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Adyel Duran
Sacred Heart University

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The Alleviation of Slum Poverty in the Philippines: A Critical Examination of Poverty Reduction Programs



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Adyel Duran
Mentor: Professor Lesley DeNardis
Global Studies
Sacred Heart University '17

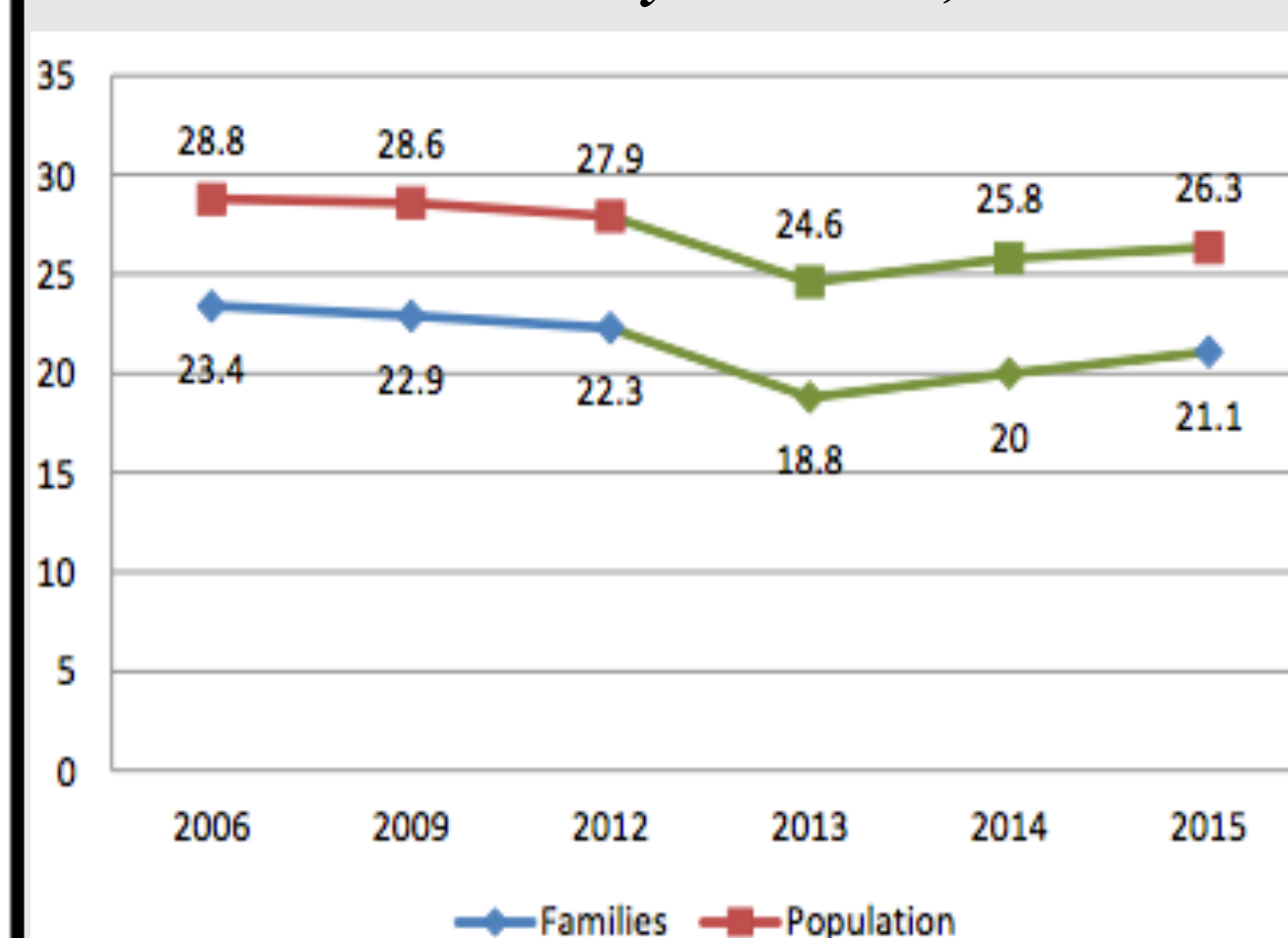
Abstract

My study aims to analyze the dynamics of slum poverty in the Philippines, as well as the success and failures of federal government poverty reduction strategies. This will be achieved by connecting theory and practice through an analysis of various development theories that are related to the outcomes of current federal poverty reduction strategies. Based on original field research conducted in the Philippines, the findings indicate that federal poverty reduction programs have not been effectively implemented due to institutional failures rooted in extractive political and economic institutions. The study concludes with policy recommendations that argue for a more comprehensive 'capabilities' approach which focuses on institutional reform and the expansion of political and civil liberties. Unless federal poverty reduction strategies address the underlying causes of poverty as rooted in institutional failures, efforts to alleviate it will not be effective over the long-term.

Introduction

As one of the Tiger Cub economies of Southeast Asia, the Philippines has experienced recent success in macroeconomic growth that would qualify the Philippines as one of the fastest growing economies in Southeast Asia. Typical macro indicators lead many to believe that the Philippines is on the right track towards a successful economy. However, macro indicators (i.e. GDP or GNP) do not tell the full story of the Philippine political economy or the wellbeing of the Filipino people. Other social indicators such as inequality, poverty, employment, education, healthcare and access to other basic goods are underlying conditions that are typically masked when only looking at macro indicators. An attempt to shift development economics to people-centered policies was the ultimate reason as to why the Human Development Index was created. There was also a shift towards focusing on other theories of development, such as institutional or cultural explanations. These theories directly relate to the current state of the Philippine political economy and the millions of Filipino people that currently lack access to the most basic resources.

First Semester Poverty Incidence, 2006-2015



Philippine Urban Slum Population

	Slum Population 2006	% Slum	Slum Annual Growth Rate (%) (2000-2006)	Projected Slum Population 2010	2020	2050
Urban Philippines	2,936,011	7.10	3.40	3,819,766	6,572,683	12,967,806
Large towns/cities	978,422	5.57	3.49	1,122,335	1,736,317	10,108,036
Metro Manila	1,351,960	12.17	8.55	1,877,003	4,689,943	6,668,187
Metro Manila ^a	4,035,283	36.33	3.14	4,565,951	6,294,181	8,949,102

Source: *Why Slum Poverty Matters*, Ballesteros

Methods

The use of case studies and interviews during my fieldwork in conjunction with policy analysis are the primary research methods. This allows me to retain the interdisciplinary and multi-faceted characteristics of Philippine slum poverty.

Findings

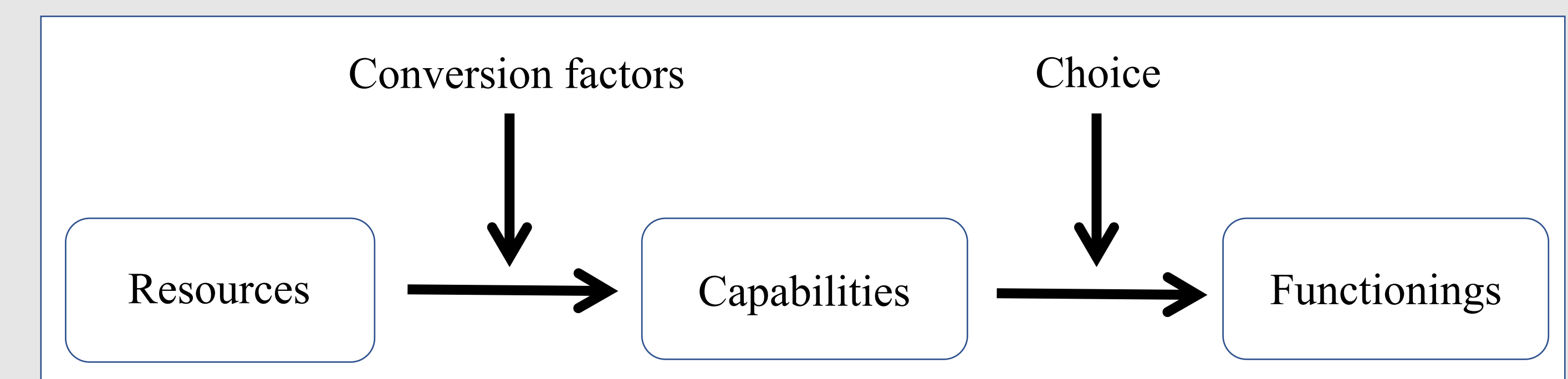
- All three families interviewed did not mention anything of federal government assistance.
- All three families had informal and inconsistent sources of income.
- All three families lived in a health hazardous area.
- All three families still could not afford specialized healthcare despite the federal government's universal healthcare program.
- The great majority of federal slum poverty reduction strategies are palliative.
- There is minimal transparency in regards to the federal budget for public housing.
- The Philippine political economy has dangerously high levels of economic inequality.

Family Income Estimates

Family 1	Family 2	Family 3
Rowena: P130-200/day	Rita: P40/day	Zanita: P100/day
Husband: P400/construction job (not daily)	Husband: P530/week	Husband: N/A
Monthly Total: P7,400-8,800	Monthly Total: P2,920	Monthly Total: P2,000

Development Theories

- Acemoglu and Robinson's political/economic institutions
- Jared Diamond's geography hypothesis
- Sen's development as freedom/capability approach (see chart below)
- Culture



Policy Recommendations

- There must be a clear agenda for high and inclusive growth that focuses on equitable distribution of income.
- Zero tolerance for corruption with strong and credible transparency and accountability mechanisms in federally funded organizations.
- Greater investment in employment based training for long term income opportunities and poverty reduction strategies.
- Greater investment in welfare housing opportunities for family victims of natural disasters, families located near high risk areas and families living under the national poverty line.

References

Philippine Statistics Authority. 2015. Accessed April 12, 2017. <https://psa.gov.ph/poverty-press-releases/publications>.

Ballesteros, Marife. *Why Slum Poverty Matters*. Philippine Institute For Development Studies, 2011. <http://dirp4.pids.gov.ph/ris/pn/pidspn1102.pdf>.



Family 1: Bautista



Family 2: Doringo



Family 3: Sorio



Garbage Dumpsite