

## INTRODUCTION

### **THE FILIPINA LOOKS AT HERSELF** **A Review of Women's Studies** **in the Philippines**

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The present collection of papers describes and delineates the flow and substance of studies on the Filipino woman, as may be gleaned and interpreted from a varied collection of written materials. These documents range from speeches and essays to research reports and bibliographic collections, spanning the years from the latter part of the nineteenth century to the present (1987).

The interpretative chapters are organized to present images of the Filipina in various perspectives — from the standpoint of history and tradition; as wife, mother and worker; and in relation to sociocultural variables found in Philippine society. The references included in each of these chapters are analyzed to discover the roles and characteristics attributed to the Filipino woman in these various contexts. Trends in subject matter, in methodology, and in results are also identified and interpreted to “flesh out” the emerging profiles. The anthology then reproduces materials from the literature which provide the finer contours to the picture of the Filipina, from the early years of the century to the eighties.

To provide perspective to this anthology, this chapter deals with two themes: first, the interplay between social forces (such as the women's movement, social development concerns, academic concerns) and themes of women's studies in the Philippines; second, the portrait painted of the Filipina through different significant periods of this century.

Prior to a discussion of these issues, however, a brief overview of the meaning and development of “women's studies” in contemporary terms is provided below.

## I. Women's Studies and the Women's Liberation Movement

Interest in women as a separate sector, a distinct focus of research and teaching, emerged with the North American movement for women's liberation. As such, the concerns of women's studies in the Western countries are those faced by the movement, and the "subject of research is defined in relation to concepts of women's oppression and their treatment as second-rate citizens underlying the organization of society . . ." (Vogel-Polsky in Supplement #18, n.d., p.4). The ultimate goal of the feminist movement, and of feminist research, is to achieve gender equality within each society.

Given these concerns, women's studies are defined to be "an analysis of the subordinate position of women and the relationship between the division of labor between men and women and social evolution in a broader sense" (Supplement #18, n.d., p.6). In simpler terms, studies on women, from the standpoint of women's liberation, assume that there is unequal power in societies between men and women. Empirical data may then be treated in either of two ways: first, to portray the "social realities" of gender oppression (Supplement #18, n.d., p.6), or, second, to examine knowledge and data from a frame of reference "in which women's different and differing ideas, experiences, needs, and interests are valid in their own right . . ." (Bowles, G. and R. Klein, 1983, p.3).

### *Advocacy as Scholarship*

Inasmuch as the concern for women's studies emerged from a social movement, it is to be expected that feminist scholars fail to depict the traditional "objective" and "impartial" researchers who are "dissociated" from their data. For one, it is usually the case that those who engage in feminist research are individuals committed to the goals of the movement (Papanek, H. 1984), and that they have clearly aligned intentions in pursuing women's studies. Secondly, studies on women should be useful to the movement's action objectives; thus, the advocacy role of the researcher is also priorly defined. Feminist scholars, therefore, generally seek to build a social science which "does not set apart researcher and researched," and instead, strive to produce data with "an impact upon the world" (Bowles, G. and R. Klein, 1983, pp. 37-38).

The action orientation of women's studies places it on a parallel with other social development studies which seek to generate social information useful to

the disadvantaged sectors under study. The desire to bridge the knowledge gap between the student/researcher and the researched group is a common concern of scholars seeking to implement participatory approaches to problems of social equity. These disciplinary trends encourage the testing-out of innovative methods for social research.

### *Methodology of Women's Studies*

Since gender oppression can be expressed in a diverse number of ways, studies on women cannot be confined to any one of the social science disciplines. It is not the sole concern of economics or sociology or psychology, etc. Rather, women's studies, by definition, need to be multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary (Bowles, G. and R. Klein, 1983; and Supplement #18, n.d.).

Another circumstance which contributes to the multi (or inter) disciplinary nature of women's studies is that gender differences and gender relationships stem from changes in social, economic and political structures and processes (Papanek, H., 1984, p. 133). Papanek cites, for example, how modernity in India has increased the demand for the entry of educated women in the labor force, thus altering gender relationships among the educated middle class. Simultaneous with this phenomenon, however, is the other fact that technological innovations have resulted in the loss of earning opportunities for the uneducated women of the lower classes who also fail to compete for new jobs for women requiring new skills. Instead, men (who fail to enter the more lucrative labor market) or machines have taken over the traditional jobs of these lower class women, thus enhancing gender differences in economic activity.

The differential influence of exogenous factors on affected sectors of men and women means that a thorough understanding of gender inequality requires familiarity with these complex events in the social rubric. In this regard, a multidisciplinary perspective is important. Moreover, since women's studies is a relatively new discipline, it still has to fashion its own categories of phenomenon and approaches to investigation. Meanwhile, manifestations of women's oppression are interpreted according to the perspectives of the older social disciplines.

### *Theoretical Perspective*

It was earlier stated that women's studies are premised on an assumption of

gender inequality. Is it then the case that feminist research merely seeks to establish the differences between the sexes in relation to a host of other variables?

The answer of feminist scholars is an emphatic "no." Merely to add knowledge about women to existing knowledge about men still perpetuates "Men's Studies." Such an approach remains androcentric (men-as-the-norm) and assumes that "the environment emits the same signals for men and women" (Bowles and Klein, 1983, pp. 91-99).

To continue, Klein argues:

"Such research . . . ignores the historical perspective, the fact that over millennia women and men have internalized feminine and 'masculine' needs . . . in which he is norm and she is 'the other' (Bowles, G. and R. Klein, 1983, pp. 90-91).

Papanek (1984) postulates that gender differences can be a major variable in examining social change and in assessing its consequences. Social phenomena such as class differentiation, employment, education, and the impacts of technology are better understood in relation to gender. Nonetheless, the simple addition of gender as a variable to models of social change will not lead to new perspectives. Like Klein, she argues:

"The addition of (gender as a) variable is insufficient to reverse the effect of the many unstated assumptions about gender differences and gender relations that are already embedded in the social sciences. Developing new paradigms that incorporate gender will require, as a first step, that these unstated assumptions be exhumed and examined" (Papanek, H. 1984, p. 135).

The theoretical stance of a feminist scholar, therefore, is dialectically linked with her commitments to women's liberation. Women's studies should properly be research *for* women (not research *on* women) and be framed within *her* own experiences, interests, and needs (Bowles, G. and R. Klein, 1983, p. 90). To do so without falling back on androcentric categories and comparisons requires tremendous creativity — both in terms of developing suitable paradigms for analyzing data and in terms of selecting (or evolving) methodologies that are truly feminist in orientation.

These, therefore, are the motives, methods, and philosophy of feminist scholarship. Against this backdrop, women's studies in the Philippines are reviewed in terms of their contents, contexts, intentions and impacts.

## II. Women's Struggle and Women's Studies in the Philippines

The nature of studies about the Filipina is inextricably linked with historical factors in both national and global settings. Key stones in Philippine history which weld together studies of different periods may be described as follows:

1. The movement for women's suffrage in the first quarter of the century;
2. An orientation of objective scholarship among the researchers in the fifties and sixties;
3. The social development strategy of the seventies which attempted to link special programs and interventions to women's felt needs, leading to; and
4. A re-invigorated movement to organize women for the improvement of their situation in Philippine society.

### A. The First Feminist Movement: Struggle for Enfranchisement of Women (1905-1937)

Among the earliest materials written in this century concerning Filipino women, two were published in 1928 and 1934.

The first monograph, entitled *The Development and Progress of the Filipino Women*, was authored by Ma. Paz Mendoza-Guazon, a Filipina who enjoyed the distinction of many "firsts" as a woman. She was the first Filipina to receive a high school diploma from public school, the first woman to graduate as a doctor of medicine, the first to be appointed a lady professor at the University of the Philippines, and the first woman member of the Board of Regents of the same university (P.V. Kalaw, in the Introduction to the book, 1982). She was also the first president of the Liga Nacional de Damas Filipina and the founder of the Philippine Association of University Women, two organizations which led in the struggle for the recognition of the Filipina's right to vote. Thus, Ma. Paz Mendoza-Guazon was a doctor, a wife and mother, a scholar, and a suffragist.

The other book, *The Filipino Women*, was written by Encarnacion Alzona, an eminent historian. Like Dr. Guazon, she was one of the first graduates of the University of the Philippines, and eventually became professor of history in this institution. Dr. Alzona was the first woman delegate of the Philippines to

UNESCO and was the first woman to serve as Chairman of its Subcommittee on the Social Sciences, Philosophy and Human Studies. She was a member of the Philippine Historical Committee, and wrote various books and prize-winning historical articles. When Dr. Alzona wrote her monograph, she was a Barbour Fellow (a *pensionada*) at the University of Michigan. Being an active advocate of women's suffrage, she wrote to prove that the Filipina of the twentieth century was "eminently qualified to hold her place in a modern and intricate society" (Author's Note, 1934). In 1985, Dr. Alzona was cited as a Distinguished National Scientist by the National Academy for Science and Technology. She, too, was an advocate and a scholar at the time of the first feminist movement in this country.

What did these early feminists say about our woman? Both Guazon and Alzona dwelt extensively on the following themes:

1. They gave evidence on the egalitarian nature of gender relationships during Philippine pre-colonial history in social, economic and political activities;
2. They pointed to factors which encouraged the emergence and institutionalization of gender differences during Hispanic rule; and
3. They paid tribute to the reawakening of Filipinas to their civil, political and social rights as twentieth-century educated women.

#### *Changes in the Role and Status of Women*

Women of these islands portrayed in the pre-colonial period enjoyed enormous rights and privileges. They became rulers over the barangays, acted as priestesses and even as military leaders. Women participated fully in economic life and were artisans, craftswomen and livestock raisers. Marriages were generally monogamous and either partner could dissolve a problematic relationship. Wives retained their maiden names and were consulted by their husbands on contracts and agreements. In matters of inheritance, legitimate sons and daughters received equal shares while wives retained half of the conjugal property. Thus, women were regarded as equal to men and received protection from the laws of their society.

The intrusion of European androcentric values altered the position of women in society. Government was then perceived as the domain of men.

Educational opportunities became uneven and "schooled" women were taught Christian doctrine, some reading and writing skills (enough to do prayers) and a lot of needlework. Women often aspired to be teachers, nuns or spinsters. In economic life, women contributed to the export trade earnings of Spain through their retail businesses. Some women also helped in the administration of farms.

Marriages remained monogamous but divorce was prohibited. Spouses could legally separate but could not remarry. Spanish law deprived wives of "their right to dispose of their paraphernal properties, to engage in business without the husband's consent, and to hold any public office except the office of teacher" (Alzona, p. 39). Instead, Filipino women were encouraged to be devout, to do charitable work and to avoid politics.

The advent of the Revolution and the American colonial period modified the status and roles of Filipina women anew. The most dramatic change, however, occurred in their education. Whereas Spanish educational policy sought to confine women to home arts, the more progressive American educational philosophy opened the doors to tertiary education for young women. Thus, women could become professionals (doctors, lawyers, nurses, etc.) and were no longer restricted to the teaching profession. They became active in civic affairs, from rendering assistance to impoverished mothers, organizing puericulture centers, working with out-of-school youth and prisoners, to lobbying for Philippine independence and for women's suffrage.

#### *Factors Which Influenced the Feminist Movement*

In retrospect, the advent and development of the Filipino women's struggle for enfranchisement may be traced to three factors: (1) opportunities which allowed the Filipina to be active outside the sphere of her home; (2) the influence of feminist ideas from abroad; and (3) greater confidence in herself as a person and as a member of society.

From Alzona's account, the first advocate of women's suffrage in the Philippines was Apolinario Mabini who drafted a constitution which gave "female taxpayers who have attained the age of 21 years . . . the right to vote for public office" (Alzona, p. 67). However, his constitution was not adopted, and the one approved by the Malolos Congress was silent on suffrage for women. Neither did the women in the revolutionary movement aspire for this right.

In 1905, an American anti-imperialist, Mr. Fiske Warren, was reported to have suggested to a young Filipina, Concepcion Felix, that a political party be organized in order to work for the enfranchisement of women. Felix rejected the idea because, as she saw it, the Filipina was still unprepared to use the ballot. She nonetheless founded an association devoted to social welfare work, and which encouraged the appointment of women to school boards. This was to be known as the *Asociacion Feminista Filipina*, which later changed its name to *La Gota de Leche*.

Later, in 1912, feminist Mrs. Carrie Catts, an American, and Dr. Aletta Jacobs, a Dutchwoman, spoke before Filipino women to attract their interest in suffrage, but, again the response was not enthusiastic. Nevertheless, another association of women was formed which also engaged in social work. This was the precursor of the *Manila Women's Club*.

Thus, although no Filipina had, by this time, spoken for enfranchisement, many educated women joined in associations engaged in civic and charitable work. Inevitably, these activities drew the Filipina away from home, children and husband, and swept her into situations wherein she was encouraged to take interest in public and political affairs and to use her talents and education for the country's welfare.

While women were engaged in these civic activities, many politicians spoke for the benefits of female suffrage, including Rafael Palma, a member of the Senate, and Manuel L. Quezon, President of the Commonwealth. In 1919, women finally endorsed the move in the Philippine Legislature to enfranchise women. At the same time, they conducted a massive and continuous educational campaign through newly-founded women's associations to convince other Filipinas of the merits of suffrage. Pro-suffrage groups at this time included the *Liga Nacional de Damas Filipinas*,\* the *National Federation of Women's Clubs*, the *Women's Citizen League*, and the *Philippine Association of University Women*.

Finally, in 1936, the newly-framed Philippine Constitution provided that "the National Assembly shall extend the right of suffrage to women, if in a plebiscite . . . no less than 300,000 women . . . should vote affirmatively on the question"

\* National League of Filipino Women

(Alzona, p. 95). The women, encouraged by this move, renewed and intensified their educational campaign for suffrage. When the plebiscite was held on April 30, 1937, 447,725 women voted "yes" to suffrage — more than a hundred thousand votes beyond the required margin. This won for the Filipina, after 20 years of struggle, the right to cast her ballot on election time.

### *Feminist Demands of Working Women*

Much of what have been written about the efforts of Filipino women in the first half of this century concern the suffrage movement, less is known about the situation of working women. Yet, evidences which show that many women were in the labor force are slowly emerging. In a recently completed work (Camagay, 1986), it was documented that in the late 19th century, a sizable number of women had worked outside of their homes. Their livelihood included work as *criadas* (domestic helpers), *maestras*, *matronas* (midwives), *cigarreras*, buyers, *bordaderas* and *sinamayeras*. Historical records also show that gender discrimination existed even then. For instance, *maestras* received lower wages than *maestros*. Women also suffered sexual harassment from their male *amos* (masters), and even from the *frailes* (friars). Mention was also made that women in the tobacco industry, in the latter years of the 19th century, held strikes (or *alborotos*) to demand for better working conditions.

In 1918, the Philippine census counted about 700,000 women engaged in various industrial pursuits, including work done at home (e.g. weaving, dressmaking, embroidery, hatmaking, shoemaking, and laundry). Alzona also reports that by 1930, more than 8,000 women were employed in various industrial establishments, 3,000 of whom were members of labor organizations.

Evidence of the activity of organized labor activities are also included in the literature. For one, an Act was passed in 1927 which required employers to provide seats for women workers and to install separate "closets and lavatories" for men and women. (Alzona, 1937). In 1930, a grassroots women's organization (*Liga ng Kababaihang Filipina*),\* was founded (Del Rosario, Chapter Four). It fought for suffrage and for the improvement of the rights of working women. Most likely, these women joined male workers, in 1936, in a series of demonstrations which demanded for "equal pay for equal work" among men

\* League of Filipino Women

and women, the prohibition of child labor, and for the free education of the children of the poor (*Tribune Manila*, 1936).

Hence, pensionadas were not alone in the struggle for women's rights at this time. While educated women advocated political rights, working women worked at their side for suffrage and for the upliftment of their own economic conditions.

### B. The Post-War Years (1945-1970): Studies on Women

Literature on the Filipino woman in the generation following the Second World War may be characterized in three ways:

One, as anecdotal materials (usually appearing in magazines and journals) which either extolled the virtues of the Filipina, or exhorted her to do more for the home and for the nation;

Two, they included sociopsychological conceptualizations, experiments and field observations of the roles, statuses, values, attitudes and aspirations of Filipino women (usually in contrast to those of Filipino men);

Three, there was a surfeit of socioanthropological observations on marital and family relationships, including decision-making processes, power and authority dynamics, and child-rearing practices (see listing in Angangco et al. 1980). Few articles were written about feminist views, and most of these were autobiographical and retrospective accounts of the earlier suffrage movement (Kalaw, 1952; Castrence, 1957; and Subido, 1955).

#### *Dissection of the Post-War Filipina*

Certain common themes emerge from the collection of women's studies in thirty years following the Second World War.

The first theme revolves around a confirmation by feature writers, feminists, and scholars alike that the Filipina's main concern is maintaining a well-knit and orderly family. For instance, Nakpil (1962) asserted that the Filipina has the best of both worlds. She makes man believe that she is pliant and submissive, therefore keeping him happy, while unobtrusively asserting her own desires, thereby fulfilling herself. Pecson (1957), while presenting the platform of the Civic Assembly of Women in the Philippines, stressed the dual role of the Filipina as nation-builder and as homemaker. Flores (1968) reported that

working wives were beset by household problems. In interviews with these women, they expressed various apprehensions:

"Husbands get upset when their clothes are not darned properly. They feel neglected."

When the house is not in order, the children not dressed neatly and the meals not prepared correctly, wife gets jittery and self-conscious because she is aware that her husband is not happy about the situation. "In-laws and . . . parents criticize women leaving homemaking to the servant" (Flores, 1969).

Orosa (1963) ventured to give practical advice to Filipino housewives on how the objectives of Rizal's *La Liga Filipina* could be implemented in their families. These objectives of fostering family unity, patriotism, education and the application of reforms, in her way of thinking, could be achieved if women acted as partners of their husbands in the home, if they exercised thrift and economy, and by patronizing local products and local markets.

Domingo (1961), Nurge (1965), and Nydegger (1966) did anthropological observations of child-rearing practices in various Philippine communities. They confirmed that Filipino women spent a lot of time on work related to the household and that an important aspect of motherhood centered on child care. Filipino parents were observed to be over-protective of children and reinforced sex-related behaviors. Thus, girls were trained to assist their mothers in household chores and in baby-sitting while pre-adolescent boys were slowly integrated into farm-related activities.

In her analysis of the gamut of studies on the woman and the family, Sevilla infers that the "ideal wife" in Philippine literature is:

"a loving and loyal mate to her husband; she is responsible for keeping the marriage intact by her patience, hard work, submission, and virtue. Aside from whatever outside employment she may hold, she is also expected to be a diligent housekeeper and budgets the money (for) family and household needs. The husband has the larger voice in decisions involving the family. He is not expected to do household chores, except for occasional repairs to allow time for more 'manly' activities like relaxing, drinking, and socializing with friends outside the home" (Sevilla, 1986).

The second theme which emerges from most of the studies of this period dwells on the increasing assertiveness and expressiveness of the Filipina, as opposed to her caricature as a passive and inarticulate maiden in Hispanic times. This change in gender character is often attributed to the "positive" influences which American education and culture provided our women.

Benavides (1958) reiterates the views forwarded earlier by Guazon and Al-

zona that the Filipina has undergone changes in her status and roles through history and she emphasized how the American educational system helped open greater horizons for the modern Filipina through opportunities for higher education. Nakpil (1952) pursues a similar thesis in describing "The Filipino Woman," and attributes the complexity of her character to the influences of pre-colonial and colonial cultures: while Spanish culture produced a "shy, diffident, and puritanical Filipina," American influence "gave her independence of character" (as annotated in Angangco et al. 1980). Similar observations are given by Isidro (1969), Castrence (1951), and Laureta (1951).

The third outlook on women which is derived from materials of the 50s and 60s concerns man-woman distinctions and relationships. Many available literature on this topic, moreover, are social science researches.

In general, the various studies describe how early socialization fosters gender differentiation among Filipino children (Domingo, 1961; and Flores, 1969). Not surprisingly, therefore, boys and girls manifested sex-related behaviors and even occupational preferences (Castillo, 1961; Flores, 1969; Gonzales, 1969; and CYRC, n.d.).

Socialization in sex roles resulted in particular role expectations from men and women. Women who ventured to go into career work were either lauded or castigated. Amor (1966) believed, for instance, that a working mother courted alienation from her children and neglected her "traditional role of fostering a happy and healthy family atmosphere" (in Angangco et al. 1980, p. 35). Castañeda (1953) averred that "the participation of women in industry has adverse effects on the welfare and progress of society" (p. 22), while Benito (1952) expressed concern over the negative effects on men's employment resulting from women's work. Vice-versa, Arceo-Ortega (1963) and Nakpil (1963) commended the Filipina career woman, who is able to fulfill herself through her work while helping augment family income, and remained "a tolerant wife and a good mother" (in Angangco et al. 1980, p. 75).

Men's views on the changing roles of the Filipina are also documented (Flores, 1969; Castillo and Guerrero, 1965). Husbands of women in the professions tended to be supportive of their working wives, especially if their earnings were economically rewarding. They perceived each other as "partners," and shared in most decisions concerning family affairs. Nonetheless, husbands continued to be perceived as the ones who should be concerned with public and national affairs, while wives (after work) should look after their homes and

children. Critical decisions in the family were also made by the husbands.

Thus, women's power in the home was exercised to the extent that she was in charge of the children's activities, household budget, and routinary affairs related to household tasks. Decisions related to the children's education, family savings and recreational activities were shared with the husbands. In cases where the wives worked, they expressed readiness to give up their occupations if their husbands and children's welfare needed more of their time (Sevilla, 1986).

#### *Scientific Objectivity in Women's Studies*

The bulk of research literature spawned in the 24 to 30 years described by this section used methods and analytic perspectives popular at the time.

The scholars of this generation, especially those in the universities, were usually schooled in American scientific tradition and adopted the objectivity-in-research values spawned by empiricism. In addition, the framework and variables used in examining American culture were used as "standards" for studying Philippine society. Thus, surveys, anthropological and psychological studies were employed to obtain information concerning the extent to which the Filipina, her husband and children were similar or different from men and women in "modernizing" societies. In interpreting the amassed information, researchers chose to remain "close to their data" rather than to develop theoretical frameworks, or to draw a comprehensive picture of Philippine society.

Hence, descriptive studies were generalized on this level and were sometimes compared to other materials with similar objectives. No conscious effort was made to transcend data in order to make statements concerning the impacts of observed gender role on women's rights and potentials. Proposed ways to improve woman's position in society were generally found in articles divorced from data, as in magazine and literary articles, and maintained the view that the Filipino woman should seek a balance between her role as homemaker and her fledgling aspirations for professional fulfillment.

The objectivity stance of social science during this period made women the objects of research, and the amassed information did very little for her. Thus, while previous scholars had earlier applauded the Americans for their role in uplifting women's educational status, the American influence on social science during this generation served to camouflage gender discrimination in Philip-

pine society and failed to provide the impetus for advancing women's rights.

### *Continuing Action for Women's Rights*

Materials pertaining to the women's movement were scant, and therefore provide few insights about the continuing feminist struggle during the 50s and 60s.

In a recent publication of the NCRFW, it was reported that women in the immediate postwar period felt the need for a duly-organized women's group to ensure the coordination and consolidation of women's efforts for the continuity of their action programs for more effective results (NCRFW, 1985). Hence, in 1947, the existing organizations banded together into the "Women's Civic Assembly of the Philippines," later renamed the Civic Assembly of Women in the Philippines (CAWP). The CAWP acted as an umbrella organization for different groups: the Girl Scouts of the Philippines, the National Federation of Women's Clubs, Catholic Women's Club, and the Rural Improvement Club.

Through the years, the CAWP has been engaged in educational activities (family life, health, livelihood) and in other social welfare and public affairs affecting women.

Tarrosa Subido (1955) also provides information on the continuing activities of the feminists following the grant of suffrage in 1937. From her book, it appears that feminism sought expression through women's participation in politics.

In Philippine politics, following the passage of the Women Suffrage Law, several women won seats as mayors and councilwomen. In 1947, President Roxas invited the CAWP to participate in the Independence Day ceremonies, and more women consequently found themselves in responsible positions within government. Women's groups likewise aligned themselves with political parties, such as the Women's Auxiliary of the Liberal Party and the Women's Mag-saysay-for-President Movement.

Subido also credits the efforts of the older feminist groups and newer women's associations for the passage of legislations favorable to women. These include among others: The Charity Sweepstakes Bill (to subsidize welfare agencies); Paraphernal Property Law (empowering a married woman to dispose freely of her paraphernal property); Women and Child Labor Laws; and, most importantly, the passage of the New Civil Code in 1950, which removed or

modified an antiquated provision adopted from the Civil Code of Spain that restricted the affairs of married woman. At the time she wrote her book, women's groups were lobbying for the creation of juvenile and domestic courts, a bureau for women and children and further improvements in the Election Code. Since then, these recommendations have been implemented.

The cleavage between feminists of the fifties and sixties and women scholars of the period may partly be responsible for the scarcity of materials on women's advocacy during this period. It also explains why most of the documented gains were in social services, law and politics (the women activists were engaged in these concerns) rather than in the social, cultural or economic spheres of the Filipina's life.

### C. The Development Decade: The Seventies

The decade of the seventies generated new views of society and social responsibilities brought about by the increasing polarization of developed and underdeveloped economies. Many so-called "Third World" countries emerged as newly-liberated states (freed from colonialism), but found themselves in dire need of social, economic and political reforms.

The consultative process for development became a mandate among the developing and underdeveloped nations since past experiences showed that a 'felt needs' strategy and 'popular participation' were critical for the success of developmental programs. Aware of the explosive possibilities of these new outlooks for development, the countries of the First World geared to retain their influence over former colonies by offering "development aid." Thus, foreign assistance poured into Third World countries for infrastructure improvement, for social innovations in technologies and institutions, and for social development research.

The low regard for women's position in many traditional societies was observed by the United Nations in the early 70s that it passed a resolution declaring the year 1975 as the International Women's Year, and the next 10 years as the International Decade for Women.

The goals of the Declaration were threefold:

1. To promote equality between men and women;



2. To support the integration of women in the total; economic, social and cultural development effort; and
3. To recognize the contribution of women to the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation among nations and to the strengthening of world peace.

#### *The Focus of Women-in-Development Studies*

In the Philippines, the government assumed the position that overpopulation, poverty and unemployment were restraining factors to its development as a modern industrializing nation. Hence, it was important that systematic steps be taken to reduce family size, to generate income, and to create employment. It was in this context that many new studies on the Filipina were undertaken.

Altogether, studies which aimed to examine the conditions of women in relation to their development are called Women-in-Development Studies.

#### *Conditions Related to Women's Participation in Development*

The plethora of social science techniques for social research helped considerably in generating a substantial body of literature on women during the seventies. The Filipina was studied from all angles, and her portrait differed drastically from the old caricature of simpering Maria Clara.

What new image of the Filipina emerged?

To begin with, the new wave of studies showed clearly that the Filipino woman was not a unitary being. Rather, her characteristics and situation in life were affected by a plurality of variables (Bautista, 1986). Castillo re-evaluated the average statistical observation concerning women by presenting diversities brought about by geographical origins, marital status, labor force participation and other social factors (1976). A similar approach was used by Aleta, Silva and Eleazar (1977) when they reconstructed the Profile of Filipino Women on the basis of sketches drawn by different researchers.

Among the many observations derived from these studies are the following:

1. Women tend to have fewer children if they live in rural and agricultural communities, marry early, work only at home and live in nuclear

- households. However, children were valued by most women who usually had more children than they originally planned to have.
2. Men and women in the Philippines are at par in terms of literacy and educational attainment. However, there are sex differences in career aspirations.
  3. In 1975, women made up a third of the labor force, with a greater proportion coming from rural areas. However, while the absolute size of the female labor force increased over the years, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) of women declined over a 20-year period, especially for rural women. Educational attainment was also found to be related to LFPR of women, and certain occupations were more feminized than other. Thus, women were frequently found in services (as domestic helpers), in professional, technical and sales
  4. Almost half of the women in the labor force, are married. Nevertheless, about a third of single working women stopped to work after marriage, and married working women would stop if their husbands earned enough for the family.

While a considerable number of conducted researches dealt with the abovementioned factors, an almost equal volume of studies were devoted to other concerns. \* Other studies analyzed the conditions of women's lives in terms of the following factors: LFPR and fertility; fertility and family decision making; migration and employment; the status, roles and problems of specific sectors (e.g. rural women, tribal women; working women in professions); profile of women's participation in development programs; legal status of women; and women in public/political affairs. (See Angangco, 1980, for a partial list of bibliography)

Another important finding from the WID studies reveals, in most cases, that Filipinas were content with their lot and accepted the traditionally ascribed roles of home makers (Castillo, 1976; Montiel and Hollnsteiner, 1976; Licuanan and Gonzales, 1976; Aleta et al. 1977; and Manalang, 1983).

Over the years, from one generation to the next till the seventies, Filipinos were socialized into the firm belief that womanhood was equated with home,

\* Unfortunately, a more thorough discussion on the field of women's studies during the Development Decade is not possible in this paper.

husband and children. Even work was secondary to this concern. The normative force of this view is best seen in the prescribed law that "the husband is responsible for the support of the wife" while "the wife manages the affairs of the household" (Romero, 1977).

More recently, a study commissioned by the NCRFW discovered that women from various Philippine regions still clung to "pre-modern" values (UPS-CE-NCRFW, 1984). Manalang attributes the findings to the Filipina's orientation for home and family. Instead of many life worlds, they have one principal life world; their definition of reality are focused on the family and its survival; they take their identity from being mothers and wives . . . Nor do they distinguish between a public and a private life (Manalang, 1984, p. 13).

Eviota (1978) reacted to this gender role with alarm and argued that housekeeping isolated women from public affairs, thereby diminishing the scope of their social power to effect meaningful changes for themselves. This role, moreover, obscured the possibility of organizing them for feminist goals:

"Identification with one's own sex and alliances based on shared interests, similar personal needs, and the same grievances against men are often perceived by women as outside the framework of household responsibilities and as conflicting with the traditional female role. (This) is aggravated by the belief that Providence ordains that their place is beside their husbands. Thus, women have an apparent moral justification for refusal to acknowledge female solidarity" (Eviota, 1978, p. 154).

These findings, therefore, emphasize that women require alternative roles which will dissipate their efforts away from household chores in order to take direct interest in their development (Makil, 1981; Aleta et al. 1977; and Eviota, 1978).

A real contribution of the WID studies is found in the development of innovative measures of women's contributions to society (Castillo, 1976; Illo, 1985; and Miralao, 1980).

Miralao's findings (1980) demonstrated how an analysis of the use of time by men and women can shed new information on their contributions to household and economic activities. Measures of effort or time-inputs, for instance, showed that in many comparisons, women's total production time is higher than that of men.

Illo arrived at the same conclusion using a different measure (1985). In her analysis, the value of woman's production is seen to be higher than that of man's if one were to consider the production of use values as the criterion rather than

the generation of exchange values. In this conceptualization, women's activities in the home (cooking, child care, etc.) are given values in the same way that man's farm labor inputs are evaluated.

### *The Impact of WID Studies*

1. Earlier, it was stated that the rationale for WID Studies was to generate information so that these may provide the benchmarks for developmental policies and social instrumentations. As a result, many government agencies engaged in programs or projects geared especially to the needs of women. For example, livelihood projects were spearheaded by the NCRFW, the Rural Improvement Clubs, and other women's organizations in order to provide additional sources of income to women and thereby also draw them out of the confinement of household work. On the legal front, legislative and codal reforms were drafted, proposed and enacted, such as an improved Child and Youth Welfare Code, and specific provisions protecting women workers in the Labor Code (NCRFW, 1980; UP-IIR Workshop on Women, 1986). Too, skills training and literacy programs were initiated by women's groups, while an intensive population control program was launched in order to provide married women with a broader latitude in defining their family aspirations (Aleta, 1977; NCRFW, 1984).

2. Despite these moves, both the Official Country Report on the Achievements of the Decade for Women and the NGOs' Alternative Country Report point to the continuing problems of Filipino women in various sectors. Likewise, feminists find the WID framework inadequate because it focused on "efficient development which implies simply the infusion and increased productivity of 'neglected sources' such as women" (Salinas and Liamson, 1985). Hence, questions of gender relationships in the home and work place have not been addressed. Alternative employment strategies have also failed because women have not been relieved of their household chores. Instead, the economic crisis has led to further degradation of women, who have been lately used as cheap sources of labor in garments and electronics manufacturing (Del Rosario, 1985), and as cheap entertainers for foreign tourists on sex tours (Dela Cruz, 1985).

3. In addition to these impacts, the WID efforts have opened the vistas for further efforts in women's studies in two ways.

First, the women scholars who have sought to describe and understand the situation of the Filipina have, to a great extent, become feminized. A greater appreciation of women's conditions (as women) has emerged, as evidenced by innovative approaches to the study of the woman question (Illo, 1985 and Miralao, 1980) and explicit recommendations that women must seek public exposure and organize into associations with common goals in order to advance their positions in society (Eviota, 1978; and Castillo, 1985).

Second, the fine details on the situation of women which the research literature provided in the seventies has also been useful to feminist groups who are now able to reinterpret these informations within their own frameworks for action (PWRC, 1985). Moreover, women's groups have started to use research tools themselves as an instrument for educating and organizing various women's sectors.

Unlike the situation in the earlier period, therefore, the developmental concerns of the seventies served to draw out the gender issue in Philippine society through research and analysis. This situation helped to build new alliances between scholars and advocates of women's rights.

#### D. The Eighties

##### *The Impact of Development on Women*

Del Rosario calls women studies in the eighties as Impact of Development on Women (IDW) Studies. These investigative efforts have found expression in various forms including (1) situationers on the conditions of women in specific sectors, like female migrant workers, women in industry, or women in agriculture (PWRC monograph series # 1, 1985); (2) case studies of women in various localities and circumstances (Pagaduan et al. 1986; Bautista et al. 1986; Cooke, 1986; Samonte; and Carlota, 1987); (3) comparative studies of women within different geographic regions (Castillo, 1985; and Illo, 198\_), and (4) critiques or assessments of national development outlooks and strategies in terms of their impacts on women (Maranan, 1985; PWRC, 1985; and Illo, 1985).

IDW studies note the following conditions of women resulting from 'development':

1. Scholars and women organizers alike point out that the introduction of

modern technologies and ameliorative programs during the 70s have not diminished poverty in the nation. On the contrary, researches demonstrate that in many instances, these developments have increased the gap between the classes. They have even marginalized the status of women further.

In agriculture, Castillo (1985) and Bautista (1986) stress that new farm technologies have been designed primarily for men. Thus, while mechanization of rice production reduces total labor requirements, more females than males, in fact, have been displaced. In Bulacan, Bautista and her associates observe that women's participation in rice production had become generally confined to weeding, reaping, and stacking since women's traditional tasks — transplanting, harvesting, and threshing — had been skipped altogether, taken over by the men, and become mechanized, respectively.

Apart from these, a new activity called *pamamagpag* has evolved from the use of the mini-thresher, which is performed solely by women. It involves the catching of stray hay and grains churned out by the machine. Whatever the women collect are used for home consumption. Gender ideology deepens the problem since owner-cultivation state a bias for hiring male farm laborers who are "stronger than women."

Maranan (1986) amply discusses the failure of two economic programs of the Marcos administration to improve the conditions of women. She posits that the *Balikatan sa Kaunlaran* (BSK) Movement and the *Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran* (KKK) Program failed for five reasons: 1) unreasonable interest and conditions on loans; 2) inappropriateness of targeted livelihood programs for the concerned women; 3) lack of consultative mechanisms; 4) political considerations, and 5) traditional patronage practices.

Del Rosario (1985) demonstrates how the export industrialization program of the New Society led to the degradation of female labor in the Philippines. Women were enticed to enter the labor market for garment manufacture, textiles and electronics. They were given minimum wages, exposed to substandard working conditions, and, as in the Export Processing Zones, were discouraged from unionizing. Apart from factory work, many other Filipinos serviced the export-oriented economy as domestic outworkers — women working at home without minimum wages, labor organizations, or regulated work hours. Export industrialization has therefore, not helped dignify the work of women; rather it has cheapened and abused their contribution to the Philippine economy.

2. An inadequate understanding of women's role in production has resulted in development programs favorable to men.

To begin with, gender ideology identifies men as "household heads" rather than men and/or women, and assumes that the principal breadwinner and decision maker in the household is the male (Illo, 1985). This discrimination has created broad implications for women.

The household head is described as the "person responsible for the organization of the household . . . (and who) usually provides the chief source of income" (NCSO, 1975, quoted by Illo, 1985). Studies have consistently demonstrated the critical role of women in production decisions (Castillo, 1985; Illo, 1983; and Bautista et al. 1986, among others), as well as the fact that many Filipino households are supported by the income contributions of either or both spouses and even of their children. Thus, the gender bias for males as household heads denigrates the actual role of women in the control and support of their families, and consigns them to "secondary earners" (Maranan, 1985). In consequence, the procedures for seeking development assistance, like loans, training on new methods and skills, and participation in organizations, are earmarked for males, and women are considered as second-priority or (worse) as mere proxies for disabled husbands, fathers or brothers.

Technological developments, as mentioned in the earlier section, have also tended to favor men. The new production technologies have considerably diminished women's contribution to production while it increased labor use in typically male activities such as land preparation and fertilization (Castillo, 1985; and Bautista et al. 1986). In industry, women are engaged primarily in services, wholesale and retails trades, which require traditional skills or simple technologies, while men are in transportation, storage, communications, mining, and quarrying industries (Facts and Figures, 1985).

Development strategies have also been biased towards organizing males — be they peasants, fishermen, landless workers, industrial workers, or other segments of the disadvantaged class (Pagaduan et al. 1986; Bautista et al. 1986; and Illo, 1985). The preconditions for these have already been discussed. However, the limits set on mobilizing women for skills training, work and organized action have dire consequences on their development as persons and as a collective. Ultimately, it restricts the women's outlook and attitude towards the community and society, and reinforces their domestication. Thus, the "double

(or triple) burden" is borne as a "fact of life," rather than questioned and unloaded.

3. Development programs have failed to minimize the domestication of women. The various researches consistently point to the persistence of traditional values concerning women's roles.

- a. In 1983, 54% of unpaid family workers were women while only 31% of own-account workers or wage/salary workers were of this sex (Facts and Figures . . . 1985). Empirical evidence related to these statistics are provided in the literature.
  - b. Technological developments and export industrialization deepen the double burden of women. Bautista and Dungo describe how the women in Bulacan, who tend to farm production also tend to household chores (1986). In addition, technology has relegated them to do marginalized tasks meant to be extensions of the domestic responsibility to "make ends meet." In industry, the double day is also still apparent. In fact, it is a deterrent to the politicalization of women workers (del Rosario, 1985).
  - c. Sexual politics pervade relations between men and women. Sexual harassment is not uncommon in places of work (de la Cruz, 1985). It has also become the tool of the militarized government to 'punish' male offenders and to subjugate progressive females (Pagaduan et al. 1986). Orozco (1983) also notes that the Labor Code has limited the maternity benefits of female workers, thus cheapening her contributions to society through her reproductive role. Gender discrimination creeps as well into hiring and firing policies for women which Maranan (1985) describes to be "the last to be hired and the first to be fired."
4. The fruits of development are unevenly distributed among women of different socioeconomic classes.

Although national development programs are meant to bridge the rich-poor gap, the reality is that more underprivileged groups unable to cross the poverty line. For instance, it has been shown that new agricultural technologies favor better-off men and women (Pagaduan et al. 1986). The landless workers (especially landless women workers) have most seriously been displaced by mechanization and new production technologies (Illo, 1983; and Castillo, 1985). Again, in industry, it is seen that wage levels are lowest for lowly-skilled jobs re-

quiring minimum education. These are usually occupied by women (Maranan, 1985; del Rosario, 1985; and Facts and Figures . . . 1985).

The harshest observation that can be made on class differences in gender exploitation, however, is in the increasing commoditization of poor Filipinas — as prostitutes, “economic refugees,” or “mail-order brides” (Samonte and Carlota, 1987; David and dela Cruz, 1985; and Orozco, 1985). The attraction of these fairly lucrative “occupations” is apparent, especially when viewed from the perspective of an underemployed domestic outworker, a machine sewer, a landless peasant woman, a lowly paid teacher or a saleslady. Unfortunately, the government and the media have conspired to depict a rich environment for women’s commoditization in this country, as in the encouragement of services for tourism, a systematic program for the export of manpower, and media play-up on the attractiveness of the “submissive and loving Filipina” who is touted to be a good homemaker to boot.

The popular opinion that Filipinas are not an aggrieved sex in Philippine society, therefore, is largely untrue. In fact, social mobility, prestige and power are enjoyed only by the educated Filipina, which in 1985, meant eight percent of the population who had gone through tertiary education, and who have the opportunity to be (by choice) executives, managers, and professional workers (see Facts and Figures . . . 1985).

### *The Impact of Research on Women’s Development*

The increasing exchange of ideas between women scholars and activists during the decade of the eighties has enriched both knowledge and action concerning the Filipina.

Research, on the one hand, has helped to clarify the sources of gender exploitation in this society (as in Maranan, 1985; and PWRC monographs, 1985). Studies have pointed to three factors which are responsible for women’s oppression: gender inequality, class domination, and national subservience to foreign interests (PWRC, 1985). On this basis, the feminist movement in the present decade chooses to struggle for the improvement of women’s rights along these three dimensions. The Philippine Women’s Research Collective which evolved in 1985, formulated a framework for the women’s movement in the country in order to assess the situation of women in different circumstances:

“A women’s movement which ignores national and class questions will remain limited, ineffectual and isolated from . . . the motive forces which are the sources of structural change. On the other hand, a women’s movement which permits the relegation of women’s issues to the background is in fact delaying or negating the full liberation and empowerment of women — an end . . . attained (by) the final uprooting of ideas and institutions which perpetuate inequality between the sexes . . .”

On the other hand, the movement for women’s rights has opened the eyes of scholars to the validity of organizing goals for women. Gelia Castillo (1985), one of the country’s foremost researchers, and awarded the National Scientist in 1986, observed:

“ . . . experiences point out the untapped potentials of women . . . as farm managers, entrepreneurs, organizers and leaders. What do we need to do to allow these potentials to blossom?”

“ . . . in our organizational efforts for agricultural projects, the door must be left wide open for the entry of women . . . as leaders, organizers and trainers.”

These views have been echoed by younger social scientists, like Jeanne Illo, Cynthia Bautista, and Nanette Dungo. Their observations describe that women, when given the chance, are effective leaders in production, irrigation and credit organizations. Thus, they, too, propose that grassroots organizations of women should be formed so that they may “discuss ways and means of making ends meet and effect the programs they come up with.” (Bautista et al. 1986).

Similarly, del Rosario (1985) bats for increasing the opportunity of women workers to organize themselves:

“The foremost task of industrial women workers, especially those working in export-oriented industries controlled by TNCs, is to unionize . . . Women workers, despite their double burden, must exert effort, spend time in union activities, and support and attend mass activities which truly uphold their interests . . .”

The emerging scholarship on women has also become an arena for innovations in research, primarily represented by a movement away from a strictly quantitative method, and toward (1) thematic analysis of “the state-of-the art,” (2) in-depth analysis of material manifestations of gender ideology, and (3) exploratory research.

The previously-cited studies of Illo (1983 and 1985) and Castillo (1985) represent state-of-the-art researches which elevate data to meaningful concepts regarding gender relationships. The pamphlets of David and de la Cruz (1985) and of Orozco (1985) present detailed analyses of gender images and values evoked by print media, television and cinema. Meanwhile, Samonte and Car-

lota attempt to infer the values of men and women through their personal advertisements in newspapers (1987). Beyond these developments, the new thinking in the eighties has led to the rise of participatory research in women's studies. Using this approach, women organizers combine investigative and educative techniques to: (a) broaden their knowledge pertaining to the problems and perspectives of particular women's groups; (b) make the women themselves aware of their needs, ideas and potentials as well as the context of their gender problems; and (c) to work out new vistas, solutions or actions for the involved women — both the researchers and their 'subjects.'

The research of Pagaduan and her colleagues at the University of the Philippines represents the participatory approach (1986). Their documentation of women's consciousness is presented against the backdrop of the Philippine national situation while yet analyzing the personal circumstances of rural women according to gender ideology. As researchers and organizers, this group chooses to understand the problems of the Filipina from what may be called a liberative-feminist framework.

Other studies of this nature are reportedly being undertaken by the feminists in the movement. Unfortunately, the documentation of these experiences were unavailable at the time of this writing.

#### E. Unity of Theory and Practice in Women's Studies

Women's studies in the present decade are concerned primarily with understanding the particularities of the situation of Filipinas in different circumstances. To the extent that these are undertaken by feminists, the implicit framework is that "women in the Philippines are at a disadvantage." Whatever the methodology employed, conclusions are coached to demonstrate the nuances of this inequality. Unlike earlier studies, therefore, the researches reviewed in the eighties are prescriptive rather than descriptive, committed rather than objective. The new framework thus requires novel approaches to obtaining the needed data — including unobtrusive methods, content analysis and participatory approaches.

Trends in the Philippines evoke the notion of advocates-as-scholars and vice-versa in feminist research (Papanek, 1984). Data are also evaluated in terms of their value to the women's objectives for gender liberation, and the gap between the feminist researches and the feminizing 'researchee' is slowly clos-

ing-up. In sixty years, women's studies and the women's movement have gone full circle. The scholar has again become an advocate.

### CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing review of women's studies in the Philippines has been undertaken to determine the extent to which feminist goals are reflected in the studies. In summary, the following patterns have been deduced.

First, the motives and framework for women's studies in this country have varied through the past three generations in relation to social phenomena which influence scholarship and feminist aspirations. However, women's studies began in response to the women's movement of the 20s and 30s, and are now becoming aligned with contemporary feminist demands. In interim years, women's studies were geared to either academic interests or governmental goals for development.

Second, the nature of the women's movement in the Philippines has been influenced by both internal and external sociopolitical forces. In the First Feminist Movement, the point of unity of women was suffrage. In the present decade, women are being encouraged to fight for gender, class and national liberation objectives.

Third, Philippine scholarship on women have largely been premised on gender differentiations. More efforts are needed to evolve measures, methods and analytic frameworks which are gynocentric rather than androcentric. Initial attempts in this direction have been made and should be studied closely for replication.

Studies about the Filipina can be used in many ways, as they have been in the past. It is time, however, to declare that women's studies should continue to advance the welfare of the Filipina. Therefore, scholarship must be linked closely with the needs and aspirations of the various sectors of women throughout the nation.