

## **“Reproduction and Intimacy in the Peripheries: In Close Conversation with Female Informal Settlers in Quezon City”**

Dr. Christianne F. Collantes, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Hawai'i-Manoa

Economic and urban development policies play important roles in the reproductive dilemmas and intimate relations of disenfranchised Filipinos, in addition to religion and faith in the dominantly Catholic nation of the Philippines. Highlighting the narratives of seven female informal settlers in Quezon City (the most populated city with the highest number of informal settlers in the entire country), this paper explores the ways in which rapid urban growth create the conditions of precariousness that ultimately affects intimacy and reproductive decisions in the city's informal communities.

The personal experiences and narratives in this paper were expressed during an intimate group discussion in northern Quezon City where residential and commercial developments are swiftly taking over designated informal settlements. The women's economic hardships and difficulties of raising large families are accompanied by fears of eviction and undesired uprooting, especially since Quezon City continues its widespread development and displacement of numerous informal settlements.

Moreover, the women express how they cannot adequately follow the teachings of the Philippine Catholic Church and practice natural family planning since their partners are located at distant towns or work abroad for long and unpredictable periods—they work in uncertain conditions as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) or as construction workers for the same development companies that threaten their own stability and livelihood in the margins of Quezon City. Their lives are situated and implicated in precariousness, and their intimacy timed only with the needs of the labour market and the corporeal demands of urban development.

It is their fears of eviction and difficulties in following the Church's teachings on natural family planning (despite their commitment to their parishes) that offer insight into how economic development policies reproduce and maintain the conditions that affect personal and private decisions regarding reproduction. These economic and development processes create strains and tensions on individual reproductive dilemmas and intimacy at micro and marginalized levels.