assistant, mother of two daughters and a son) expressed, “Previously, I only wanted to have two children because the ‘Suharto KB’ program was two. But at that time, I didn't have a son. Then at 38-39 years old, I had a boy.”

Table 1. Respondents' characteristics

Variables	Office n=6		Urban n=6		Rural n=6		Total N=18	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age								
20-29 ¹	1	16.67	0	0	0	0	1	5.56
30-39	3	50	2	33.33	1	16.67	6	33.33
40-49	0	0	4	66.67	5	83.33	9	50
50-59	2	33.33	0	0	0	0	2	11.11
Education								
Secondary education or lower	1	16.67	3	50	5	83.33	9	50
Tertiary education	5	83.33	3	50	1	16.67	9	50
Occupation								
Informal sector	0	0	3	50	5	83.33	8	44.44
Formal employee	6	100	3	50	1	16.67	10	55.56
Number of children								
0	2	33.33	0	0	0	0	2	11.11
1	1	16.67	1	16.67	0	0	2	11.11
2	3	50	1	16.67	5	83.33	9	50
3	0	0	4	66.67	1	16.67	5	27.78
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Have son(s)								
Yes	4	66.67	4	66.67	3	50	11	61.11
No	2	33.33	2	33.33	3	50	7	38.89

¹Young women participants are under-represented in the urban and rural community site samples. According to the Banjar head, in Tumbakasa's (rural) case, most young people migrated to Bali cities for school or work. In Banjar Biaung's profile in 2020, married women in the range of 20-29 years represented only 8.77% of the resident population (based on SIKEKAL application for Banjar heads <https://kertalangu.simade.id/login>). The age distribution of eighteen women chosen as participants was beyond the researcher's control because the RNG application randomly selected them. It was a limitation of the simple random sampling method for small samples in this study. At the same time, the higher age range of respondents had the advantage of indicating long-term fertility outcomes and attitudes toward fertility for a substantial proportion of respondents.

Another Balinese urban participant unequivocally regarded local cultural values as having overriding importance. The Balinese birth order naming system and son preference in Balinese society prioritize some of these urban women more than the national two-child policy despite the long-standing and exceptionally successful family planning campaign.

“I have heard [of the two-child policy], but Balinese people, the majority, want four children. Balinese must have *Wayan, Made, Nyoman, Ketut*. ... Balinese must have a son. [which means] not limited to four kids,” Kot02 (45 years old, urban Balinese, homemaker and online retailer, mother of two daughters) argued.

Two other Balinese urban participants have different perspectives on the two-child policy campaign concerning the principle of controlling family size, but neither contests the cultural importance of son preference. Bkot04 agrees with the national policy, regarding two as an ideal number of children. Meanwhile, Bkot06 expresses her less "in touch" views on the family planning program, especially contraception, likely related to her status as a mother of three daughters.

"I think it is a good [program] because it fits with people's abilities. I think two kids are ideal, not too troublesome. Moreover, I am working," said Kot04 (41 years old, urban Balinese, civil servant, mother of one son),

"From the government's point of view, the program is promoted for population control, but I never use it [contraception]. So, I do not understand very much about it," answered Kot06 (37 years old, urban Balinese, a school administrator, and mother of three daughters).

The statements from all six rural women surveyed similarly show that the need for a son still strongly influences model family concepts. Still, for all of them, this cultural pressure is outweighed by even more significant economic concerns:

"I will be happy to have more kids if they have a future. If they don't have it, I won't. I am not going to have more children. ... two are enough ... I cannot provide enough food for many kids." Des01 (47 years old, Balinese villager, a homemaker and casual farmer, mother of two daughters) expressed her feelings.

Des02 (47 years old, Balinese villager, a homemaker, and mother of two sons) also stated, "Two kids are enough so I can school them. I don't have [money]. ... There is the [new] *Krama Bali* family planning program, but two are enough for me. Only two children because I think that is enough. My husband also chooses two children. Yes, I only have two boys. My responsibility is to school them."

Des03 (43 years old, Balinese villager, a homemaker and craftswoman, mother of two daughters) showed her agreement to the two-child program. "I agree because it is easier to take care of two kids. More children mean more stress. I have two girls. No, no, no. I don't want more. Two are enough. It is easier. It is an economic issue. I only have a cramped house. Where will they stay? Rich people can have more children. I just accept my fate."

"I have heard, but I don't know what it is [the KB program]. I like copying [others], you know... I don't understand the meaning. However, I agree because today's life is difficult, hard, especially [for people] like me. That's it. It is better to have two [children]. I already have a boy and a girl. I am grateful. I wanted it, and I already got it," explained Des04 (41 years old, Balinese villager, homemaker and casual farmer, mother of a daughter and a son).

"Yes, I heard about it [the new family planning program] when I attended the socialization at the village in 2018. Yes, I am a PKK [women's empowerment organization] leader here. I think it [family planning] is good because today's costs, especially education, are expensive. Two children are enough if I have a son and a daughter. Sadly, I have two girls. Yes, later [another baby]..." Des05 (31 years old, Balinese villager, an honorary teacher, mother of two daughters) pointed out her indecision.

Even, Des06 (40 years old, Balinese villager, a small retailer, mother of three sons) concluded, "... As a villager, it is hard for me to have too many children."

Several Balinese women in this study voiced their objections to this new *Krama Bali* family planning policy. As one of the rural respondents stated, it made no sense because of women's triple burden.

"I think it is hard to have two kids, let alone four kids. [Balinese] have many *adat* ceremonies. ... Then, we have *menyama braya* [kinship commitments], *gotong-royong* [mutual cooperation]—more costs for living. Today's demands are numerous," explained Des06, 40 years old, Balinese villager, *sentana marriage*, small retailer, mother of three sons.

In this regard, cultural obligations are in tension, particularly regarding women's ritual responsibilities and roles as bearers of sons. Balinese have many religious and customary (*adat*) ceremonies that require social cooperation among the neighborhoods underpinning strong social bonds, especially in rural Bali. Women's role in ritual preparations compounds the heavy productive and reproductive roles that structure women's lives.

Two Balinese National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative participants were critical of the political motives behind the *KB Krama* policy:

It was stated by Kan01 (57 years old, National Population and Family Planning

Board of Bali Representative staff, Balinese, mother of two sons). “Recently, the local government is bickering about the infrequency of [the names] *Nyoman* and *Ketut* because of two-child families. I think if you are capable of having four children, it is okay. If you don't want it and have only two children, you can call *Putu* [equivalent to *Wayan*] for your first child and *Ketut*, which means *kitut* [followed]. So, *Ketut* still exists... [But] if you are able, why not have more children?... People talk about “*KB Krama Bali*”; it is fun to have four children, but who will care for them? It is not that simple. If we have more children, would the government provide support for the third and fourth kids? Can you imagine? Think deeply. They [Governor and allies] only serve for a maximum of ten years. What about the next Governor? Are they going to continue this program?”

“It [*Krama Family Planning* promotion] is loud, but its influence depends on the person. I am not affected because I know my economic level and want to be optimum... Maybe, the government observes the rarity of *Ketut*... or, there are political issues. I don't know... It can be they want to attract more support. People do not say, ‘I want four kids.’ It is because they are smarter and prepare everything. In the rural areas, society asks for more kids because of the need for a son [*biar punya anak laki*]. Not because of the Governor's instruction,” described Kan03 (32 years old, National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative staff, Balinese, mother of a daughter and a son).

Participants are aware of the unstated political intention behind this policy. The subjects of women's reproductive health and child welfare were also seized upon by several National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative staff participants as reasons to resist the new local authority intervention.

Kan02, 30 years old, National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative staff, a midwife, Balinese, mother of a son) explained, “Bali is the smallest area with a majority of Hindu believers, unlike other places in [Indonesia] where the majority religion is Islam. It could be the ancestral beliefs in ‘more children, more fortune’, which means they hold on [to a view of] how Balinese tradition can be developed—more Balinese people. ... A positive side of the Governor's [policy] is to increase the number of Balinese

people. On the other hand, ‘*Bapak*’ [‘Father/Leader’] doesn't see its side effects of it.... We also calculate the [need for] birth spacing....The reproductive period for women is up to 35 years old maximum. If she gets married at the age of 30, she is considered high risk at 35. If she only has two children and will have more, the risk is also on the baby. They can get congenital disabilities, *Down Syndrome*, because of the deficiency of several hormones from the mother. He [Governor] thinks only of increasing the Balinese population but, sadly, doesn't know about the other effects. ... It is the first time in Bali's history that *adat* is used as a political campaign... In our generation, without sugar-coating, they would have only two kids. The nation's quality is based on its heirs. *Bapak*— he should not only focus on four children but the aims of the early childhood education program. It will be useless if *Wayan-Made-Nyoman-Ketut* has low quality [lives].”

“They only think of giving birth and are not concerned for the [mother's] reproductive health. ... I disagree with four kids... I choose the two-child [program]. However, I am also scared to argue with the Governor. I need to know how long the aid [if it exists] will be given. It will be okay if the kids finish their academic degree or until they have a job. But, if it is only giving birth, who will take responsibility for the family welfare?” said Kan05 (52 years old, National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative staff, Balinese, mother of a son and a daughter).

Economics is the most prominent consideration mentioned by interview participants regarding the two-child policy and the *Krama Family Planning* four-child alternative assessment. According to the Bali official Family Planning Board report, the desire to have more children is mainly limited by the financial and child-rearing liability (11). Accounting for the take up of the National Population and Family Planning Board message, contraceptive practices, and somewhat more ambivalently, ideal family size in Bali province. Again, Balinese participants from all cohorts voice similar concerns with economic implications, irrespective of their personal preference on family size:

“The living cost for four kids is not cheap. [Given] population explosion issues, I prefer the quality that can guarantee a better life—making people more secure for a better future. I think the problem is not on the quantity

but the readiness to take care of the children. Many Balinese traditions can be preserved, except for the four children [model]. Today, having children is difficult. [It's a matter of choosing] quantity or quality," argued Kan06 (35 years old, National Population and Family Planning Board of Bali Representative staff, Balinese, no children).

Des01 (47 years old, Balinese villager, a homemaker and casual farmer, mother of two daughters) also agreed. "If other people have more [money], they will have four. For me, two are enough. It is okay... More importantly, I can take care of my children according to my limitations."

Des03 (43 years old, Balinese villager, a homemaker and craftswoman, mother of two daughters) inferred, "It is too much for me. How about the cost? I am poor. Where can I get the money? When they were still babies, it was hard to take care of them. After they grow up, I will be happy if they work. If they don't work, I will only waste my money, and I will be stressed."

"I strongly agree to have four kids for cultural preservation so that Ketut exists, but the economic factor is still a burden," said Kot05 (46 years old, urban Balinese, an assistant of a nursing home, mother of two daughters, and a son).

Kot06 (37 years old, urban Balinese, a school administrator, and mother of three daughters) also expressed her burden. "I agree with the [four-child] program.... but for me, who have an economic limitation, two or three are enough..."

Meanwhile, Des04 (41 years old, Balinese villager, homemaker and casual farmer, mother of a daughter and a son) explained, "It is the Balinese ideal from the previous era. The four children [system] was made to preserve the Ketut. I also agree, but I don't want to [have four kids] because of economic constraints. If others want to have more children, I don't have any problem with that. I choose only two kids."

"If I have two sons, two are enough. Because I have two girls, I want one more child. If it is not my luck, it doesn't matter. Enough. Girls are the same [as boys]. I'm still grateful. One of them can stay at home, like me." The statement from Kot02, 45 years old, urban Balinese, homemaker and online retailer, mother of two daughters) described her struggle as a Balinese woman.

Interview responses show that family planning considerations are strongly influenced by child-bearing cost versus benefit implications, even where this comes up against competing solid pressures from political interests, social structures, and cultural values. They recognize that they are between a rock and a hard place in which to exercise varying degrees of autonomy available to them to navigate reproductive decisions.

DISCUSSION

The main focus of this study is the attitudes and experiences of ordinary Balinese subjects regarding family planning policies. Women's roles in Balinese society have become implicated in long-standing concerns regarding population, development, sustainability, and reproductive health. Balinese women face the dilemma of maintaining their identity and vital roles in the rapidly changing society in a context of conflicting values and responsibilities. Their challenge is to negotiate between modern globalizing society and the core values of being Balinese-Hindu. In reality, Balinese women carry a "triple burden" due to productive, reproductive, and ritual obligations. Their roles in ensuring the family's well-being and economic development, their *adat* duties, and their reproductive position (child-bearing and nursing) multiply the pressures they experience in society.

Having children is essential in Balinese society because children are responsible for replacing their parents' positions in the household, the clan, and their duty to the community (7). Balinese also believe that children, especially sons, ensure the family line and the proper transition of parents and ancestors in cycles of Bali-Hindu reincarnation (23). Furthermore, government policies related to family planning and cultural preservation compound these tremendous pressures on their fertility decisions.

The national two-child policy gave greater opportunities for women's self-actualization, increased their participation in the labor force, and for some, offered a realization of their reproductive rights to control their fertility (24). At the same time, it posed serious problems for women in the context of conflicting cultural pressures to produce a male heir. Currently, the population control objective of this program has become a subject of

contention that feeds into broader questions of cultural politics in Bali. With concerns over the demographic changes taking place due to the reduced birth rate and increasing numbers of non-Balinese migrants to the island, a new policy to liberalize family planning practices offered a tantalizing political platform (16,17,25). Balinese political figures used these concerns to challenge the cultural impact of restrictions on the family size under the long-standing national two-child policy. This dimension of population politics raised early on in family planning debates (26), has become an increasing concern in Balinese society today (18,27,28) with consequences for women's reproductive choices.

The dilemma to maintain the identity and vital role of Balinese-Hindu women is parallel and exists for the three groups of respondents. Their reproductive choice assimilates with the primary duty to be good women, good mothers, and good wives to attain good karma for themselves and their family descendants (29).

According to the literature, fertility is typically higher in rural than urban areas (30–32). Interestingly, National Population and Family Planning Board statistics and this study show an entirely different pattern: urban Balinese currently have more children compared to rural Balinese. Based on Family Planning Bureau data (20), only 21.08% of rural Banjar Tumbakasa households have more than two children, compared to 26.53% of the households in urban Banjar Biaung. Although using a small sample, this study captures the qualitative dimensions of this distinctive pattern. Rural women's overriding need and willingness to limit fertility stand in contrast to the views of half the Balinese urban participants interviewed. Economic pressures have a greater impact on rural women who are pragmatic about balancing conflicting values, for the same reasons perhaps that the family planning program had early acceptance when Bali was still primarily a rural agrarian society in contrast to predictions of standard demographic transition theory (3). It is also the case that traditional patrilineal structures and values were not monolithic.

Gender preference is widely found in traditional societies (33–36) (Balinese, culturally, have a patrilineal structure that privileges precedence of male heirs. At the same time, traditional culture provides a form

of marriage (*sentana*) in which a daughter takes on normatively male descent and inheritance rights (37). *Sentana* marriage enables daughters to be regarded as culturally redefined male heirs (23,38). Interestingly, in this study, four of the six rural interview subjects, but only one urban participant had a *sentana* marriage.

With increasing economic pressures, several rural participants rationally choose and are pleased to limit their family size to only have two children, even with no son. The rural Bali interview results indicate that the economic burden for these women generally outweighs the intense cultural pressure for an inheriting son. Two of the Balinese rural participants decided to stop having children after two daughters rather than seek the possibility of a son through another pregnancy. The widely held view was that the pressures and demands of everyday life mitigated against large family size. These women exercise varying degrees of agency in navigating the complex and competing pressures of growing demands on the household economy from health, education, and rising living costs and standards.

The change in values related to family size cannot be avoided in the face of significant economic pressures. The development of the global economy has powerful effects on individuals (9). Balinese women participants tend to express their reproductive preference for greater attention in child-rearing to improve well-being and livelihood prospects, rather than the desire for any advantage there might once have been for extended families in the rural household (6,10). Most participants will prefer to stop at two children if they have at least one son but are not likely to choose to have four children. This finding is similar to another study in Spain that highlights the complexity of fertility, economic insecurity, and gender egalitarianism (39).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

Balinese women experience triple constraints on their fertility decisions from patrilineal in Balinese culture, economic stresses, and conflicting government population policies (the national two-child policy and provincial four-child *Krama Family Planning* policy). The national two-child policy positively gave women the capacity to limit

their family size, enabled more significant participation in the economy, and made possible improvements in education and living standards for their children. But, the pressure to limit family size also conflicted with the precedence of sons in Balinese culture. Balinese women participants, especially those in rural and urban sites, show varying degrees of agency in their efforts to navigate the complexity of their fertility preferences, family planning policies, cultural values, and economic opportunities and constraints.

Bali's new family planning policy (*Krama Family Planning*) encourages the four children model and complicates those pre-existing triple burden impacts on women's agency. The new pro-natalist provincial policy explicitly prioritizes cultural values and undoubtedly indirectly exacerbates the pressure to produce inheriting sons. Balinese women find themselves placed between cultural preservation and economic considerations that intensify pressures arising from their pre-existing productive, reproductive, and *adat* obligations. While the cost and benefit implications of child-bearing remain significant factors in the fertility decisions of the study participants, it remains to be seen how a new generation of Balinese women will respond to these challenges.

Suggestion

This study indicates the range of internal and external forces affecting the ability of Balinese women to navigate conflicting economic, political, and cultural demands that offer them varying degrees of personal agency. It points to the importance of engaging women's agency and reproductive rights in further research and policy development. Responding to the findings above, the Indonesian national and the Bali Provincial governments need to review family planning policies related to those policies' impact, relevance, and effectiveness. It is time for the governments to involve rural and urban women in developing family planning policy that addresses their needs and interests as well as those of the wider society. Both quantitative and qualitative studies are needed to provide broader perspectives and deeper understandings related to changes in family planning policy and fertility decisions. The apparent differences in decision-making on family size between

rural and urban Balinese also need to be examined through in-depth mixed-method research.

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