

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Due to Taiwan's recent environmental and cultural transition, economic development, education popularized, the demographic statistics in Taiwan have shown a downward trend in the total fertility rate. The total fertility rate was 1.81‰ in 1990, 1.68‰ in 2000 and 1.1‰ in 2007. Total fertility rate in Taiwan is below the population replacement standard. Low fertility in Taiwan is regarded as a serious problem in recent years.

Like many other developing countries, Taiwan faced the problem of excess population after World War II. About 1.3 million migrants from mainland China crowded into a war-torn, small island with a preexisting population of 6 million around 1950. In 1950, the average area of cultivated land per farm had been reduced to 1.4 hectares. There is an unbalanced situation between population and agricultural production. However, with the help of aid from the United States, Taiwan stabilized its economy and resumed its normal course of development.

Promoting a reasonable rate of population growth through voluntary family planning programs, incentives, and disincentives are elements of the government's guidelines for population policy. The guidelines also included measures to improve the quality of the population through better education, nutrition, and eugenic protection and to promote a rational distribution of the population.

## 1.2 Motives

In 1950, the Chinese-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction initiated a small program to spread knowledge of family planning methods. The

commission's effort did not win immediate support from the government, partly because some officials thought that family planning was against Chinese tradition. A few years later the Council for United States Aid was in charge of national economic planning, supported the view that a reduced population growth rate would benefit the economy. With support from most high-ranking officials and assistance from the Population Council and the University of Michigan, the Taiwan Provincial Government set up an island-wide family planning program in 1964. Gradually the program introduced types of contraceptives, including orals, condoms, and female and male sterilization.

Taiwan has completed the demographic transition in the 20 years after the initiation of intensive family planning program when the net reproduction rate has been below-replacement fertility in 1984. By 1983, Taiwan had attained replacement fertility and almost universal use of contraception by married couples. Now Taiwan's government needs a new policy to provide incentives that increase the fertility rate.

### **1.3 Purposes**

First, the purposes of the analysis presented in this paper are to examine the relation between culture, society, economy and fertility based upon theories.

Second, I focus on the experience of France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Japan. These countries were selected, in part, because of their distinctive demographic experiences. The US experienced a very substantial baby boom from 1946 to 1964, Japan experienced high fertility for a short period following the end of World War II. The countries have been selected because data availability allows us to explore the policies and changes in age structure over an extended period. The future of these countries is of considerable interest because both Japan and United States' size in the world economy and also because of their demographics. Japan has

the world's oldest population while other countries have relatively young population for advanced countries. These countries' policy experiences will be examined with the goal of determining whether fertility policy played an important role within demographic transition and might be a mirror to Taiwan in the future.

Third, the demographics and social trends in Taiwan and history of Taiwan's fertility policy will be explored. A careful documentation of the programs and policies implemented since 1950, the motivation behind those policies, and their contribution to the rapid fertility decline in Taiwan will be illustrated.

Finally, we can have integrated conclusions and policy suggestions.

#### **1.4 Research Method and Expected Results**

In this study, books, journals, articles, and papers concerning marriage, fertility and fertility policy to build up basic understanding were collected, and then the theory, fertility trends and statistical data will be analyzed. As the analysis reveals, the different aspect of low fertility factors and phenomenon are discussed and compared with the experiences in other countries. This research may contribute to the implementation of relevant measures in the future.