THE FILIPINA LOOKS AT HERSELF: A REVIEW OF WOMEN'S STUDIES IN THE PHILIPPINES*

Amaryllis T. Torres
College of Social Welfare and Community Development
University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the content of studies and publications on women which have been undertaken in the Philippines since the early twentieth century. These studies may be classified as belonging to the following periods: (1) the period of the first feminist struggle (1905-1937); (2) the post-war years (1940-1970); (3) the Development Decade – the '70s; and (4) the new decade of feminism – the '80s. An analysis of the patterns and trends in these materials concerning the status, views and actions of the Filipina indicates the following: first, the concerns of women *as women* are emphasized by writers of the first and second feminist decades, while those in the other periods deal with gender issues in relation to either more general social science concerns, or in terms of social development goals; second, education is considered to be a potent factor in enlarging the perspectives of women about themselves; third, by-and-large, the average Filipina considers home-making to be her primary function; and fourth, not all development projects were able to help women positively, even during the International Decade for Women. In conclusion, the author stresses the point that scholarship about women should not be dissociated from the advocacy goals of the women's movement, so that its findings may be useful and relevant to the pressing needs of the Filipina.

Introduction

This paper is based on a study which aimed to develop an anthology of studies on the Filipino woman. The project was undertaken under the auspices of UNESCO and involved the collection of studies on women from various local sources to depict her conditions, status and roles in Philippine society. Interpretative essays were then written to analyze the trends, issues and conceptual frameworks used by the different authors to understand the Filipina.

I coordinated this project and supervised the collection and annotation of the materials. Four other colleagues joined the editorial committee and contributed critical essays. They included: Dr. Ma. Luisa Camagay, Prof. Judy Carol Sevilla, Prof. Rosario del Rosario and Dr. Cynthia Rose Bautista.

A total of about 360 books, articles and bibliographies on women were identified from various libraries of universities and from the resource materials of

women's groups. A sizable number were written by women scholars, and represent written literature from 1928 to 1985. Two distinct publications proved especially helpful. The first one is the book entitled "A Profile of Filipino Women" by Isabel Rojas-Aleta, Teresita Silva and Christine Eleazar. The second is a bibliographic collection of materials concerning "The Status of Women in the Philippines" by Ofelia Angangco, Laura Samson and Teresita Albino.

In today's presentation, the results of the review will be interpreted to answer the following questions:

First, what is the interplay between social forces (such as the women's movement, social development concerns, academic concerns) and the themes of women's studies in the Philippines?

Second, what portrait is painted of the Filipina through different significant periods of this century?

Prior to a discussion of these issues, however, allow me to provide a brief overview of the meaning and development of "women's studies" in contemporary terms.

Women's Studies and the Women's Liberation Movement

Interest in women as a separate sector, a distinct focus of research and teaching, emerged along 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 therefore 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 women's lib standpoint 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 a 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 "disassociated" from their data. For one, it is usually the case that those who engage in feminist research are individuals com-

mitted to the goals of the movement (Papanek, H. 1984); therefore, 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, etcetera. Rather, women's studies, by definition, need to be multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary (Bowles, G. and R. Klen, 1983; 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 classes. 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 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. Thus, a multidisciplinary perspective is important. Moreover, since women's studies is a relatively new discipline, it has still to fashion its own categories of phenomena 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 scholar is "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 environments emits the same signals for men and women" (Bowles, G. and R. Klein, pp. 90-91).

To continue, Klein argues:

> "Such research . . . ignores the historical perspective, the fact that over millenia women and men have internalised feminine and 'masculine' needs . . . in which he is norm and she is 'the other' (Bowles, G. and R. Klein, 1933, pp. 90-91).

Papanek (1984) postulates that gender differences can be a major variable in examining social change and assessing its consequences. Social phenomena such as class differentiation, employment, education, and employment, 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 will be reviewed in terms of their contents and intentions.

Women's Struggle and Women's Studies in the Philippines

The nature of studies about the Filipino women is inextricably linked with historical factors in both the national and global settings. The keystones in Philip-

pine 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 the people's felt needs, leading to:
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 is entitled "The Development Progress of the Filipino Women" and was authored by Ma. Paz Mendoza-Guazon, Filipina, who enjoyed the distinction of many "first's" as a woman. She was the first Filipina to receive a high school diploma from the 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, 1928). 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 on "The Filipino Women" was written by Encarnacion Alzona, an eminent historian. Like Dr. Guanzon, she was one of the first graduates of the University of the Philippines and eventually became a 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 Subcommission 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? In both mono-graphs, the following themes dominate:

First, the egalitarian nature of gender relationships during Philippine pre-colonial history in social, economic and political activities;

Second, the emergence and institutionalization of gender differences during Hispanic rule; and

Third, the re-awakening of Filipinas to their civic, political and social rights as twentieth-century educated women.

1.   *Changes in the role and status of women*

Women of these islands in the pre-colonial period are portrayed as enjoying enormous rights and privileges. Women 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 partners 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 spinters. In economic life, women contributed to the export trade earnings of Spain through their needlework, while they serviced the needs of local residents 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 profes-

sionals – 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 women's suffrage.

2.   *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 of 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. The idea was rejected because, as Ms. Felix saw it, the Filipina was still unprepared to use the ballot. Instead, an association devoted to social welfare work, and which encouraged the appointment of women to school boards, was founded by Ms. Felix. This was the *Associacion Feminista Filipina*, which later changed its name to *La Gota de Leche*.

Later, on 1912, feminists – an American, Mrs. Carrie Catts and Dutchwoman, Dr. Aletta Jacobs – spoke before Filipino women to interest them in suffrage. Again, they met with a negative response, but 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 by this time had as yet spoken for enfranchisement, many educated women had joined in associations which 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 more politicians spoke for the benefits of female suffrage, including the then President of the Commonwealth, Manuel L. Quezon. In 1919, women

finally endorsed the moves 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 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 (Alzona, p. 95). So, the women 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. After 20 years of struggling for enfranchisement, the Filipina then won the right to the ballot.

3.   *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 at that time. Yet, evidences are slowly emerging which show that many women were in the labor force.

In a recently completed work (Camagay, L., 1986) it was historically proven that in the late 19th century, a sizable number of women had work outside of their homes. The livelihood of women usually included work as *criadas* (domestic helpers), *maestras, matronas* (midwives), *cigarreras, buyeras, bordaderas* and *sinamayeras*. Historical records also show that gender discrimination existed even then. For instance, maestras received lower wages than maestros. Women also suffered from sexual harassment — from their male *amos* and even from the *frailes*. Sometime in the latter years of the past century, the women in the tobacco industry also 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, 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.

Evidences of the activity of organized labor are also in the literature. For one, an Act which required employers to provide seats for women workers and to install separate "closets and lavatories" for men

and women was passed in 1927 (Alzona, E. 1937). In 1930, a grass-roots women's organization was founded and called *Liga ng Kababa-ihang Filipina* (Del Rosario, R. 1986). 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 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: studies on women* (1940-1970)

Literature on the Filipina woman in the generation following the Second World War may be characterized in three ways: *one*, anecdotal materials (usually appearing in magazines and journals) which either extoll the virtues of the Filipina or exhort her to do more for home and nation: *two*, sociopsychological conceptualizations, experiments and field obser-vations of the roles, statuses, values, attitudes and aspirations of Filipino women (usually in contrast to those of Filipino men); and *three*, socio-anthropological observations of marital and family relationships, including decision-making processes, power and authority dynamics, and child rearing practices (see listing in Angangco, O., *et al.*, 1980). Few articles were written which concern feminist views, and most of these were autobiographical and retrospective accounts of the earlier suffrage movement (Kalaw, P., 1952; Castrence, P.S., 1957; Subido, T. 1955).

1.   A dissection of the Filipina

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

a.   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 (1963) 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 un-obstrusively asserting her own desires, thereby fulfilling herself. Person (1957), while presenting the plaftform of the Civic Assembly of Women in the Philippines, stressed that dual role of the Filipina — as nationbuilder and as homemaker. Flores (1969) reported that working wives were beset by household problems, such as:

"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 servants. . ." (Flores, P., p. 120).

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 is child care. Filipino parents were observed to be over-protective of children and reinforced sex-related behaviours. Thus, girls were trained to assist their mothers in household chores and in babysitting 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, J. 1986).

b. 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 Alzona 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 when describing "The Filipina 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, O. *et al.*, 1980, p. 63). Similar observations are given by Isidro (1969). Castrence (1951), and Laureta, E. (1951).

c. The third outlook on women which may be derived from materials of the '50s and '60s, concerns man-woman distinctions and relationships. Most of the literature on this topic, moreover, are social science researches.

In general, the various studies described how early socialization fosters sex roles stereotypes among Filipino children (Domingo, F., 1961; Flores, P., 1969). Not surprisingly, therefore, boys and girls manifested sex-related behaviours and even occupational preferences (Castillo, G., 1961; Flores, P., 1969; Flores, P. and Gonzales, M., 1969; CYRC, nd.).

Socialization in sex roles resulted in particular role expectations from men and women. Thus, women who ventured to go into careerwork 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, O. *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 careerwoman, 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, O. *et al.*, 1980, p. 75).

Men's views on the changing roles of the Filipina are also documented (Flores, P., 1969; Castillo, G. and Guerrero, S., 1965). Husbands of women in the professions tended to be supportive of their working wives, especially if their earners 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, J., 1986).

1. Scientific objectivity in women's studies

The bulk of research literature spawned in the 30 years described by this section used methods and analytic perspectives popular at the time. Thus, surveys, anthropological and psychological studies were employed to obtain information concerning the Filipinos, her husbands and children. In interpreting the amassed information, researchers chose to remain "close to their data". Hence, descriptive studies were generalized on this level and were sometimes compared to other materials with objectives akin to its own.

No conscious effort was made, therefore, to transcend data in order to make statements concerning the impacts of observed gender roles on women's rights and potentials. Proposed ways to improve woman's position in society were generally found in articles divorced from data and maintained the view that the Filipino woman should seek a balance between her role as homemaker and her fledgling aspirations for professional fulfillment.

3. Continuing action for women's rights

Materials pertaining to the women's movement were scant, and provide few insights about the continuing feminist struggle during the '50s and '80s.

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, such as the Girls Scouts of the Philippines, the National Federation of Women's Clubs, Catholic Women's Club and the Rural Improvement Clubs.

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 the elections, 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 Magsaysay-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 which restricted the affairs of married women. At the time she wrote her book, women's groups were lobbying for the creation of juvenile and domestic courts, a women's and child's Bureau and further improvements in the Election Code. Since then, these recommendations have been implemented.

C.   *The development decade: the seventies*

The decade of the seventies spawned 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 disadvantaged position of women in many traditional societies was recognized early in this decade, leading to the UN's Declaration of 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.

1.   *The focus of women-in-development studies*

In the Philippines, government assumed the position that over-population, poverty and unemployment are 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.

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

2.   *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?

a.   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 and they usually had more children than they have 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 1976, 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 others. Thus, women were frequently found in services (as domestic helpers), in professional, technical and sales occupations.

(4) Of the women in the labor force, almost half 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 family needs or if their incomes were considerably less than those of the men.

While a considerable number of researches were conducted on the abovementioned factors, there was an almost equally large volume devoted to other concerns. Unfortunately, a more thorough discussion of the field of women's studies during the Development Decade is not possible in this paper. Suffice it to say that 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; women in professions); profile of women's participation in development programs; legal status of women; and women in public/political affairs.

b.   Another important finding from the WID studies is that, in most cases, *Filipinas were content with their lot and accepted the traditionally ascribed roles of home makers* (Castillo, G., 1976; Montiel, C. and Hollnsteiner, M., 1976; Licuanan, P. and Gonzales, A., 1976; Aleta, I. *et al.*, 1977; Manalang, P., 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, husband and children. Even work was secondary to this concern. The normative force of this view is best seen when even the law prescribes that "the husband is responsible for the support of the wife" while "the wife manages the affairs of the household" (Romero, F., 1977).

More recently, in a study commissioned by the NCRFW, it was discovered that women from the 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 distinguished between a public and a private life (Manalang, 1984, p. 13).

Eviota (1978) reacted to this gender role with alarm and argued that house-keeping 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. She stated:

> 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, B., 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, P. 1981, Aleta, L *et al.*, 1977; Eviota, E., 1978).

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

Miralao (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 a 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

a. 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 *agencies of government 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). 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 a broader lattitude in defining their family aspirations (Aleta, I., 1977; NCRFW, 1984).

b. *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 the further degradation of women, who have lately been 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).

c. In addition to these impacts, *the WID efforts have opened the vistas for further efforts in women's studies* in 2 ways.

First, to a great extent, the women scholars who have sought to describe and understand the situation of the Filipina have themselves 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, J., 1985; Miralao, V., 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, E., 1978; Castillo, G., 1985).

Second, the five 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 re-interpret these information 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.

D. *The new decade of feminism: the 'eighties'*

The easing of restrictions over organizing efforts as a result of the "lifting" of Martial Law in 1981 spawned the formation of various women's organizations (Maranan, A., 1981; Del Rosario, R., 1986). These associations have since then been involved in various issues concerning women and the nation, and are presently engaged in a unified battle to enlarge women's rights through the Constitution. Part of their strategy has been the use of research to be able to reinforce their feminist demands.

1. *The impact of development on women*

Del Rosario (1986) calls the women's studies in the new decade as *Impact of Development on Women* (IDW) studies. These efforts have often been expressed in 3 ways: (1) as situationers on the conditions of women in specific sectors (e.g. migrant female workers, women in industry, women in agriculture); (2) as case studies of women in various areas and work situations; and (3) as comparative studies of women within different geographical regions of the country and of Asia.

Generally, IDW studies note the following conditions affecting women in the Philippines: (Del Rosario, 1986; PWRC, 1985)

(1) Women workers' situation has been aggravated by the demands of global capitalism. For instance, rural women have been further impoverished by the Green Revolution technology and agribusiness penetration into the countryside. Women in cottage industries apply their traditional skills (in sewing, embroidering, weaving, etc.) for the export market yet remain in the informal labor sector without protection from labor laws. Women in garments, electronics and other export-oriented industries are given low wages and exposed to repetitive, hazardous and regimented work condition.

(2) Women's problems are aggravated by "her double burden which is rooted in traditional gender discrimination of society" (Del Rosario, 1986, p. 45). The inequality between the sexes has substantially continued, principally because males fail to share house work and child care and because institutional support for economic activities of women remain scarce. The outlook on women as housewives and mothers has been reinforced by media, thus entrenching traditional views among men and women. Few governmental attempts have also been undertaken to provide daycare centers, health care and economic support for women.

(3) Specific and concrete steps must be taken to alleviate the oppressed conditions of women. These steps must involve both government and women's groups and focus on women's problems in their various spheres of undertaking. The organization of women into sectoral groups is also important so that "women's forces can strengthen themselves and develop within or alongside material and class forces" (PWRC, 1985).

Studies within the framework of IDW continue in the mid-'80s. Recently, Pagaduan, M. and others completed a participatory research on "The Awakening of Peasant Women." It attempts to depict the potentials of and hindrances to, consciousness-raising among women. Two ongoing studies of women in agriculture use statistical procedures, oral histories, case studies and observations to study the status of women in farming (Bautista, C., 1986). Researches are also being conducted on Filipina entertainers in Europe (Arcinas), on mail-order brides (Cooke), and on working women in governments and textile industries (Samson).

Apart from these efforts of university women scholars, women's groups themselves continue to study and document the conditions of their sectors (Del Rosario, R., 1986).

2.   *Sources of women's oppression*

The oppression of the Filipina is perceived to be rooted in three factors: gender inequality, class domination and national subservience to foreign interests (PWRC, 1985). Thus, the feminist movement in the present decades chooses to struggle for the improvement of women's rights along these three dimensions. The Philippine Women's Research Collective states:

"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 . . .

Initial efforts to concretize this feminist framework are found in the recently completed series of monographs by the PWRC. Essentially, these monographs find that:

(a)   Export-oriented industrialization has pushed rural women into marginalized lives, while women in industry have received extremely low wages; (Ofreneo, 1985; Del Rosario, 1985).

(b)   Widespread poverty and unemployment resulting from the economic recession in recent years have pushed women into degrading positions — as prostitutes, as domestic helpers and entertainers abroad, and as mail-order brides (Dela Cruz, P., 1985; Orozco, W., 1985).

(c)   Despite declarations that women should be relieved of household work, it remains the main obstacle to her active participation in development. Ironically, mass media has helped perpetuate the image of Filipina women as homemakers, and consumers, rather than as active producers and leaders in their own right (David, R. and Dela Cruz, P., 1985).

These observations find confirmation in other researches. The marginalization of landless rural women as an offshoot of new farming systems has been confirmed by Illo (1985) and Castillo (1985). Official labor statistics describe the outflow of Filipinas as domestic workers, nursing aides and entertainers and provide data on the continuing decrease in the LFPR of women (BVM, 1985). Samson (1977) had earlier also spoken of the escapism in terms of the mass media and the degradation of the image of the Filipina.

3.   *Unity of theory and practice*

Developments in recent years have drawn women scholars closer to the women's movement, and vice versa. It may, therefore, be safe to say that studies on the Filipina in subsequent years will remain attuned to the objectives of the feminist movement.

Women's studies and the women's movement have gone through a full circle in 60 years. Early studies on the Filipina were written to show her capabilities in order to win a political right. In this decade, studies were conducted to demonstrate the structural roots of the Filipina's continuing oppression in Philippine society (Bautista, C., 1986) so that our women can learn more about themselves and join in the women's rights movement. This trend is expected to continue.

Bibliography

Aleta, I. R., T. L. Silva and C. P. Eleazar. 1977. A profile of Filipino women: their status and role. Prepared for the United Nations for International Development. pp. 331-355. Manila: Philippine Business for Social Progress.

Alzona, E. 1934. The Filipino woman: her social, economic and political status, 1565-1937. Foreword by Alexander G. Puthven, Manila: Benipayo Press. 146 p.

Amor, E. J. 1966. The Working mother. *In:* The Filipino Family: Selected Readings, pp. 113-118. By the Family Life Workshop of the Philippines, Inc. Quezon City: Alemar-Phoenix Publishing House, Inc.

Angangco, O. R., L. L. Samson and T. M. Albino, 1980. Status of women in the Philippines: A Bibliography with Selected Annotations. Quezon City: Alemar-Phoenix.

Arceo-Ortega, A. 1963. "A Career housewife in the Philippines." In Women in New Asia: The Changing Roles of Men and Women in South and Southeast Asia: Edited by Barbara War Pars: UNESCO

Bautista, C.B. 1986. "Studies of Women in Terms of Philippine Socio-Cultural Dimensions." *In* An Anthology of Studies on the Philipino Woman, pp. 48-58. By Amaryllis T. Torres *et al.*, A project of the UNESCO Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and Pacific. Metro Manila, Philippines. January 1986.

Benavides, E. 1958. *The Filipino Woman's Social, Economic and Political Status.* Manila: Cultural Foundation of the Philippines. p. 17.

Benito, G.S. 1951. "Women in Industry in the Philippines." M.A. Thesis, University of the Philippines, Quezon City. 44:1.

Bureau of Women and Minors Report. 1985.

Camagay, Ma. Luisa. 1986. "Women Through Philippine History." *In* Anthology of Studies on the Pilipino Woman, pp. 10-15. By Amaryllis T. Torres et al. A project of the UNESCO Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and Pacific. Metro Manila, Philippines.

Castañeda, L. F. "Women and Children in Industry in the Philippines." B.S. Thesis, University of the Philippines, Quezon City. 77:1.

Castillo, G. T. "Occupational Sex Ples as Perceived by Filipino Adolescents." Philippine Sociological Review (January-April 1961)9 (1-2):2-11.

_____ 1976. *The Filipino Woman as Manpower: The Image and the Empirical Reality*. Los Banos, Laguna: University of the Philippines at Los Baños. 236p.

_____ 1989 and Guerrero, Sylvia H. "The Filipino Woman: A Study in Multiple Ples." Lipunan 3:16-29. Also in Journal of Asian and African Studies 4(1): 18-29.

Castrence, P. S. ed. 1951. *Talking Things Over with the Growing Filipina*. Manila. Bardavon Book Co. 192p.

_____ . "Some Thoughts on the Feminist Movement in Southeast Asia. Philippine Sociological Review (April 1957) 5(2): 61-66.

Del Rosario, Rosario. *Life on the Assembly Line: An Alternative Philippine Report on Women Industrial Workers*. Philippine Women's Research Collective Pamphlet Series No. 1 of the End is the Beginning. An Alternative Philippine Report on the Impact of the Decade of Women (1976-1985).

_____ 1986. "Filipino Working Women." *In* An Anthology of Studies on the Pilipino Woman, pp. 35-47. By Amaryllis T. Torres et al. A project of the UNESCO Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and Pacific. Metro Manila. Philippines.

De la Cruz, P. A. *Filipinos for Sale: An Alternative Philippine Report on Women and Tourism*. Philippine Women's Research Collective Pamphlet Series No. 1 of the End is the Beginning. An Alternative Philippine Report on the Impact of the Decade of Women (1976-1985).

_____ , and David, Rina. *Towards Our Own Image: An Alternative Philippine Report on Women and Media*. Philippine Women's Research Collective Pamphlet Series No. 1 of the End is the Beginning. An Alternative Philippine Report on the Impact of Women (1976-1985).

Domingo, M. F. A. 1961. "Child-rearing Practice in Barrio Cruz na Ligas." M.A. Thesis, College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines, Quezon City.

Eviota. E. U. "Sex as a Differentiating Variable in Work and Power Relations." Philippine Sociological Review, "Women: Old Roles and New Realities." Vol. 26 Nos. 3 and 4, July-Oct. 1978, pp. 151-158.

Flores, P. M. 1969. *Socio-Psychological Development of Filipino Children*. First Edition.
_____ , and Gonzales, Michaela B.. 1969. "Sex Roles Development of Filipino Children and Youth in a Changing Culture." *In* Socio-Psychological Development of Filipino Children, by Pura Medina Flores. Manila.

Guazon, M. P. M. 1951. *The Development and Progress of the Filipino Woman*. Manila: Kiko Printing Press. Second Edition. 75 p.

Guerrero, S. H. 1965. An Analysis of Husband-Wife Roles Among Filipino Professionals at U.P. Los Baños Campus. *Philippine Sociological Review*. 13 (4), 275-284.

Illo, J. F. I. "Who Heads the Household? Women in Households in the Philippines." Paper read at the Women and Household Regional Conference for Asia held in New Delhi on 27 to 31 January 1985.

Isidro. V. 1969. "The Changing Attitudes of the Filipina. "Katas (March) 9: 65-68.

Kalaw, P. V. 1952. *How the Filipina Got the Vote*. Manila: Crown Print: 58 p.

Laureta, F. G. 1951. "A Comparison of Our Women's Education to that of Yesterday." M. A Thesis, Adamson University, Manila. 72:1.

Licuanan. P.B., and A. M. Gonzales, 1976. "Filipino Women in Development." Draft Final Report. Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City. Typescript.

Makil, P. Q. 1981. "Philippine Studies of Women: A Review." *In* Silliman Journal, 28 (1-2); 32-42.

Manalang, P.S. "Indicators of Modernity in the Orientation of Filipino Women." *In* Education Quarterly. Vol. 31, No. 4. 1983-1984.

Maranan, A. 1984. "The Philippine Women's Movement: Problems of Perception." In proceedings: Seminar to Prepare the Alternative Philippine Report on the Impact of the Decade for Women. PILIPINA, Ateneo de Manila.

Miralao, V.A. 1980. "Time-Use Data As Measures of Men's and Women's Role." Women and Men in Development: Findings From A Pilot Study. Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University.

Montiel, C. and M.R. Hollnsteiner. *The Filipino Women-Men* Role and Status in Philippine Society. Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University. 51:1.

Nakpil, C.G. "The Filipino Woman." Philippines Quarterly (March 1952) I (4) 8-10.

Nurge, E. 1965. *Life in a Leyte Village.* Seattle: University of Washington.

Nydegger. W. F. and N. Corrinel. *Tarong: An Ilocos Barrio in the Philippines:* New York, Wiley, 1966. 180p.

Ofreneo, R.P. *Women of the Soil. An Alternative Philippine Report on Rural Women.* Philippine Women's Research Collective Pamphlet Series No. 1 of the End in the Beginning. An Alternative Philippine Report on the Impact of the Decade of Women (1976-1985).

Orosa, S.L. "How Housewives Can Implement the Objective of Rizal's Liga Filipina." *In* Jose Rizal: Man and Hero, pp. 180-164. By Sixto Y. Orosa et al. Quezon City: Vibal Print: 1963 a.

Orozco, W. *Economic Refugees. Voyage of the Commonditized: An Alternative Philippine Report on Migrant Workers.* Philippine Women's Research Collective Pamphlet Series No. 1 of the End is the Beginning. An Alternative Philippine Report in the Impact of the Decade of Women (1976-1985).

Pagaduan, M. *et al.* 1986. "The Awakening of Peasant Women: A Participatory Research." Institute of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines and Forum for Rural Concerns.

Pecson, G.T. 1957. *The History of the Civic Assembly of Women of the Philippines.* 17 1.

Philippines (Republic) Department of Education. Academic and Personality Profiles of Potential Dropouts. Quezon City: Child and Youth Study Center, Department of Education and Culture, Mimeographed. n.d.

Philippine Women's Research Collective, 1985.

Romero, F.R. "Emancipating the Filipino Women from Legal Bondage" *Initiatives In Population.* 3 (1) 1977.

Salinas, A. and T. Lianzon. *Too Little, Too Late: An Alternative Philippine Report on Government Initiatives for Women.* Philippine Women's Research Collective Pamphlet Series No. 1 of the End is the Beginning. An Alternative Philippine Report on the Impact of the Decade of Women (1976-1985).

Sevilla, J.C. "The Filipino Woman and the Family." *In* An Anthology of Studies on the Pilipino Woman, pp. 16-34. By Amaryllis T. Torres et al. A project of the UNESCO Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and Pacific. Metro Manila, Philippines. January, 1986.

Subido, T.T. 1955. *The Feminist Movement in the Philippines: 1905-1955.* Manila: National Federation of Women's Club.

Tribune Manila, July 22, 1936.

University of the Philippines-Institute of Industrial Relations Workshop on Women, 1986.

Ongoing Studies on Women:

Arcinas, F. "A Study of Filipina Entertainers in Europe." Department of Sociology, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

Cooke, F. "A Study of Australian and Filipino Marriages and the Mail Order Bride System."
    Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.
Samson, L. "A Study of Women in the Garments and Textile Industry." Department of
    Sociology, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.