

Gender Roles, Fertility, and the Status of Married Filipino Men and Women

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BECAUSE OF THE IDEOLOGY of patriarchy that underlies gender stratification in most cultures, women as a group have been historically excluded from publicly acclaimed bases of power. Men have had better access to higher education and higher paying jobs. Traditionally, this comparative advantage of men in the public arena translates to their greater power in the household. In the Western model the ability to contribute to household income is the key to the household balance of power. Contribution is measured in terms of monetary units. Non-monetary contributions (e.g., housework) do not advance one's position in the household power structure.

Some researchers on the status of women find that women exert both greater autonomy and greater household control when they contribute to the household income (Agassi, 1989; Mason and Lu, 1988; Roldan 1983; Stavrakis and Marshall 1978; Bernard 1975; Scanzoni, 1972). The woman's bargaining position is further enhanced if her contribution is greater than her husband's (Collins, 1975:250). On the other hand, children, because they interfere with her full participation in the labor market, detract from the woman's power base.

This paper attempts to examine the effect of societally prescribed gender roles and fertility on the household status of married Filipino men and women. Traditional patriarchal societies have designated the roles of husband and wife as household head and domestic manager, respectively. Although the Philippine household is not organized strictly along patriarchal ideology, the husband is the publicly acknowledged head of household and as such is expected to be the economic provider of the family. Conversely, the wife is credited primarily for her ability to have children, take good care of them and her husband, and manage the household finances.

In recent times, however, there has been an increase in the number of married women joining the labor market. Nonetheless, the wife's economic role has always been viewed as secondary to her domestic role and even in cases where she clearly makes more money than her husband, the latter remains the recognized household breadwinner. In light of this changing role, this paper will also test the hypothesis that the wife's household power increases with her ability to contribute to household finances.

Household status or power in this paper is defined in terms of the husband's

and wife's role in decision-making. Thus, the person who has the greater autonomy in making major household decisions is considered to have the greater power. Using data from the 1981 Women in Development Survey of the Institute of Philippine Culture, the decision areas examined are those bearing on resource allocation and fertility decisions. Resource allocation decisions refer to the amount of money allocated to savings and children's education. Fertility decisions refer to the number of children that the couple will have. The decision outcome was based on responses to questions asking who the major decision-maker is—whether it is mostly the wife, both equally, or mostly the husband.

Gender Roles: A Historical Background

A long history of Western colonization has resulted in an overlay of patriarchy on an otherwise sexually egalitarian Philippine social structure. To understand contemporary Philippine gender relations one must know the sociocultural history of the country.

The only Christian nation in Asia, the Philippines was colonized by Spain for almost 350 years and the United States of America for another 50 years. With Western colonization came the restructuring of the Philippine household, especially along patriarchal lines.

Ethnographic accounts reveal an egalitarian arrangement among pre-colonial Filipinos. For example, the Filipino legend of creation tells the story of how man and woman were both nestled in a bamboo tube and made to appear at the same time as the bamboo split in half. Historical accounts of pre-colonial lifestyles support the equality of the sexes as was implied in

this folktale. In particular, sexual taboos and practices were the same for both men and women (Chirino, 1903).

In general, marital practices favored the Filipino woman. A dowry was required of the prospective groom. If the man could not afford to pay the bride, he offered his services to his future wife's family. The object of this exercise was to demonstrate to the woman's family his industry and skill as a potential husband. These services could last for several months, or years, or until the woman's family is convinced that he is worthy to become a member of their family (Eggen, 1968).

Infante (1975), a Filipino historian, suggests that unmarried persons who were found to have premarital relationships were fined and obliged to marry. Non-compliance on the part of the man could result in severe physical punishment, even death. Among the upper class, a woman discovered to be pregnant before marriage was forced to reveal the name of the father so he could be punished. To be sure, gender inequality in marriage was noted among some Filipino tribes. Infante points to Spanish accounts of the practice of polygyny among Filipinos who had converted to Islam and those who lived along coastal regions that had extensive contact with Chinese traders.

A division of labor along sexual lines also existed but there were indications that this was neither rigid nor unequal. Men did the housework when the women were occupied with planting or childcare (*ibid.*: 105, 113). Husbands and wives also worked together in commercial ventures, crafts, and agricultural production, and Morga (1903) finds evidence that wives hunted and went into war with their husbands. Women's participation in other extra-domestic affairs appeared to be

common. It was usual for women to serve as priestesses and supernatural mediators (cf. Infante 1975; Tubangui et al., 1986). Accounts by Spanish colonizers indicate that, in most cases, negotiations were carried out with the wife rather than with the husband (Pido, 1986).

The prominent position of pre-Hispanic Filipino women was highlighted with the birth of their children. Prior to the introduction of Catholic surnames, it was the mother's prerogative to give names to their children. The children used these names until they were married and had children of their own (Lallana, 1990).

Class and legitimacy status rather than sex determined the inheritance of the offsprings. While all the children of a free woman inherited from parents, the illegitimate children and the children of a woman-slave did not inherit (Jocano, 1975). The principle of primogeniture was followed in the division of the inheritance. The oldest child, regardless of sex, inherited the most. The exception to this pattern was when there was only one girl among several boys or vice-versa—the lone child was endowed as an eldest child (Jenks, 1905:165).

The coming of the Spanish and the subsequent Christianization of the Philippines brought about significant changes in gender relations in the country. As was the case in all their New World colonies, the clergy imposed the norms of sexual and conjugal behavior that characterized European society. Patriarchal control of the nuclear family along with the political dominance of older men over younger men and men over women were the keys to the restructuring of Philippine society (cf. Infante, 1975; Pido, 1986).

Entrusted land ownership evolved early in the Spanish occupation. As land

ownership became confined to the elite male, the traditional Filipino woman's control over land ownership as well as her rights to inheritance were undermined. Soon the husband predominated in the Filipino household (Robles, 1968; Infante, 1975). The Filipino woman was excluded from public and administrative activities. She was pressured to restrict her activities to the home. Her basic charge was to assure the moral upbringing of the children. In keeping with her role as the moral guardian of the family, she was to aspire to achieve the ideals of the Spanish female stereotype—a paragon of virtuosity and femininity; docile and subservient. Socialization to this feminine ideal was mostly true in the urban areas where the Spanish tended to concentrate and among the Filipino elite who had a special status among the Spanish colonizers.

The imposition of Spanish colonial laws also resulted in new standards of pre-marital and marital morality. The people were firmly steered towards strict adherence to pre-marital chastity, male courtship, monogamy, and marital fidelity. But the adherence to these ideals differed between the sexes. The woman bore far greater responsibility in conforming to these ideals. Whereas the man had considerable latitude, the woman's non-adherence to such standards brought upon her severe punishment (Robles, 1968).

For instance, a single act of adultery was legally sufficient to punish the wife. By comparison, the husband must have been shown to have committed cohabitation, repeated acts of sexual intercourse under scandalous circumstances, or keeping the mistress in the conjugal dwelling, to be convicted of concubinage. Similarly, the preconditions for divorce were slanted towards patriarchy. The practice

of divorce itself was illegal, but legal separation was permitted by the "Siete Partidas" (the Seven Parts of the Spanish Civil Code) which dealt with persons and family relations. The grounds for such legal separation were the attempt on the life of one spouse by the other, or adultery on the part of the wife.

Such standards found their way into present-day Philippines. Bulatao (1975) documents the prevalence of such double-standards of morality among contemporary Filipinos. Moreover, the coming of the Americans did not significantly alter the political and social structure of the Philippines. While the expressed American policy was egalitarian, little was done to change the sexually inequalitarian political and social structures introduced by the Spaniards. The policy of the United States territorial government was to employ Filipino males as colonial intermediaries. The land tenure system, which was a major basis of social and gender stratification, remained unchanged (Pido, 1986; McWilliams, 1964; Pomeroy, 1970) under American rule.

The ideology of domesticity promoted by the Spanish colonizers was maintained under the American occupation. Family workers, mostly women and children, were not considered productive workers if they were unpaid. The 1903 Philippine Census counted about 30 percent of females, 10 years or older, who were gainfully employed while 58 percent of males were so classified.

The biggest impact of American rule, however, was the introduction of universal education. For the first time in the country's occupied history both men and women, whether in urban or rural regions of the country, had equal access to free education. The expansion of educational

facilities opened employment opportunities for both men and women. At the same time, the increased differentiation between the productive and reproductive spheres led to increased "acceptance among the ruling classes of the ideology of woman's place" (Eviota, 1985: 105). As further economic development occurred, the separation of work and family "eventually took root among the laboring classes" (Ibid.).

Eventually, the inheritance practices instituted by the Spaniards were reversed. The principle of primogeniture was gradually reintroduced. However, in some instances where land owned by the family is small, this inheritance practice had been modified. Sons inherit the agricultural land while daughters were provided with higher education (Fegan, 1982). This may partially explain the education advantage of Filipino women over men.

The National Commission on the Role of Women (1985), in a study by the Department of Education from 1977-1978, finds that women predominate in higher education levels. In the workplace, not only is there an absence of explicit discrimination against women in any capacity, but they may have advantages over men. For example, the Philippine Labor Code provides for maternity leave benefits, from 40 to 90 days, with pay and without loss of seniority (Carino, 1991). The law also makes it illegal to stipulate marriage as an employment condition, or to fire a woman on account of pregnancy or while on maternity leave (Romero, 1980). Eviota (1985), in her historical analysis of labor force data, finds that men and women doing similar tasks receive similar wages.

The patriarchal ideology of the Western colonizers did make a significant and sustained impact in gender relations within

the Filipino household. The husband continues to be the designated household head. Article 165 of the Civil Code of the Philippines states that "the husband is the administrator of the conjugal partnership" (Paras, 1984:519). The rationale as expressed by Paras (Ibid) is that since the "husband is principally responsible for the support of the wife and the rest of the family (including household help) and because if the conjugal partnership does not have enough assets, it is the husband's capital that is responsible for such support, not the paraphernal property, the husband should logically be the administrator." In the same breath, Paras (Ibid:520) claims that this role is qualified as a "privilege" not a "natural right." Thus, if the husband abuses his power as an administrator or when "he deliberately absents himself" from the household, the wife legally becomes the administrator of the conjugal partnership (Ibid.).

The husband may have the administrative power over the conjugal partnerships, but it is the wife as the household manager who has control over the household income. The Civil Code of the Philippines, as well as customary practices, bestow upon the wife the power to decide on how the household financial resources should be allocated. Should these resources be insufficient, the woman has the authority to borrow money and charge the conjugal partnership and/or the husband's capital for the payment of this debt. Because she is not the breadwinner, she is under no legal obligation to use her own personal property for this purpose (Ibid.).

In other aspects, the patriarchal influences of Western colonization have been codified in the Civil Code. For instance, the husband can prevent the wife from accepting expensive gifts from people other than their relatives. The husband also has

the right to decide on the place of residence of the family. However, under certain circumstances the wife may establish a separate place of residence. Muslims and Christians are affected by this provision differently. A Muslim wife may refuse to live with her husband if "her dower is not satisfied according to stipulation", or "the conjugal dwelling is not in keeping with her social standing or, is for any reason, not safe for members of the family or her property" (Article 35, "The Muslim Code" in the Civil Code of the Philippines). A Christian wife may refuse to live with her husband under any of the following circumstances (Paras, 1984; 394-395):

- a) he indulges in illicit relations with other women;
- b) he is immoderate in his demands for sexual intercourse;
- c) he gambles;
- d) he insults or abuses her;
- e) he refuses to support the family;
- f) he insists on their living together with his own parents even when the wife and the parents-in-law cannot get along.

In 1987, the New Family Code has amended the Civil Code ostensibly to redress some of the holdover male-biased provisions from the Spanish colonial times. Under this New Family Code, the husband and wife are jointly responsible for the following:

- a) Fixing the family domicile (Article 69);
- b) Support and management of the family and household (Articles 70-71);
- c) Legal guardianship over the property of their unemancipated common children (Article 225); and
- d) Exercise parental authority over the persons of their common children, although in case of disagreement, the husband's decision prevails (Article 211).

Other changes that seek to equalize the roles of married men and women are those that affect the spouse's practice of profession and the bases for legal separation.

In the old Civil Code, the wife could not engage in a profession or business if her husband objected, provided his income was sufficient in accordance with the family's social standing (Cortes 1984). Moreover, "the husband had cause for legal separation with only a single proven act of infidelity on the part of the wife." Today, this same condition is not sufficient cause if it is committed by the husband (*ibid.*). The New Family Code now mandates that either spouse can engage in a legitimate profession without the consent of the other. Likewise, the grounds for legal separation are now the same for either spouse (Article 55). These new provisions remain to be tested. As Medina (1991:156) points out, enactment and implementation of the law are two different things.

Gender Roles: Empirical Findings

Social scientists in the Philippines have found that social norms perpetuate the perception of the "traditional" roles of married men and women. Filipino traditions now dictate that the husband be the breadwinner and the protector of the wife and the family, while the wife be household manager and the keeper of the hearth. The wife is also expected to keep the "marriage intact by her patience, submission, and virtues" (Sevilla, 1982:68).

In practice, however, men and women's roles—especially the latter—have deviated from this idealized "tradition." In contrast with the recent past, the contemporary Filipino wife, whether in the rural or urban areas, is more apt to actively

engage in economic activities to financially help support their family. Women have sought gainful employment outside the home to augment the husband's income or to substitute for an unemployed or incapacitated husband (Medina, 1991:156). Whereas some wives work in the formal wage sector, others are self-employed. More married rural women than urban women are engaged in economic activities (Medina, *ibid.*:126). Miralao (1984) explains that the rise in the number of working married women is a response to the "impoverishment of households at the bottom of the social economic hierarchy, the rising levels and standard of living, and the continuing acquisition of education by women."

In regard to household chores and child care, the norm still appears to be wife-dominated. However, some family researchers have shown an increasing number of men helping in domestic tasks particularly when the wife works outside the home. Illo (1977) finds that in Bicol, husbands of working women tend to help in household chores more than the husbands of women who did not work outside the home. A confirmation of this finding is found in a later study by Garcia (1984). Nonetheless, the spouses are unwilling to concede to these shifts even if they are disposed to participate in the other partner's traditional roles. Esquillo (1976) finds that women in Marikina do not allow their husbands to get involved in household matters even if the latter are willing to help. On the other hand, husbands still prefer the traditional role for their wives even when they share in the household chores.

Whether or not this gender role differentiation in the household translates to greater or less status of either spouse will be investigated in the following section.

Data and Methodology

The analysis presented here is based on data from the 1981 Women in Development Survey conducted by the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, among 2,393 households in three regions of the Philippines. Though now 15 years old, this survey remains the only study of this magnitude and kind where the respondents were married to each other and questions on household decision-making were asked of both. Other surveys of married men and women have been conducted but they are not necessarily married to each other, or the information available from such surveys are limited to labor force and fertility and contain no data on household decision-making. In the 1981 Women in Development Survey, the husband and the wife were interviewed separately. The questions asked of the couple were identical except for the fertility history which was asked only of the wife.

A multinomial logit regression analysis was used in which the dependent variable is the distribution of the responses of the husband and the wife to the questions on resource allocation and fertility decision-making. The dependent variable is divided into three categories: 1) mostly wife; 2) both equally or joint; and 3) mostly husband.

The logit coefficients were then estimated for all possible comparison groups, namely, mostly wife versus mostly husband, joint versus husband, and mostly wife versus joint.

The economic role of the husband as well as that of the wife is operationalized as income. The household manager role of the wife is defined in this study as con-

trol of fiscal resources. Her childbearing and childrearing roles are measured as number of children ever born and children aged 13 years and older. Although both fertility indicators appear to be the same, the latter is included to test the hypothesis that the presence of older children is positively related to the status of the wife.

To ensure that the effects of the primary variables—income, control of resources, number of children—are not conflated by other factors, other socioeconomic, geographic, and demographic factors that have been studied by other researchers were included in the model. For comparability, each model had the same set of 11 independent variables. The socioeconomic variables included wife's education and income. The husband's socioeconomic characteristics were measured relative to the wife's characteristics. These variables are referred to as comparative education and comparative income.

These variables measure the comparative advantage of one spouse over another. Each of these relative measures was arrived at by simply taking the difference between the wife's and husband's education and income. Wife's age, husband's age, and comparative age were also included. An index of communication¹ was likewise included. The correlation between the husband's and wife's communication indices was very high (94 percent). For the purpose of this study, the wife's communication index was chosen. Duration of marriage was used both to control for variations in fertility and, like age, to control for cohort effects. Lastly, place of residence was used to control for the effects of urban versus rural life.

Two sets of logit regression models were constructed—one for resource allocation decisions and another for fertility

decisions. To avoid conflation resulting from inconsistent husband and wife responses with respect to their role in household decision-making, data analysis was based on consistent husband and wife responses.

Results and Findings

Who makes the decisions in the households? Who controls the household resources? Ultimately, who has the greater status in the household? Is it the wife? The husband? Or do they have equal status and household decision-making power?

Although the preponderance of evidence point to an egalitarian decision-making, some Filipino family researchers argue that on the whole, the Filipino wife has little power in the home. Bautista (1977) finds that although 92 percent of the wives hold the money, the husbands, especially in urban areas, have greater share in deciding where the money goes. She claims that a majority of the wives ask permission from their husbands to lend money to relatives and to buy clothes and other personal items.

Castillo (1981:31), however, disagrees. She asks: "when a wife asks permission from the husband to do a certain thing, is she doing so as a matter of information to the husband or as a case of husband's control or monitoring of wife's behavior?" Moreover, she claims that "since the wife holds the money, it is difficult to imagine the husband buying clothes, lending money to relatives or even going out with friends which involves expenses without the wife being at least informed or consulted." Fox (1962) and Ortega (1963) also argue that because the wife keeps the money, it is easier for her rather than the husband to control how the money is spent.

In general, studies reveal that Filipino husband and wife decision-making roles vary according to decision area. The wife is the primary decision-maker on matters dealing with household budget and expenditures (Gonzales and Hollnsteiner, 1976:12-13; Illo, 1989:263; Porio et al., 1975:21-22); childrearing and household management (Mendez and Jocano, 1974:49); family health, food preparation, money and child control (Liu and Yu, 1968:122). The husband decides on acquiring a loan and extending monetary aid to relatives (Novero, 1978:41).²

The current data also provide credence to earlier findings that household decision-making in the Philippines is largely egalitarian. Table 1 shows that approximately 80 percent of the wives and an equal number of husbands report that they decide jointly on the number of children that they are going to have. About half of the couples claim that resource allocation decisions are equally shared. The data also show that when there is deviation from the norm, either the husband or the wife is reported to have greater power. In resource allocation decisions, approximately equal number of husbands and wives are reported to have the responsibility for this area while in fertility decisions, slightly more husbands than wives are reported to be the principal decision-maker. Little variation between the husbands' and wives' responses has been noted.

Correlates of Household Power. What influences the distribution of household power in the Philippines? Tables 2 and 3 present the logit coefficients for each of these three models. Table 2 indicates that six variables achieve statistical significance in the resource allocation decision making model. These variables are wife's education, comparative husband's and

Table 1. Household decision-making area by decision-maker: Women in Development Survey, Philippines 1981.

Decision Area/ Decision-maker	Respondent	
	Husband	Wife
Resource Allocation		
Mostly Wife	22.7	23.3
Both Equally	55.7	55.1
Mostly Husband	21.6	21.6
Total	100.0	100.0
Fertility		
Mostly Wife	4.9	7.4
Both Equally	81.7	80.0
Mostly Husband	13.4	12.6
Total	100.0	100.0

wife's education, comparative husband's and wife's age, number of children ever born, place of current residence, and level of discussion. Table 3 shows that the variation in fertility decisions is explained by six factors—wife's education, comparative husband's and wife's education, wife's age, number of children ever born, place of current residence, and level of discussion. Because of the focus of this paper, only education, income, and number of children will be discussed at length.

Quite surprisingly, the key economic variable, income, consistently turns out to be a statistically insignificant factor in the allocation of household decision-making power. The logit analysis results also suggest that the household power structure of the Philippines appears to be consistent across different cohorts. Duration of marriage is not statistically significant in all the models while wife's age is statistically significant only in the fertility decision-making dimension.

Socioeconomic Correlates of Household Power. Studies on marital power indicate that women with more economic re-

sources tend to have more power than those with less resources (Blood and Wolfe 1960; Heer 1963; Weller 1968; Rodman 1972; Roldan 1983; Zelizer 1985). Overall, the spouse with the comparative resource advantage has a greater role in household decision-making. In particular households, the woman dominates when her market resources exceed that of her husband's.

The logit analysis results (Tables 2 & 3) reveal that wife's income and comparative husband-wife income, the variables representing the spouses' economic roles, are not statistically significant in any of the models. This finding suggests that contrary to Western theories on marital power and status of women, household power allocation in the Philippines does not vary with either the husband's or wife's monetary contribution to household income.

Similarly, the wife's level of education appears to have no significant effect on the distribution of power in fertility decisions, but it is shown to significantly impinge on the distribution of power in resource allocation decisions. Interestingly,

Table 2 shows that by itself, wife's education does not necessarily increase her role in this area. Compared to those with only an elementary education, high-school educated wives do not have a greater role in resource allocation decisions, whereas college-educated wives are shown in fact to exert a lesser role in household resource allocation than their elementary-educated counterparts. However, wives who exhibit higher educational levels than their husbands are more likely to play a greater role in household resource allocation than their husbands.

Fertility. The general feeling among Western feminists is that children are economic liabilities not assets (Zelizer 1985). Blood and Wolfe (1960) claim that women contribute more resources to the marriage prior to childbearing. Heer (1963) argues that by bearing children women contribute more resources to the household. In the Philippines, where children are highly valued for psychological as well as economic reasons and parental roles take precedence over marital roles, childbearing is often regarded as an important resource.

The current data reveal that regardless of the number of children that a couple has, the wife predominates in household resource allocation decisions while the husband has a lesser role in these. The number of children that the couple has, however, has a definite impact on resource allocation and fertility decisions. The findings suggest that having children empowers women in the household.

Having children is a prerequisite to having greater wife control in resource allocation decisions (Table 2). Beyond zero parity, the wife's role in resource allocation decisions increases significantly, albeit in a curvilinear fashion. Women with the lowest parities (1-2 children) and those

with the highest parities (7 or more children) appear to have a greater role in resource allocation decisions than women who have between three and five children.

Table 3 shows that in fertility decisions, greater husband dominance is associated with childlessness and large number of children (seven or more children), whereas egalitarian fertility decision-making is associated with fewer number of children (less than seven). Having children increases the woman's power in household decision-making, although having grown-up children does little to alter the decision-making role of their spouse.

The findings point to three major patterns:

1. the Filipino household is basically egalitarian but exhibits a relatively stronger female- than male-bias;
2. Filipino household decision-making power structure appears to be impervious to economic variations; and
3. household power relations are organized to support a pronatalist ideology which emphasizes the procreative function of married couples as a major source of status.

The ideology of patriarchy which provides for a male-centered household authority structure appears to be supplanted by a sexually egalitarian tradition which gives household decision-making power to the wife regardless of her monetary contribution to the household. No matter who brings in the bigger income, the wife predominates in household resource allocation decisions. The wife also has equal role in fertility decisions whether or not she contributes to the household's income. When the husband's income is "not sufficient" the wife is expected, as part of

Table 2. Logit (Beta) regression coefficients for resource allocation decisions: Women in Development Survey, Philippines 1981.

Predictor Variables	Who Decides?		
	Wife vs. Husband	Joint vs. Husband	Wife vs. Joint
Socioeconomic characteristics			
Wife's educ. high school ^a	-0.0313	0.0045	0.0264
Wife's educ. college ^a	-0.774*	0.2698*	-0.5043*
Husband-Wife same education ^b	-0.7500*	0.5010*	-0.2405
Husband more education ^b	-0.0001	0.0002	0.0002
Wife's income	0.0004	0.0002	0.0002
Comparative husband-wife income	-0.0001	0.0001	-0.0003
Life cycle & other contextual variables			
Wife's age	0.0408	0.0168	0.0240
Comparative husband-wife age	0.0721*	.0718*	0.0003
Duration of marriage	-0.0153*	0.0055	-0.0098
Zero Children ever born ^c	-3.4660	-1.9654*	-1.5006*
1-2 Children ever born ^c	-0.2113*	0.7412	-0.4701
3-4 Children ever born ^c	-0.6740*	-0.2549	-0.4191
5-6 Children ever born ^c	-0.3835	-0.2528	-0.1306
1-4 Children 13 yrs. old & over ^d	-0.1046	0.0907	-0.1954
5+ Children 13 yrs. & over ^d	-0.0339	0.1018	-0.1357
Urban place of residence ^e	-0.6462	0.2177	0.4286*
High level of discussion ^f	1.7694*	2.0946*	0.3252*
Chi-squared value:	373.93	* Significant at .05 level.	
Number of cases :	2,334		

^a Comparison group is elementary education.

^b Comparison group is wife with more education than husband.

^c Comparison group is women with 7 or more children.

^d Comparison group is women with no child aged 13 yrs. & older.

^e Comparison group is rural place of residence.

^f Comparison group is low level of communication.

her household management role, to supplement his income either by working outside the home or engaging in income generating activities within the home. In some cases, she may have to borrow money or do whatever is necessary to stretch the husband's income. The findings seem to point out that in the Philippines where the normative expectation is that parents, particularly

the husbands, are responsible for the economic well-being of the household, the individual spouse is not typically rewarded for performing his/her expected economic role.

The findings further suggest that high woman's education *per se* does not increase her role in household resource allocation decisions. But having a comparative

Table 3. Logit (Beta) regression coefficients for fertility decisions: Women in Development Survey, Philippines 1981.

Predictor Variables	Who Decides?		
	Wife vs. Husband	Joint vs. Husband	Wife vs. Joint
Socioeconomic characteristics			
Wife's educ. high school ^a	-0.0784	0.0610	-0.1394
Wife's educ. college ^a	-0.2780	-0.0965*	-0.1819
Husband-Wife same education ^b	-0.1964	-0.1434	-0.0530
Husband more education ^b	-0.1037	-0.4414*	0.3377
Wife's income	0.0000	-0.0000	0.0000
Comparative husband-wife income	-0.0000	0.0000	-0.0000
Life cycle & other contextual variables			
Wife's age	0.0167	0.0424*	0.0218
Comparative husband-wife age	-0.0125	0.0190	-0.0435
Duration of marriage	-0.0246	-0.0216	0.0091
Zero Children ever born ^c	0.1078	0.3976	-0.2899
1-2 Children ever born ^c	0.9556*	0.6726*	0.2830
3-4 Children ever born ^c	0.4534	0.3057	0.1476
5-6 Children ever born ^c	0.3098	0.1330	0.1768
1-4 Children 13 yrs. old & over ^d	0.2136	-0.0819	0.2955
5+ Children 13 yrs. & over ^d	-0.0001	-0.4583	0.4582
Urban place of residence ^e	-0.2420	0.0139	-0.2559
High level of discussion ^f	0.0475	-0.2350	0.2825
Chi-squared value:	51.27	*Significant at .05 level.	
Number of cases :	1,901		

^a Comparison group is elementary education.

^b Comparison group is wife with more education than husband.

^c Comparison group is women with 7 or more children.

^d Comparison group is women with no child aged 13 yrs. & older.

^e Comparison group is rural place of residence.

^f Comparison group is low level of communication.

education advantage strengthens the traditional household structure where the wife predominates in resource allocation decisions and shares equally with her husband in fertility decisions. Her having more education than her husband makes

her more competent in making these decisions.

The data strongly suggest, however, that fertility is the key factor in the Filipino household power allocation. This pattern is

consistent with the strong pronatalist ideology that underlies Philippine social structure. It is this pronatalist ideology which justifies the power imbalance in the household. The balance of power tips in favor of the husband when the couple has no children. Once the couple has at least one child, household decision-making follows more closely the traditional female-oriented pattern of household management and an egalitarian fertility decision-making.

Regardless of the underlying reasons for maintaining the household division of labor, this arrangement has remained functional for the Filipino family, especially in its pursuit of upward social mobility. A great part of this status achievement strategy is having children. While some feminist scholars consider children as a major limiting factor in women's liberation from their subordinate status in the household, Filipinos view children as necessary in the family's process of status achievement. As expressed by a construction laborer, "I will try to realize my dreams in my children" (Parpan 1975:6).

In the face of economic insecurity, a child is a valuable economic resource. Children, when they are young, are valued for the help they provide within the household and in the farm. The simple menial chores performed by children are valuable as they free the parents to do the major tasks (Caldwell 1978). Children, when they grow up, become a major source of economic support for the family. Moreover, in the absence of institutionalized social security and medical insurance, children serve as the parents' primary support in their old age (Arnold et al. 1975; Bulatao 1975). The inability to have children can have

serious implications both on the couple's current and future social and economic status.

Among lowland Christian Filipinos, the pressure to have children is greater on the husband than on the wife. Children serve as testimony to the husband's good moral character and virility (Jocano 1969). Because they are looked upon as "God's blessings," having children means that the couple is sanctified. Couples who are childless or only have a few children are considered unfortunate, i.e., they are punished by God (Jocano 1969). Among the cultural minorities, a childless woman is subject to pity and a purveyor of bad luck (Barton 1975:55). Although she is not excluded from social and religious activities, there is the feeling that she is not a "complete natural woman" (Ibid).

Because of the primacy of the family in Filipino society, power attribution in the private, not the public domain, may assume primary importance. The husband's extra-household economic activities determine the family's economic and social status, at least initially. But it is through the woman's household management skills, and willingness to bear and raise children that the family achieves social and economic mobility.

In conclusion, it is clear that the use of paradigms developed under different sociocultural and historical milieu can lead to ethnocentric distortions of reality. The simple promotion of economic factors and the degradation of the women's childbearing function as bases for improving women's status in the face of a strong pronatalist ideology could lead to the disenfranchisement of the married Filipina.

Notes

- ¹ This index was created from responses to questions relating to husband-wife discussion of children's education, savings, number of children, and money allocated for food purchase. If the husband or the wife answered yes to all four questions, the level of communication was labeled high, otherwise, the level of communication was considered low. The husband and wife responses to each of the questions were correlated to determine their level of consistency. Using a simple percent agreement measure, the responses were no lower than 90 percent.
- ² The current data show that in about 97 percent of the households the wife keeps the household money. Due to lack of variance this variable was eliminated from the final regression model.

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