Raymond JNC Cruz 1/11/2014

HI166 – H Word Count:

Sex and Family Planning

Foreign speakers are hard to understand due to their unfamiliar accents, but nevertheless, the information their words carry are quite significant once the language barrier has been overcome. The speakers presented the sex and family planning measures implemented by Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

In Indonesia, a small and happy family norm is promoted with the tagline “Two is enough, girl or boy just the same.” The key success elements to this program are services, commitment, and government, among others. 1970-1990 is called the revolutionary era for family planning, wherein family planning was considered attractive or “sexy” for donor. Indonesia’s leader, Suharto, was awarded by the United Nations Family Planning Association for the development and implementation of this program. However, in what is called the “Era of Decentralization”, the family planning program was weakened since decentralization proved to be a challenge.

Thailand has the late Dr. Nawarat, otherwise known as Dr. Nopporn. He is a self-taught sexologist and sex therapist. He is the author of a column (*Sep Som Bor Mi Som*) that circulates the Thai newspapers, which aims to disseminate sexual education to the general Thai public. The column is of the question-and-answer type, and readers are free to submit their inquiries to be answered and published by Dr. Nopporn. Some questions submitted to article include how to do oral sex, and one even contained a concern about the reader’s significant other’s diminutive genitalia, among others. This sexualization of the media has proven effective in educating the public in sexual matters. Dr. Nopporn also promoted through his article the medicalization of sexuality, with him tackling his readers’ concerns and inquiries from a medical perspective.

In the Philippines, the population is expected to reach 100 million in 2014 (Source: *Philippine Star*). This will put a massive strain on national resources and therefore necessitating family planning measures. There are already family planning programs existing in the Philippines, but almost all of these are only available to those who can afford them i.e. middle to upper class citizens. Since majority of the population is composed of lower class citizens and those who live below the poverty line. Most of these people have also little to no educational attainment, let alone sexual education. These people are simply just too poor to afford the family planning and sexual education programs in the Philippines (now, doesn’t that sound familiar?).