

POWER DYNAMICS OF RURAL FAMILIES: THE CASE OF A SAMAR BARRIO

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"Under the saya"¹ is a popular phrase in the Philippines directed to a husband whose wife tends to be more dominant. This connotes that the accepted norm for the conjugal relations is for the husband to be more dominant. But one wonders if the reverse may not be true. For while the husband is considered to be the head, the woman is popularly known as the "neck" that turns the "head" suggesting dominance and influence.

The Filipino woman has been considered influential since the pre-Spanish era. Popular writers assert that she does not need to be liberated and someone even said that the family is fundamentally matriarchal (e.g. Jara 1974). Moreover, a study of life in a Leyte village (Nurge 1965) indicates the tendency of the Filipino woman to be more dominant in the family. However, it is also claimed that the Filipino family is neither "patriarchal" nor "matriarchal," even in the past, suggesting an egalitarian structure (Panopio and Cordero 1977).

Which of these claims is more nearly correct? This study is an attempt to investigate the power structure of the rural family. Who is considered the authority figure? How powerful is the husband/father? How about the wife/mother — has she as much power as that of the man of the house? How about the children — have they any power at all? Who is the most influential person in the family? How are task roles allocated? What factors affect the changing pattern of family power?

Objectives and Rationale

The objectives of the study are: 1) to determine the patterns of decision-making, authority, influence, and task role allocation in rural families, and 2) to determine the basis of family power.

Several studies have been conducted in the United States on the subject of family power structure and related topics. Safilios-Rothschild (1970) mentions no less than 20 major studies. However, she notes that these were all piecemeal studies on decision-making, authority, influence, and task allocation; no research has been made to integrate these power elements into the study of family power structure. Similarly, in the Philippines, no study on family power structure has been conducted. There have been studies on decision-making (Guerrero 1966; Mendez and Jocano 1974) which have shown a joint decision-making pattern. No attempt has been made to probe further into the questions of whose influence affect the result of the decision-making and who exercises greater authority in the decision-making process, and in the allocation of tasks.

This study is an attempt to investigate the decision-making process and task allocation in order to find a more comprehensive indicator of the family power structure of Filipino rural families.

Today, when the rural family is the center of the country's development efforts, there is a need for a systematic investigation of the family structural patterns. Attitudes, values,

and other behavior related to dominance are learned in the family. Principles of superordination/subordination remains pervasive in the family, and the same occurs in the bigger society (Jocano 1975). Moreover, authoritarian parents produce authoritarian children. Because of this, "the traditional non-innovative society continues," (Guthrie et al. 1970). If this is so, and if the Filipino family is authoritarian, then something must be done to improve it structurally as part of the development efforts. The rural family as object of development should be viewed not only from the economic dimension, but from the social dimension as well. Efforts to improve the rural family's economy may be more effective if it is accompanied by an equal effort to improve its structure.

*Family power structure:
A conceptual framework*

Family power structure refers to the "total configuration" (Safilios-Rothschild 1970) from related concepts such as decision-making, authority, influence, and task role allocation. These concepts comprise the components of family power. Decision-making and task role allocation are the behavioral components, while authority and influence are the power components.

The decision-making process. There are four elements in the decision-making process: the decision-problem, the decision-maker, authority, and influence.

The decision-problem is that which provides at least two alternative courses of action. These are problems which represent a variety of family concerns such as farm decisions, household decisions, community-oriented decisions, decisions concerning children, and family planning decisions.

The decision-maker is the person who decides on a decision-problem. He or she may

be the culturally recognized authority figure, or may be an implementor of someone else's idea or suggestion. The decision-maker may or may not be influential. The one whose suggestion or idea is the one followed would be more influential.

Authority and influence are both dimensions of power. Authority is the right to make the decision and to dominate the decision-making process, while influence is the ability to affect or even manipulate the decision-making so that it results in one's favor. Authority may be culturally prescribed, while influence is a power potential that anyone can wield directly or indirectly.

Authority as a prescribed right has an inherent potential to control the decision-making process. However, one may not necessarily exercise this power potential by choice as in the case of shared authority, or by joint decision-making, or because of incompetence. A weak authority may be shown in a strong degree of influence from other members of the family. In turn, full exercise of the right to dominate may be shown in the degree of dominance in the whole decision-making process, including command over important task roles.

Influence as a power potential can emanate from anyone. The member who is able to affect the result of most decisions would be the most influential member of the family.

Task role allocation. Task role allocation refers to the division of labor between the sexes or among the members of the family. There are two types of task roles, the "thinking task" and the "doing task." The former refers to decision-making as a task role, while the latter refers to the physical doing of task roles. Task allocation is categorized into "sex differentiated" and "role differentiated" tasks.

The sex differentiated tasks adhere to the traditionally sex-linked tasks such as male task

or female task. Joint or shared tasks are non-differentiated. The role differentiated tasks adhere to specialized task roles of father, mother, son or daughter. Tasks which are performed by anyone or everyone is an unspecialized task. It is possible that the "doing task" is less specialized than the "thinking task."

Authority and influence may be reflected in the manner in which tasks are assigned to the children and participated in by the same. Ordering indicates an authoritarian pattern. Voluntary participation may indicate a permissive pattern. Children may not freely volunteer to do certain tasks in an authoritarian atmosphere for fear of making mistakes and be scolded. A democratic pattern may be indicated by the soft, tender manner of dispensing errands.

Influence may be reflected in the degree to which one is the performer of tasks. For example, if the husband does more household tasks, the wife may have a strong influence to make him perform such tasks. Shared performance of tasks reflects shared influence. Prevalence of the non-differentiated or joint task roles may also reflect shared authority, whereas the prevalence of the differentiated tasks may reflect dominance of one sex over the other. If the male task pattern dominates in sex differentiated task roles, it may mean that he is less dominant.

In summary, there are four family power patterns: decision-making patterns, authority patterns, influence patterns, and task role allocation patterns. The decision-making patterns indicate who the decision-makers are. Authority patterns indicate the degree of authority exercised in the decision-making process. Influence patterns indicate from whom influence emanate in the decision-making process. Task role allocation patterns indicate those who have command over the doing of tasks.

There are four possible family power

structures, namely, patriarchal, matriarchal, egalitarian, and permissive. A patriarchal structure is a husband/father dominated family, while a matriarchal is a wife/mother dominated family. The spouse who exercises more authority and wields more influence in the decision-making process, and the spouse who does less of the "doing tasks" may be the dominant spouse.

An egalitarian structure is a system where authority and influence are shared. A permissive structure is a family where children and other people are able to exercise their right to decide and to influence over the authority figure.

Variations in the family power patterns may be attributed to the changes in the family life cycle. It is possible that as the family moves in the family life cycle, the family power patterns will also change.

The family life cycle

The family life cycle as an independent variable may be related to the changing patterns of family power. It is said that critical dates in an individual's life may occur in his family status (Lansing and Kish 1957), i.e., when he or she gets married, or when children are born or when children start leaving home.

For purposes of this study, stages of family cycle are: the beginning family, the child-bearing stage, child-rearing stage, child-leaving stage, and the empty-fold stage. The "beginning family" refers to the couple who have no children yet. The "child-bearing family" is a family with at least one child who is below twelve years old. The "child-rearing stage" is the period when the eldest child is at least twelve years old and below twenty years old. The "child-leaving stage" is a loose description of that period in family life when the children, at least the eldest child, start leaving home for marriage or for work or even to study somewhere else.

The "empty-fold stage" is the return to the stage when the family was composed of the father and mother, again as a new couple. The cycle is then completed. It means all the children are either all married or working and studying somewhere else.

Methodology

Site and data collection. The study was conducted in Maramag, Balangkayan, Eastern Samar. The choice of the place was based on the fact that Eastern Samar is a depressed area and so any barrio within the province would be representative of a rural area. The place is practically cut-off from urban conveniences. Besides, there have been no researches made in the area.

One hundred thirty-two respondents from 114 families were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. These families represent a complete enumeration of those qualified to be the subjects for the study in the sense that they were complete, i.e., couples were not separated or widowed.

Data analysis. The data were analyzed by scoring, averaging, and percentaging. The husband and wife responses were treated separately. Similar trends in their responses determined the major patterns. Where their responses differed, these were categorized as dissimilar patterns. Further analysis of these were made by adding the scores of both respondents. By this method it was determined whether or not the responses tended to favor a major pattern.

Trends of relationship between the family life cycle and the power patterns were determined by a simple comparison of the mean scores of 8 household decision-problems and 6 household "doing tasks" with that of the five stages of the family life cycle.

Operational definitions. The *decision-making process* refers to the 3-level questioning scheme using 26 decision-problems

representing five areas of family concerns. The first area of concern covers farm decisions such as:

1. what rice variety to plant
2. to loan for production
3. how much to loan
4. from whom to loan
5. when to repay the loan
6. how much rice/camote should be sold
7. what to price the rice/camote for sale
8. where the copra should be sold

The second includes household decisions such as:

9. to borrow for consumption
10. how much to borrow
11. from whom to borrow
12. when to repay the debt
13. to repair/remodel the house
14. to buy furniture/kitchen utensils
15. to take someone to the doctor
16. what to cook

The third pertains to community-oriented decisions such as:

17. to join the Samahang Nayon (SN)
18. to buy a ticket for a community project fund raising
19. to lend money to neighbors/relatives
20. to lend farm and household tools

The fourth considers family planning decisions such as:

21. to practice family planning
22. what method of family planning to use
23. how many children to raise.

And the fifth taps decisions concerning children such as:

24. whether or not the children go on to high school/college
25. dropping out of school
26. punishing the child

Decision-making patterns refer to husband-alone decision, wife-alone decision, joint decision, child and others decisions.

These patterns were determined from the responses to the question "who decides . . ." referring to the 26 decision problems above.

Authority patterns refer to authoritarian pattern, democratic pattern, and permissive pattern. The authoritarian pattern is sub-categorized into "authoritarian husband" and "authoritarian wife." The pattern is "authoritarian husband" when he decides without consultation or consults but follows his own will. It is "authoritarian wife" when she decides without consultation or consults but follows her own will. The pattern is democratic when the husband and wife jointly decide, or when they consult each other and the will of the other is the one followed. The pattern is permissive when the child or other people make the decision with or without consultation and their will prevails. These patterns were determined from the question: how do you decide — do you consult? if so, whose will is followed?

Influence patterns refer to husband influence, wife influence, shared influence, and child and others influence. It is "husband influence" when in a joint decision-making, the husband's will prevails or when he consults but still follows his own will, or when he decides without any consultation. It is "wife influence" when she decides without any consultation, or when in a joint decision-making her will is the one followed, or when she consults but still follows her own will. It is "shared influence" when the response to the question is "both" despite probing, or when the husband decides in consultation with the wife and the final response is "both" and vice versa. It is "child influence" when the child decides with or without consultation and his will has to be followed; and "others influence" when others like parents, partners in business, or anyone in the family decide with or without consultation and their will are the ones followed.

The "doing tasks" operationally refers to

the 13 tasks grouped into three areas: farm tasks such as:

1. planting rice/camote
2. plowing/preparing the land for planting
3. weeding the plants
4. harvesting palay/camote
5. care of livestock

household tasks such as:

6. cooking preparing food
7. fetching water
8. gathering firewood
9. cleaning the house
10. taking care of the child
11. laundering

and community-oriented tasks, such as:

12. attending the Samahang Nayon meeting
13. attending the parents-teachers association meeting

These were used to determine the sex differentiated and role differentiated task patterns.

The *sex differentiated task patterns* refer to the male task pattern, female task pattern, and joint task pattern. It is "male task" when the task is performed by the husband or son alone; "female task" when the task is done by the wife or daughter alone; and "joint task" when the activity is performed by both.

The *role differentiated task patterns* refer to specialized task and unspecialized task roles. The task is "specialized" when the task is performed by father alone, mother alone, son alone, and daughter alone. It is "unspecialized" when the task is performed by the father and mother, father and son/daughter, mother and daughter/son or by all.

The number of responses to each decision-problem (DP) and "doing task" (DT) consisted the score of each. The decision-problem that score highest in favor of a major pattern is one *DP-score* and the

"doing task" that score highest in favor of a major pattern is one *DT-score*. For example, if the joint pattern scores highest in the decision to practice family planning, this is one *DP-score* for the joint pattern.

Findings

Respondents. One hundred thirty-two respondents were interviewed. Of these, 90 or 68 percent were wives and the rest (42 or 32 percent) were husbands. The small percentage of husband respondents show that husbands are mostly out, either in the farm or in the sea, at the time of interview.

In the distribution of respondents among the family life cycle stages, 41 were of the child-bearing stage, 37 of the child-leaving stage, 20 of the empty-fold stage, 19 of the child rearing stage, and 15 of the beginning stage.

In terms of the characteristics of the respondents, the average age was 39.3 years. Educationally, most of them (60 percent) had primary and intermediate education, while ten percent had no schooling at all. The rest either had gone to high school or college, but rarely were there who finished. Occupationally, half of them (50 percent) were farmers, 34 percent were housewives, and the rest were engaged in varied occupations such as storekeeping, fishing, and the like. Their approximate income on the average was P1,800 per year. In terms of contact with the outside world, 55 percent of the respondents have travelled at one time or another to Manila.

Family power patterns. There were 26 decision-problems (DP) and 13 "doing tasks" (DT) used to determine the power patterns. The expected responses for each DP and DT were 132, but the actual number of responses varied because of the non-applicability of

some questions to many respondents. The household decision-problems and "doing tasks" had the highest percentage of responses, an average total of 86 percent and 92 percent, respectively. This indicates that the household decision-problems and "doing tasks" were more applicable to most of the respondents.

To get the decision-making patterns, authority patterns, influence patterns, and task role allocation patterns, percent scores were computed relative to the number of subjects responding to each DP and DT.

Discussed in this report are the results based on the DP scores and DT scores grouped by area. The highest possible DP score for a pattern would be 26 in the case of the decision-making and 13 in the case of the "doing tasks," since there were 26 decision-problems and 13 "doing tasks."

Decision-making patterns. Table 1 shows the patterns of decision-making by area and DP scores. The major decision patterns are husband alone (H), wife alone (W), joint pattern (J), and child and others (CO). The child and others decision pattern is a combined category. This refers to the decisions of the parents, farm partners, and children. The dissimilar category refers to the responses of husband and wife which did not follow the same trend. However, further analysis of these indicate the tendency to favor a major pattern as shown in the last column.

It will be noted that the joint pattern predominates (8 DP-scores) closely followed by the wife alone pattern (5 DP-scores). This confirms Guerrero's (1966) finding among rural families in a barrio in Batangas.

Viewed by area (Table 1), farm decisions tend to be more joint with the balance tipped toward the husband and child and others patterns. Generally the wife's domain, the household decisions were found to be

Table 1. *Decision-making patterns by area and DP-Score*

Decision area	No. of decision-problems	Patterns and DP-Scores							
		Husband alone	Wife alone	Joint	Child and others	Dissimilar	Tending toward		
							H	W	J
Farm	8	1	0	3	2	2	—	1	1
Household	8	0	5	1	0	2	1	—	1
Community	4	1	0	1	1	1	—	1	—
Family planning	3	0	0	3	0	0	—	—	—
Children	3	0	0	0	2	1	—	1	—
Total	26	2	5	8	5	6	1	3	2

dominantly wife alone (5 DP-scores) tending towards the joint pattern. The community-oriented decisions tended to be equally distributed among the four major patterns. On the other hand, family planning decisions indicated a clear joint pattern (3 DP-scores), and the decisions concerning children indicated a child and others pattern.

The child was a decision-maker in his own right, even if these were negative ones, e.g., dropping out of school and not going to high school or college. This may imply that if the child cannot exercise his right to decide positively, he may exercise it negatively, perhaps as a form of spite for too much adult dominance. His decision to drop out of school may also stem from a lack of incentives from parents or school environment which lack facilities.

There were other people who tended to be decision-makers for the family, but these were

in situation where the family had no control like when they farm on a partnership basis or when they make copra for land owners. This indicates that a good number of families were somehow dependent on other people for their needs. This implies that when one has to depend on someone else for his basic needs, a person is likely to be powerless. He would tend to accept what those who hold power over him would decide.

Authority patterns. Asked who was the "gamhanan" or "magburuot," meaning powerful or authority figure, majority of the husbands (73 percent) and wives (78 percent) said it was the husband (see Table 2). Asked about their reasons for saying so, the most frequent answer from both husband and wife were that of strength and the breadwinning role of the man of the house. This indicates a traditional view and that by cultural prescription, the husband is considered the authority figure of the family.

Table 2. *Perceived authority in the family*

Category	Husband responses		Wife responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Husband	31	73	70	78
Wife	9	21	10	11
Both	2	6	10	11
Total	42	100	90	100

However, viewed from the decision-making process using 26 decision-problems, the data reveal that the wife tends to exercise greater authority with 9 DP scores as against the

husband's 3 DP scores (see Table 3). This indicates that the husband is willing to share his authority to the wife, but tends to be overpowered by her.

Table 3. *Authority patterns by area and DP-scores*

Decision area	No. of decision-problems	Patterns and DP-Scores								
		Authoritarian		Democratic	Permissive	Dissimilar	Tending		Toward D	P
Husband	Wife	H	W							
Farm decision	8	2	2	2	1	1	—	—	—	1
Household	8	0	5	1	0	2	—	1	1	—
Community-	4	1	1	1	1	0	—	—	—	—
Family planning	3	0	0	3	0	0	—	—	—	—
Children	3	0	1	0	1	1	—	—	—	1
Total	26	3	9	7	3	4	0	1	1	2

Results by area show that in the farm decisions, the authoritarian pattern dominate, the husband exercising more authority on two decision-problems and the wife, too exercising more authority on two decision-problems. In the household decisions, the wife tends to have more authority, while in the family planning decisions, the pattern is democratic. In contrast, the community-oriented decisions do not show a clear pattern, although on the whole it tends to be authoritarian pattern. The decision concerning children tended to be permissive.

On the whole the authority pattern is authoritarian with democratic pattern coming close to it.

Influence patterns. Using the same 26 decision-problems to find out who exerts more influence in the decision-making process, Table 4 shows the dominance of the dissimilar pattern (8 DP-scores) meaning husband and wife responses to these DPs were

not quite unanimous. But further analysis of these responses reveal a trend towards the wife influence pattern (4 out of 8 DP-scores), with the shared pattern following closely. On the whole, then, the pattern is more wife influence.

This result is reinforced by the manner in which conflict is settled between the husband and wife, where the husband is found to give in more. In response to the question "who takes the first step to end a conflict," most of those who responded indicated that the husband takes the first step more than the wife does (see Table 5). This is further supported by Nurge's finding in a study of a Leyte village life (1965), where the husband was found to give in more to the wife's demands.

Morally, taking the first step to end a conflict is a positive virtue. It is a mark of strength of character. Culturally, however, the common notion about taking the first step to

Table 4. *Patterns of influence by area and DP-Scores*

Decision area	Patterns and DP-score						Tending towards		
	No. of decision-problems	Husband influence	Wife influence	Shared influence	Child and others	Dissimilar	H	W	S
Farm	8	1	1	2	1	3	½	1½	1
Household	8	0	5	0	0	3	1	1	1
Community-	4	1	0	1	1	1	—	1	—
Family planning	3	0	0	3	0	0	—	—	—
Children	3	0	0	0	2	1	—	1	—
Total	26	2	6	6	4	8	1½	4½	2

Table 5. *Person who takes the first step to end a conflict*

Category	Husband's response		Wife's response	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Husband	15	45	37	49
Wife	8	24	18	23
Both	1	3	2	3
Whoever is at fault	7	22	18	23
Whoever is outreasoned	2	6	1	2
Total	33	100	76	100

end a conflict is a sign of weakness. It means giving in. It is in this context that taking the first step is used here.

Finally, these results tend to support C.S. Rothschild's (1970) contention that knowing only who makes the decisions gives only a partial picture of family power. In this study, while the decision-making pattern was joint, the wife was shown to exercise more authority and tended to wield more influence in the whole decision-making process. It may also be pointed out that this result supports Hunt et al.'s (1954) description of the Filipino woman as the most influential member of the family.

Patterns of sex differentiated tasks. Using 13 "doing tasks" to determine the pattern of task allocation, Table 6 shows the patterns of sex differentiated tasks. It will be noted that the dominant patterns are male task and joint task. However, further analysis of the dissimilar pattern indicates a trend towards the joint task pattern. Hence, on the whole, the patterns tends to be more joint with the male task pattern following closely. Viewed by area, farm tasks such as weeding, harvesting, care of the livestock, as well as planting, tend to be joint tasks than they are male or female tasks. Household tasks such as fetching water and gathering firewood, tend to be more male tasks, while cleaning the house

Table 6. *Patterns of sex differentiated tasks by area and DT-score*

Task area	Patterns and DT-Scores							
	No. of doing tasks	Male-linked task	Female-linked task	Joint task	Disi-milar	Tending towards		
						M	F	J
Farm	5	1	0	3	1	—	—	1
Household	6	2	2	1	1	—	—	1
Community	2	1	0	0	1	1	—	—
Total	13	4	2	4	3	1	0	2

and laundering the clothes tend to be female tasks; and cooking and taking care of the child tend to be joint tasks. The community-oriented tasks such as attending the Samahang Nayon meeting and the PTA meeting tend to be male-linked tasks.

On the whole, the general pattern of task allocation between the sexes tend to be more differentiated with 6 DT-scores (4 male and 2

female patterns) as against 4 DT-scores for the joint pattern.

Patterns of role differentiated tasks. As to the role differentiation of task allocation, Table 7 reveals the dominance of the specialized pattern on the task of the father (4 DT-scores for father and 2 DT-scores for mother), closely tending towards the shared pattern (5 DT-scores).

Table 7. *Patterns of role differentiated tasks by area and DT-score*

Task area	Patterns and DT-scores						
	No. of doing task	Specialized (father mother)		Shared	Disi-milar	Tending towards Sp. Shared	
Farm	5	1	0	3	1	—	1
Household	6	2	2	2	0	—	—
Community	2	1	0	0	1	—	1
Total	13	4	2	5	2	0	2

A comparison between the "thinking tasks" and the "doing tasks" reveals two things. First, the wife does more independent "thinking tasks" such as a) how much money for consumption may be borrowed, b) from whom may this amount be borrowed, c) when to repay the debt, d) what to cook, and e) to buy furniture than "doing tasks" such as a) cleaning the house, and b) laundering clothes;

Second, the husband does more independent "doing tasks" such as a) plowing, b) fetching water, c) gathering firewood, and d) attending the SN meeting than "thinking tasks" such as a) how much to loan for production, and b) to join the Samahang Nayon.

This suggests that women could become good managers and executives if trained and given the opportunity to do so.

Moreover, on the whole, "thinking task" tends to be more shared than the "doing task" which tends to be more differentiated. This supports Geiken's (1964) theory that the more "mental" the task is, the greater the sharing than when the task involves physical doing.

Family life cycle as a basis for family power. Table 8 contains the mean of the percent scores of eight household decision-problems and 6 "doing tasks." The household decisions cover these matters: a) to borrow for consumption, b) how much should be borrowed, c) borrow from whom d) when to repay the debt, e) to repair/remodel the house, f) to buy furniture, g) to take someone to the doctor, and h) what to cook. The household tasks include these items: a) cooking/preparing food, b) fetching water, c) gathering firewood, d) cleaning the house, e)

taking care of the child, and f) laundering the clothes.

Each of these was crossed with the five stages of the family life cycle in all the five power patterns such as, authority pattern, decision-making pattern, influence pattern, sex differentiated task patterns, and role differentiated task patterns. This was done to see the relationship between family power patterns and the family life cycle, and by so doing attempts to explain the changing patterns of family power. For this purpose only the patterns of decision-making and role differentiated task role patterns are discussed here as they may suffice to illustrate the trend. It should be remembered that the household decision-making is dominantly wife-alone decision pattern, while the task role patterns tend to be specialized on the task of the father.

Table 8. *Power patterns and family life cycle (FLC) stage*

Power patterns	Mean of percent scores and FLC				
	Beginning family	Child bearing	Child rearing	Child leaving	Empty-fold
<i>Decision-making patterns</i>					
Husband-alone decision	24.2	16.2	13.6	12.3	16.0
Wife-alone decision	25.5	40.1	49.8	60.5	46.3
Joint decision	21.8	32.0	31.6	23.3	25.8
Child and others decision	25.8	11.6	4.6	3.8	11.7
<i>Role differentiated tasks</i>					
Specialized task pattern	65.1	53.6	43.0	50.6	66.6
Shared task pattern	18.1	46.3	57.0	40.3	33.3

It may be noted that the wife's dominance in the decision-making process progresses from the child bearing stage and reaches its peak at the child-rearing and child-leaving stages, and tends to decline at the empty-fold stage. This seems to imply that the children are the wife's power resource. Children are highly valued in the family. To the husband, they are a boost

to his masculine ego. To the wife, they are the reason for her being, and to please her husband. The husband recognizes this vital role that the wife plays in the marriage relationship, i.e., bearing children. Because of this, he tends to love her more and to give in to her wishes for the sake of the children.

But why does the peak of the wife's dominance tend to be at the child-rearing and child-leaving stages? Could it be that she asserts herself because of a threatened position? It may be that the role as mother is threatened when the children start to assert their "child power" and when they become rebellious, she may feel guilty of having failed them. Often, parents may not quite accept the fact that their children have grown up and that they need to be treated as such; and that they must develop to be independent persons. When they start leaving, her position may be threatened further by the thought that she might not be needed anymore, and so she asserts to prove that she is still important and must be recognized as such. If the children are her power resource, what power has she anymore when they are all gone? Would her husband love her still as much? Her assertion may imply her need for the husband's continuing love and support.

The peak of the joint decision-making pattern is at the child-bearing stage. This indicates that the wife has to share the household concerns with the husband owing to the care of child-bearing. It may be noted that the peak of the husband's decision-making pattern is at the beginning stage, which may imply that the young wife is still dependent on him. Also the child and others decision pattern is at the beginning stage. This may imply that the new couple are still dependent on their parents.

At the empty-fold stage, the wife's dominance tends to decline, and the pattern tends to be shared. This may imply that they

can now afford to be together more and share in the household concerns. The urge to dominate may have mellowed through the years and the absence of the children may draw them closer to each other.

In the "doing tasks," it may be noted that the peak of the specialized task role pattern is at the beginning and at the empty-fold stages. Since the specialized role is more on the task of the father as noted earlier, this may imply that the father has more time to be at home at the beginning and at the empty-fold stages. He does not have to work very much outside the home in terms of production activities. In a study of Laguna households (King 1976), it was observed that children affect the time allocation of fathers and mothers for their production activities. Since there are no children to worry very much about, the father may lessen his production activities outside the home and so he is able to do more household tasks. However, though, the peak of the shared pattern is at the child-rearing stage. This may imply that the father has to help the mother cope with household tasks which increase when children are growing. This may also indicate that the bigger children are already able to help in some household activities. This tends to support Geiken's (1964) observation of greater task sharing among families with children over five years old.

Summary and conclusion

The results may be briefly summarized as follows:

Power patterns

Decision-making patterns
 Authority patterns
 Influence patterns
 Sex differentiated tasks
 Role differentiated tasks

Dominant patterns

Joint decision-making
 Authoritarian-wife
 Wife influence
 Joint task pattern
 Specialized-father

Tendency towards the

Wife alone decision
 Democratic pattern
 Shared influence
 Male-linked pattern
 Shared tasks pattern

A relationship was indicated between family life cycle and the family power patterns. The wife appeared to increase her dominance with the coming of children into the family. The peak of her dominance appeared to be at the child-leaving stage and it tended to decline at the empty-fold stage, implying that the children are her power resource.

On the basis of these findings, it may be concluded that the power structure of the rural families studied seem to be women dominated or matriarchal, and tending closely towards the egalitarian structure.

Implications for further research may be derived from these findings. The finding that the wife tended to assert more authority and wield stronger influence, in joint decision patterns, implies that studies on family power would not give adequate results with only "who decides" method of determining the power patterns.

Moreover, the tendency for the husband and wife responses to differ with the same question, suggests that the view of only one-sex respondent, may be biased. To have both husband and wife as respondents comparing their responses would give more adequate results.

Notes

This article was based on the author's Master's thesis, submitted to the Department of Agricultural Education, University of the Philippines at Los Baños in 1977.

¹"Under the saya" literally means under the skirt. In olden days when pants and mini-skirts were unheard of, women wore long skirts. The phrase actually means, a henpecked husband.

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