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## The Realities of Marriage of Urban Filipino Women

JOSEPH A. VANCIO

Filipino society in the past decades has witnessed dramatic changes in many aspects which affect family life.<sup>1</sup> Some of these changes are: the rapid rate of urbanization, the pressures of high population growth, the adaptation of more scientific methods of rice farming, increasing industrialization and use of modern technology, and an awareness of women's participation in development and an assertion of their basic rights and dignity.

In view of these developments, it becomes relevant to assess periodically the state of Filipino marriage in order to ascertain how well (or badly) it is faring in times of stress and change. In this regard, a study was conducted at the Institute of Philippine Culture to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the marital bond among Metro Manila couples.<sup>2</sup>

Two research methods were used to gather data for the marriage study, namely: self-administered questionnaires and selected interviews. Through purposive sampling, 368 respondents coming from various institutions in Metro Manila, such as factories, public and private schools, banks, and government offices were chosen. Women respondents (178) comprise about one half of the total

### (Prenote)

This article is a revised version of the research study, "The Realities of Marriage in Metro Manila: An Exploratory Study," completed at the Institute of Philippine Culture from November 1975 to April 1976. The study was funded by the Gregorio Araneta Social Development Foundation.

1. Social scientists commenting on Philippine society and institutions almost never fail to make an observation about the central importance of the Filipino family in social organization. The family seems to permeate every aspect of society. The Civil Code (Article 52) recognizes the family as an inviolable social institution.

2. In part, the urgent need for an investigation of marriage patterns stems from the recent upsurge of interest in the issues of divorce, generated by a recently proposed Presidential decree on the status of women, the situation of women in marriage, and how many marriages are in serious trouble or irretrievably broken.

sample and are mostly college educated, urban middle class, working mothers. They are employed as teachers, administrative officers, secretaries, clerks and factory sewing machine operators. Their median age was 32 years, married nine years and with an average of three children. In addition, six professionals dealing with marriage and family life were also interviewed: a parish priest, a canon lawyer, a marriage counselor, a church marriage tribunal official, a Domestic Relations Court judge, and a female attorney.

This study explores the realities of marriage of the urban Filipino woman by dividing the data into six main parts: 1) The premarital situation which includes the length of courtship, premarital sex, the manner of choice of mate, premarital preparation and the main source of knowledge about marriage; 2) the present marriage situation with a focus on special situations; 3) the working mother and wife; 4) decision-making in marriage; 5) various opinions of the experts; and 6) conclusion.

#### PREMARRIAGE SITUATION

In the period prior to marriage, the general pattern among the respondents was to have had the chance to know their future spouse for a year or more. Very few of the courtships or periods of acquaintance which led to marriage lasted less than a year. The respondents seemed not to have rushed into marriage.

During the period of courtship, 49 percent of the women stated that they were able to perceive what they considered as unfavorable habits in their future spouses. This perceptiveness during courtship could be considered a factor in a realistic approach to marriage. On the other hand, only 22 percent of the male respondents acknowledged awareness of unfavorable habits in their future wives. The fact that in the courtship period less than half of the women and less than a fourth of the male respondents showed any perceptiveness about unfavorable personal traits could indicate a serious oversight on the part of young people regarding the purpose of courtship. Though both groups fall short, women seem to be able to have a better personal view of their future spouse.

The premarital sexual habits of the male and female respondents showed a sharp contrast. It is not surprising that only 15 percent of Filipino women admitted any premarital sexual activity.

On the other hand, 54 percent of their male counterparts were no strangers to premarital sex. In an urban context, one would anticipate a relaxing of the sexual mores among college youth especially in the premarital period. Even though these urban college women were exposed to a supposedly more liberal setting their involvement in premarital sex activity is low. Men showed a more precocious premarital sexual attitude. Possible explanations for the women's attitude could be: internalized norms and values as a result of parental warnings or, even as college students, young Filipinas remain under the watchful eyes of parents or guardians. Filipino women are usually under stricter parental control and subject to socially less-tolerant attitudes regarding sexual behavior. Filipino society does its part through mechanisms such as *tsismis*, or gossip, to keep the women in line. It is a rare Filipina who would brave *tsismis* or group censure by a display of more liberal sexual behavior.

On the other hand, a modernizing trend is observed in Filipino cultural patterns regarding the manner of choosing a spouse and arranging a marriage. Traditionally, the Filipino approach to marriage is one of a family alliance. The opinions of parents and relatives and their choices usually carry much weight. The trend today however, which is very evident in an urban context, is that the couples are able to exercise their choice more independently from parental influence. In the present sample, 70 percent of the women and 67 percent of the men made an independent choice of their spouse. The age of the respondents at the time of marriage emerged as a positive factor associated with independence of choice. Freedom of choice from parents' influence was directly associated with higher ages at time of marriage. Parental influence of mate choice was not only more frequently present among the males, but also with those married at a younger age.

The question of preparation for marriage leaves much to be desired. It is often lamented that one of the ills affecting Catholic marriages is the insufficient preparation for Christian family life. Normally a series of instructions on the nature of married life is supposed to be given to every Catholic couple preparing for marriage. Yet 52 percent of the respondents reported not to have received instructions of any kind. And only 31 percent said that they had some instructions from a priest or minister.

A telephone survey of Metro Manila parishes was made to deter-

mine: (1) the number of parishes which offer premarital instructions, and (2) what type of instructions are given and if they are mandatory for all couples. A random sample of 30 out of 85 parishes in the Metro Manila area was chosen. It was found that premarital instructions in Metro Manila parishes lack uniformity of policy, requirements, and content. Most parishes are not clear if these instructions are separate from a personal interview which is required mainly to complete a standard church form on the freedom of the individual to marry. A rough estimate of 28 out of 85 parishes in the Metro Manila area do not even require instructions.

Respondents in the present sample were asked to name and rank according to importance the sources of their knowledge about marriage. The pattern which emerged shows that importance is attributed mostly to self-reliance, that is, their own reading. The church or school was acknowledged as a source for knowing about marriage by only 9 percent of the respondents. Neither the church nor the state, then, is recognized by the respondents as a major source of positive preparation to help couples achieve success in marriage. Young people are permitted with great ease to enter into the married state. Yet both the church and the state, by their present prohibitions, do not easily admit of marriage failures by allowing those marriages which have broken down to be dissolved and the individuals to remarry.

Both male and female respondents gave expression to the dominant idea about marriage: that it is a means to establish a family and have children. Other opinions about marriage and life with the spouse are likewise couched in traditional terms. The greater majority of respondents, both men and women, anticipated having children and considered this as the ideal situation for their marriage. In the present context of Filipino society, these concepts of married life are culturally prejudiced against the woman. They tie her down to the world of the house and the children. Martinez-Esquillo concludes in a recent study that the wife's small shared social network and her confinement to the domestic sphere result in high fertility and lessen the contribution of Filipino woman-power for development.<sup>3</sup> The married male continues to be more

3. Natividad Martinez-Esquillo, "Conjugal Interaction and Fertility Behavior Among Filipino Urban Working Class," mimeographed (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1976), p. 208.

or less free and to exercise this freedom, perhaps not so much in spite of marriage, but because of it. Moreover, the husband's social network is much more extensive than his wife's. It is rare for the Filipino male when married, to see his role as sharing much of the household responsibilities.<sup>4</sup>

### THE PRESENT MARRIAGE SITUATION

The majority of women respondents were part of what can be called successful marriages. Their marriages were mostly first-time unions and were celebrated in church. The success rating means that they have achieved a certain harmonious relationship mainly as regards six items: communication with the spouse; consideration of the spouse as companion; the raising and disciplining of children; sexual relations with the spouse; the financial situation; and relations with in-laws. This does not mean that their marriages are without problems or conflicts, but that they manage to cope with such difficulties and keep them within bounds. One of the sources of marriage problems is the financial situation which, for many respondents, occasionally sparks quarrels between husbands and wives. Most respondents admitted to not having yet achieved financial stability.

When problems arise in the marital relationship, the majority of the women first weigh both sides of the question before taking a stand. The remedy which the respondents would pursue reflects to a great extent the solidarity of their marriage. When they find themselves in a strained situation, most of the respondents chose to discuss the matter with the spouse, bear the strain for the sake of companionship, or finally, seek guidance.

Whether the man chose his wife independently or under the influence of his parents did not seem to affect the success of the marriage. On the other hand, women whose parents influenced their choice of a husband tended to have more successful marriages (61 percent) than those who had made an independent choice (56 percent). If given the chance to choose again, women who would choose a spouse just like the present one tend to have a successful marriage (72 percent) compared to those who would not choose the same spouse again (16 percent). Women in the

4. Ibid., pp. 168ff.

higher income level had a slightly higher tendency to report marital success (63 percent) than the women of the lower income level (58 percent).

There are three types or categories of marriage in which an urban woman can find herself, namely, the religious or church-celebrated union, the civil, and the common-law marriage. The most typical is the religious union solemnized in the Roman Catholic Church. Evidence from the study supports the observation that the income level of respondents is associated with the church-celebrated type of matrimony. Nineteen percent of the marriages began as civil unions and were later celebrated in church. The lower income respondents have a relatively greater proportion of civil and common law unions (24 percent) than do the higher income respondents (3 percent). A reason for this could be that since Filipino cultural traditions place heavy financial burdens on the religious celebrated marriages, the poor tend to resort to other alternatives to avoid spending more than they can afford. In the context of the Filipino family and society, the civil and common law marriages are tolerated but not socially feted. With these types of unions, the poor are able to marry yet not be compelled to assume the accompanying expenses of festive or religious services. Religiously speaking, the lower class urban wife finds herself in a more marginal position than her higher class sisters. The very cultural and economic structure surrounding the church-celebrated marriage seems to exclude more poor from the religious-celebrated union. In the predominantly Catholic Philippines, it is this type of union which is more socially acceptable.

There are two types of situations in marriage which we call special situations. These are: extramarital sexual relations and the keeping of a *querida* or paramour. These practices relate mostly to the domain of the Filipino male. Twenty percent of all respondents in the study reported having engaged in extramarital relations sometime during their marriage. The males outnumbered the females twenty to one in this practice. Thirty-six percent of the males admitted to extramarital sex while only 2 percent of the females did so. The male respondents did not find that their extramarital relations were at variance with their marriage involvement. About 85 percent of them said that their marriages were not in any danger of breaking up and actually the marriages had turned out better than they had expected. The keeping of a *querida* is not

an acknowledged common practice since only 4 percent of the men admitted they were involved in the practice. Only one woman on the other hand reported having an exclusive relationship with another man besides her husband. Extramarital sexual relations and *querida* relationships represent a sensitive area of investigation in Filipino society for which accuracy of the findings might be questionable.

To further determine the attitudes of husbands and wives toward extramarital relations, the respondents were asked what their reactions would be if they discovered their spouse was involved in such a situation. The answers vary by sex. While 88 percent of the female respondents preferred to discuss the matter with their spouse first, only 53 percent of the males would do so. A substantial 47 percent of the males preferred a more "drastic" action such as legal separation, physical intervention, or for some even divorce if such were permitted. Clearly, the urban wife is up against a male "double standard" with regard to extramarital relations; the men engage in it more often than the females, but are less tolerant of wives who might be involved in similar sexual liaisons.

The six experts who were interviewed agreed that marital infidelity and the application of the double standard morality are paramount factors in problem marriages. The Filipino male, they say, exhibits an immature and irresponsible attitude toward marital sex. This leads one of the interviewees to identify it as an "irresponsible male syndrome" which can perhaps be traced to the cultural process of socialization and the lax discipline of adolescent Filipino boys. The experts claim that the frequency of infidelity problems which they come across suggests a troubled or unsatisfying sex life for many couples. The survey showed that although 56 percent have successful marriages and claim satisfying sex relations with the spouse, still more males reported having extramarital relations than females. One observer asserts that women also share the responsibility for many marital sex problems. Although the Filipino wife has a deep sense of loyalty and fidelity, she has many sexual inhibitions or culturally induced psychological attitudes regarding sex relations with her husband. Too many wives assume the mother role and image with the husband which only serves to bring additional barriers to sexual relations.

All marriages must deal with problems, but what are those problems which most affect urban couples? In general, the respondents



saw infidelity, incompatible personalities, and financial difficulties, as the main reasons for marriage break-ups in the Philippines. On the other hand, the main causes for problems within their own marriages, are, in order: finances, difficulties in communication, and incompatible personalities.

Divorce, if this were legalized in the Philippines, is the most drastic of all solutions to an unbearable marriage. The respondents in our sample were questioned about the possibility of a divorce law for the Philippines. More women (65 percent) than men (41 percent) disapproved of the legalization of divorce. The higher the income level of the respondent the more likely he is to approve of divorce. In the light of the facts of women's disapproval of divorce, and keeping in mind the other attitudes of the urban Filipino wife, it seems that the woman represents the stabilizing element of the marriage. She invests the most of herself in the marriage while even taking on double physical strain (market employment and home production) and is more tolerant of the husband's lapses while seeking to preserve the bond for the sake of the children and the home. This sustaining role of the urban Filipino woman would perhaps come into sharper focus among the lower class working mothers.<sup>5</sup> It is not a question here just of recognition to be given but of rights to be realized.

### THE WORKING WIFE

Another important element which could have a very direct effect on marriage harmony is the working mother — the wife who shares the economic burden of the family by full or part-time work for pay outside the household. For the urban Filipino wife of the poor or middle class, this usually means an increase of physical strain. The wife is expected to bear the responsibilities of the household along with employment, a 'double burden.'

A national study completed in 1975 analyzed the situation of the Filipino working mother.<sup>6</sup> She is not an unknown phenome-

5. Besides Martinez-Esquillo's study, see Cristina Montiel and Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner, "The Filipino Woman: Her Role and Status in Philippine Society," (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1976).

6. Emma Porio, Frank Lynch, and Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner, "The Filipino Family, Community, and Nation: The Same Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow?," mimeographed (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1975).

non because 78 percent of more than the three thousand urban and rural respondents of that study knew of mothers who held jobs outside the home. The jobs these women tended to have were within the sphere of "culturally appropriate" occupations for women, namely: teaching, clerical work, and selling.

Generally speaking the fact of a working mother was approved by most of the respondents (75 percent). However, a distinction must be made. The better educated people tended to look less favorably than others on the mother who took an outside job.<sup>7</sup> This is interesting for it seems that there is a concern for mothers working only if the financial situation actually requires her contribution, or if the household duties will permit it. There is not much consideration given to the wife's self-fulfillment or capabilities — she may work, but only if the household situation warrants it. The wife, primarily, finds herself tied to domestic chores. There seems to be an absence of any uneasiness at the thought of a professionally trained mother wasting her talent and years of study by not being employed.<sup>8</sup>

The actual skills held by working mothers give us an insight into the crucial issue of employed women. Though the positions of teachers and office workers which require professional training are more well known in the city, the greater majority of known rural wives are farmers, vendors, service personnel, and handicraft workers, that is, in low skill jobs.<sup>9</sup>

The whole situation of the Filipino working wife is evaluated in the Porio study regarding the revelation of the respondents about their *ideal* for women. Forty-one percent of the respondent group favored the wife staying home and doing housework and related activities. The fact that there are working mothers holding certain positions did not seem very important. Large numbers of the respondents did not consider these positions as desirable for women. Porio assesses the situation of attitudes as an obvious ambivalence, particularly evident in the male attitude.

Is the working mother an increasing reality and growing necessity in the Philippines today? It would seem so. If it is, Porio concludes that the male attitude of viewing the working mother as a

7. Ibid., p. 46.

8. Ibid., p. 47.

9. Ibid., p. 45.

threat to his role of breadwinner is headed toward frustration and will generate tension in the marital union.<sup>10</sup> Not only would the preservation of this attitude be bad economics but also directly discriminatory because more urban, well-educated and talented Filipinas will be seeking self-fulfillment in employment outside the routine of household duties.<sup>11</sup>

But what about the attitude of the women themselves? In the present study, the working mothers were asked about the division of their time and interest between work and family. Sixty percent of these women claimed to still be giving priority to the family even though they keep a steady job. Only 40 percent of the men responded that work did not take away more of their time for the family. Answers varied also by occupation. Among those in the professional category (mostly women teachers), 68 percent held that their work did not interfere with their time and interest for the family. Women in spite of their work claimed they were able to give priority in their time and attention for the family. It seems that the urban Filipina even though she may be involved in an economic pursuit on a par with her husband still feels that her place and responsibility is in the home. It can very well be that she doesn't have any other choice at the moment.

#### DECISION-MAKING IN MARRIAGE

Traditionally, Filipino society with its large and mainly peasant base exhibited patterns of authoritarian behavior in the relationship between parents and their children. Husbands or wives would regularly make the decision (autocratic) depending on what the subject was. There were few syncretic or joint decisions. But a number of recent studies show the dominance at present of the more modern pattern of joint husband and wife decision-making. We ask then: does this pattern show a growing importance or change in the wife's role? Evidence shows that this is not necessarily the case.

The present study concentrated on only two aspects of decision-making: household budget and children's education. A team

10. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

11. See Asuncion J. Marquez, "Why Women Work in the Philippines: A Study of Three Companies," (M.A. Thesis, Ateneo de Manila University, 1959).

deliberation was the determining pattern for both decisions. Though the budget is decided jointly by 52 percent of the respondents, a substantial 43 percent still stated that such decisions were made solely by the wife. Little indication was given by this better-educated urban sample to allocate the budget decisions to the male (a mere 5 percent).

Mendez and Jocano in a study of urban middle-class respondents from Project 3, Quezon City, reported that for the most part decision-making patterns are egalitarian.<sup>12</sup> Among lower class families in Cebu City, Liu and Yu observed that wives were autonomous in money control and disciplining of children.<sup>13</sup> The egalitarian or joint pattern emerged in family economic security, schooling and planning leisure-time activities. Evidence from these studies affirms that the more general pattern is the joint-parental mode rather than authoritarian mode. Porio reported the same findings in their national study.<sup>14</sup> But what about the role of the urban Filipino wife — is it expanding or still bound by traditional concepts? It seems that the latter still holds true.

Among the modern sector respondents — more highly educated, urban residents with high income, the Porio study revealed that these socio-economic characteristics were positively associated with preference for wives and mothers as household treasurers.<sup>15</sup> The conclusion to be drawn is that the tendency to assign this role of household treasurer to women will increase in popularity as modernization increases.<sup>16</sup> The urban Filipino wife is faced with a dilemma. For whatever else she is or will be, she is expected to be more of a housewife!

More recently a study was completed by Martinez-Esquillo on conjugal interaction of working class couples in Metro Manila.<sup>17</sup> She reported that with 67 percent of the couples having both spouses working, husbands showed little or no indication of participating in household activities and decision-making. The joint pat-

12. Paz Policarpio Mendez and F. Landa Jocano, "The Filipino Family in Its Rural and Urban Orientation: Two Case Studies," (Manila: Centro Escolar University Research and Development Center, 1974).

13. William T. Liu and Siok-Hue Yu, "The Lower Class Cebu Family: Preliminary Profile Analysis," *Philippine Sociological Review* 9, 1-2 (1968): 104-23.

14. Porio, Lynch and Hollnsteiner, "The Filipino Family," p. 75.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

17. Martinez-Esquillo, "Conjugal Interaction and Fertility Behavior," cited in note 3.

tern of decision-making was dominant. It is interesting to note that among the activities given as the exclusive participation of the husband in decision-making and performance, was the *providing* of economic support. Those activities which were the exclusive participation of the wife include the *keeping* and *allocating* of family cash. There seems to be little evidence of any expansion of the wife's role in decision-making. The future of the working wife doesn't look very bright. Martinez-Esquillo gives two other striking findings about the husband-wife relationships: 1) there is the apparent determination of most wives to monopolize decision-making and performance of household chores (more husbands who appear willing to participate in household chores than wives who would allow it);<sup>18</sup> 2) wives are more emotionally involved in the marital partnership than husbands.<sup>19</sup>

#### VARIOUS OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS

The opinions of the six interviewed professionals were recorded on: an assessment of the present marriage situation in the Metro Manila area, and opinions about projected divorce legislation for the Philippines. The experts' assessment of the marriage situation revolves around two factors, namely, the interaction between husband and wife, and the situation of women under the law as regards problem marriages.

Referring to the spouses' interaction, the experts emphasized that in the context of modern Filipino society, the realities of marriage center on the following elements: sexual life of the spouses in and out of marriage; intercommunication of spouses; spouses' high child-orientation; and the place of religion in marriage life especially as a strengthening and solidifying element.

- (1) Extramarital relations refer predominantly to the male: most problem marriages which the experts encountered have involved the "undisciplined" sexual life of the husband.
- (2) Communication between spouses: according to the experts, the Filipino male is not oriented to much verbal communication with his spouse; this communication barrier in most marriages makes the husband-wife relationship functional rather than personal.
- (3) The spouses' high child-orientation: the presence of children helps to

18. Ibid., p. 122.

19. Ibid., pp. 128, 157.

stabilize a marriage. In the time of marriage crises, children can be a very important restraining factor for a couple. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said that they would bear with a strained relationship for the sake of their children. There is, however, a negative aspect to this child-orientation which surfaces in some problem marriages. One or both of the spouses give too much attention to the children while neglecting the other spouse and damaging the marital relationship.

- (4) The place of religion in urban married life: The practice of religion is important for the Filipino couple. Often a marriage of spouses with incompatible personalities can continue on the merits of their religious belief. One interviewee observes that the religious element serves as a strengthening and solidifying factor especially among the middle age group with marital problems.

It was noted that couples with problems rarely consult professionals who can help them. When they eventually do consult them, it is usually too late. The cases which come to the courts or to the lawyers for legal solutions are practically beyond repair.

The second part of the experts' assessment of the marriage situation focuses on the ecclesiastical and civil provisions for couples with problem marriages. We will comment on only the civil provisions. They are: the declaration of annulment where the marriage is proven invalid from the beginning; and legal separation.

Let us look at the general condition of the Filipino woman and wife as she is regarded by the Civil Code of the Philippines. A prominent Filipino female lawyer claims that women are directly discriminated against by several provisions of the Civil Code.<sup>20</sup> Montiel and Hollnsteiner, evaluating the present status of the Filipina before the law, give examples of these inconsistencies: 1) the law limits the right of a daughter to validly enter into a marriage to 14 years of age, while a son can contract marriage at 16; 2) a woman's choice of residence is restricted until after her 23rd birthday; 3) the Code on marriage simply passes a daughter from the authority of her parents to that of her husband; 4) a wife is not permitted to gratuitously acquire property or accept gifts except from relatives without her husband's consent; 5) the husband retains the right for serious and valid reasons, to object to his wife's exercise of profession or occupation; 6) the marriage code

20. Irene R. Cortez, "Women's Rights Under the 1973 Constitution," Professorial Chair Lectures, Monograph no. 10 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1975), pp. 13-14.

asserts only the rights of the husband over his wife.<sup>21</sup>

How do women fare in the declaration of nullity cases? Civil courts have narrowly limited the interpretation of invalidating consent to such conditions as insanity, force or fraud. Other weaknesses in the civil code are the automatic validations, and the prescribed time on the filing of an appeal, both of which border on an obstruction of justice for many cases.<sup>22</sup> Usually it is the unsuspecting woman who finds herself in such unfortunate circumstances and not able to appeal for nullity.

Legal separation, which is the other civil provision, does not in the end dissolve the marriage, but merely defines the division of properties and the custody of the children. The experts fully agree that the law discriminates against the female spouse.<sup>23</sup> One respondent claims that "legal separation under our present laws is an exercise in futility." The procedure is costly (both materially and psychologically) and ultimately offers little solution to the broken marriage. Again, it is the woman who most often finds herself in the unfortunate position. Not only are the legal grounds weighted against her but financially she has been so dependent on the spouse that she is hardly in any position to initiate legal proceedings. For the woman who is left to fend for herself and the children, a long and expensive legal battle assumes low priority.

The opinions of the experts interviewed were mostly against any future concessions leading to divorce legislation. Those expressing themselves against divorce cite as satisfactory alternatives: revising the present code to improve the processes of civil annulments and legal separations; and modernizing Domestic Relations Court jurisprudence and eliminating legal discriminations against women. The arguments in favor of divorce refer mainly to these lines of thought: divorce legislation for the Philippines is a political and not a religious issue. The state has a duty to provide

21. Montiel and Hollnsteiner, "The Filipino Woman," p. 26.

22. An example of an automatic validation of marriage would be a woman who continues to cohabit in marriage with a man who had abducted her through force or fear. The very fact of her cohabitation with him after the conditions of the abduction had lapsed validates the otherwise initially voidable marriage.

23. The grounds for legal separation are: adultery on the part of the wife, concubinage on the part of the husband, or an attempt against the life of the other spouse. Concubinage, a more permanent relationship, is more difficult to prove while adultery is established by a single occurrence. No mention is made of abandonment or desertion as grounds.

solutions for those citizens whose marriages have been irretrievably broken so that they can enter into a second civil marriage if they so wish. Moreover, a divorce law would promote equality before the law for women; such a legislation would undercut the legal protection now implicitly granted to the *querida* system and in this sense strengthen the institution of marriage.

Both opinions about divorce, though differing in their desired strategy, express a concern for the unfortunate couple caught in an intolerable marriage. One interviewee echoes the concern of the rest when he says:

If in our teachings there seems to be no possibility to admit changes, we must still find out if there is some way to consider the couples in trouble as exceptional cases and not impose on them inhuman solutions . . . In recent years greater consideration is being given to every human situation. Can't this be the same for marriage?

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can summarize the evidence previously discussed. In our sample, we found that urban wives were more perceptive than males in noticing the shortcomings of their future spouses during the period of courtship. Most courtships lasted for a year or longer. Premarital as well as extramarital sexual activities were predominantly male characteristics while urban wives gave little evidence of such indulgence. This is understandable when we recognize the presence of a double standard of morality in society and other mechanisms at work to keep the Filipina under surveillance. The world of the urban Filipino wife is still limited in spite of evidences that show she can choose her spouse with relative independence from parental influence, pursue the role of a working-mother and enjoy the syncratic mode of decision-making with her husband. The woman's social network is smaller than her husband's and as a working woman only certain types of culturally appropriate jobs are available to her. The substance of her "egalitarian" decision-making is domestic-centered, and when she has a job she still feels her priorities of time and attention must be given to the family. The dominant idea of marriage which is shared by the majority is in the traditional family and children-oriented line. The typical marriage is the church-celebrated type, but chances are that if a woman is from the lower income urban class, she will find herself in a civil or common law union instead.



With regard to the legal aspect, the wife does not figure as a very liberated figure, or even an equal *vis-a-vis* her husband. Serious discriminatory measures are written into the Civil Code and perpetuate the imbalance and injustice to women. A male-dominated society has succeeded in keeping these provisions up to the present. The legal image of the dependent and subservient wife still persists. Only recently have movements been made to correct this situation but, so far, no significant action has been taken. Experts in marriage agree that it is more difficult for a woman to solve a problem marriage through judicial means such as a legal separation. The economic situation of the wife is usually less stable than that of the husband and generally not adequate enough to pursue a lengthy and costly legal process. The wife even finds that the legal grounds for separation are stacked against her in favor of the husband. In spite of their situation, more urban women disapprove of divorce legislation for the Philippines. The women's role emerges as the stabilizing and sustaining element in Filipino marriages. She invests more of herself emotionally and completely in the marital partnership.

The experts observe further that the urban wife is not generally as free as her husband as regards her own views about sexual behavior. Social and cultural pressures have formed her way of thinking and acting. She may have many attitudes which continue to disturb a healthy conjugal relationship with her husband. The wife doesn't fare much better in the male approach to sexuality either. Regardless of the expected monogamous aspect of matrimony (both religious and civil), the *querida* system exists and perhaps more than the survey figures indicate. The married male does not allow his wife to exercise the same sexual freedom in marriage that he enjoys.

In spite of all this, most urban women consider their marriage as having achieved a level of success. Perhaps, it would be wrong to equate the hope for changes for married Filipino women with the liberation from the home and domestic-centered responsibilities as in the West. Considering Filipino society and the realities of marriage for the urban Filipino wife, liberation perhaps should come in the context of the home and the family with the male sharing more of the responsibilities.