

Taiwan's Modernization—Women's Changing Role

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One of the most noticeable phenomena in Asia over the last three decades is the massive modernization process among countries with Confucian heritage. Taiwan undoubtedly takes the leading role in this emerging flow. With its rapid urbanization, industrialization, and democratization, Taiwan has experienced fundamental changes in its population composition, in economic structure as well as in social norms and behaviors. Among various aspects of social changes in Taiwan, the females' changing status has become a significant topic. Most reports document the females' rising status in society by referring to quantitative evidence such as the females' labor force participation rate. One of the reasons for this is because entry into the workforce signifies entry into the occupational world traditionally restricted to males. However, females' status is composed of both public and private spheres. While a universal trend of the rapid increase of female employment is observed, if a lag exists between these two aspects of life, it is hard for females to achieve real equal status with their counterparts.

Generally speaking, modernization has been defined as a form of social transformation resulting from one major force—economic development. It is typically characterized by structural differentiation, continuing integration, and social conflict (Smelser, 1973). A conventional assumption is that female status is enhanced due to the rising educational

achievement of females and the economic contribution concomitant with the modernization process. While education may be regarded as an important human capital, one that results in the increase of female employment, it is also significantly associated with the expansion of modern values and orientation in the population, including sex-role attitudes (Inkeles, 1966).

Another approach to the relationship between modernization and women's status is to analyze the developmental effect on political participation, on formal institutional changes (such as inheritance law), and on other aspects of societal progress. A global trend in the Third World appears to be that women's political empowerment is positively linked with the extent of modernization, which in turn may produce significant policy impacts (Chow & Berheide, 1994; Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1994; Liang & Gu, 1995). Modernization also entails more egalitarian relations between the genders and is often revealed in legal changes as well as in attitudinal change regarding unfair treatments or practices (Liu, 1995). Women's contribution to the development, in this perspective, includes informal activities and should be recognized in the context of the interdependence of the family and work systems (Tinker, 1987; Ferree, 1990).

This chapter will focus on the female's work role and family role as two main domains of social change. Specifically, an attempt will be made to examine Taiwanese females' participation in the labor force as well as at home to clarify the division of labor between the genders. It is also our intention to delineate ongoing attitudinal changes as a possibly significant factor affecting females' roles in Taiwan. In other words, it is assumed that both the behavioral and the cultural backgrounds need to be considered in the explanation of the female's changing social status in Taiwan.

THE FEMALE'S STATUS IN TAIWAN: HER WORK ROLE AND HER FAMILY ROLE

For many countries with a strong patriarchal heritage, females have been confined to the domestic compound. In recent decades, the prevalence of better educational opportunities and the flourishing tertiary sector in Taiwan has given rise to the female's higher social status. Although whether females enjoy similar opportunities and privileges as males remains questionable (Rodman, 1972; Yi, et al., 2000), the overall progress toward higher education and higher employment rate of women have become dominant indicators of women's status enhancement. It is true that the mode of modernization in Taiwan as in many other developing countries has taken a different route (Huang, 1988; King, 1993) from that in Western nations. However, the female's

economic contribution as a result of employment outside the home still leads to the advancement of her domestic status (Yi & Tsai, 1989; Yi & Chang, 1996). This implies that to participate in gainful employment may alter the normative subordinate position that has traditionally been ascribed to the Taiwanese female.

The steady increase of female labor force participation over the last three decades has demonstrated its importance to the economic success of Taiwan (Yi, 1993; Lu, 1999). This trend started in the mid-1960s when Taiwan's economic development took the first noticeable step into the world economy. The demand for female labor by export processing manufacturers between 1966 and 1973 brought unmarried females from rural areas to join the labor-intensive factories (Chen & Hsiung, 1997). These unmarried daughters tended to send back their earnings to help their brothers' education or other familial demands (Gallin, 1982). During the same period of time, the launch of the small business sector—especially the home-based family enterprise—in Taiwan took place. Unpaid employment at home among married and unmarried females was essential for the operation of the family business (Hsieh, 1992; Li & Ka, 1994; Lu, 1994). It is clear that the economic contribution of the female labor force at that time was significant both at the familial and at the national level.

Although a female's social status appears to equate to her economic output, numerous studies have contended that nonphysical factors including familial practice, conjugal relations, residential background, and role belief may influence her status as well (Yi & Yang, 1995; Lin, 1997; Yi, et al., 2000). Among various reports, at least three areas of the interplay between the female's work and family roles in Taiwan have aroused much attention. Both quantitative and qualitative accounts have extensively discussed these issues. A brief overview of each aspect is summarized following:

The Importance of Informal Employment

Marriage and childbearing are repeatedly shown to be two factors affecting the continuity of the Taiwanese female labor force (Chien & Hsueh, 1996; Chang, 1996). Despite the fact that the difficulty of reentry to the labor market inhibits females' second employment opportunity (Yi, 1999), the overwhelming norm and the expected priority within family roles are considered to be two major reasons for females' employment discontinuity (Yu, 1999; Chien, 1997; Chang, 1996). It has been documented that females withdraw from the labor market in order to accommodate familial demands: approximately half of married females with premarital employment experience will leave the labor force after marriage or at the childbearing stage (Chien, 1997; Yi & Chien, 1999).

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that employment continuity remains the most salient category of female employment patterns in Taiwan. About 30 to 40 percent of married Taiwanese females stay in the labor force irrespective of marriage and child-rearing constraints (Chien & Hsueh, 1996; Yi & Chien, 2000). Apparently, compatibility between work and family systems is possible for this group. One persuasive explanation given is that a significant number of females change to informal employment after marriage; thus, they are able to maintain their employment status (Yi & Chien, 2000). As a consequence, a relatively high percentage of married females falls into the category of employment continuity. Their employment choice is definitely different from those with continual employment in the formal sector, and thus should be analyzed in the cultural context.

To be specific, a typical unmarried Taiwanese female enters the labor force after completing her middle school education. When she marries, there is a nearly 30 percent chance that she will be asked to quit her job. If she remains employed, there is another 10 percent chance that she will finally leave the labor force at childbirth (Yi & Chien, 1999). However, for those who never withdraw from the labor market, it is found that one-third maintain employment status by switching from the formal sector into the informal sector at the time of marriage or childbirth (Yi & Chien, 1999). Since approximately 20 percent of married females have always been working in the informal sector, before and after marriage, a total of one-half of married females classified as having been continually employed are actually engaged in informal work (Yi & Chien, 1999).

"Informal work" in Taiwan is mainly in small family enterprises, such as unpaid family work, self-employment, and the like (Lu, 1994; Yi & Chien, 2000). Females who marry into families that have an agriculture or small business background are most likely to work as unpaid family workers. Females who change from formal to informal employment during various family stages are likely to do so because of familial demands. Therefore, the work roles of married females with informal employment can be regarded as an extension of their family roles (Greenhalgh, 1991; Li & Ka, 1994; Lu, 1999; Yi & Chien, 2000). Dominated by patriarchal norms as well as by the traditional gender division of labor, these females manage both work and family roles by working at the family business and hence maintain their employment continuity after marriage and childbirth.

The Importance of Decision-Making Power at Home

A female's domestic status, as an important segment of her social status, can be evaluated by the female's relative position in the family. Although it is difficult to capture the dynamics of the family power

structure, a conventional usage is to measure decision-making outcomes as the operational indicator (McDonald, 1980; Rank, 1982; Warner, et al., 1986; Yi, et al., 2000). Generally, higher status is presumed to coincide with greater marital power. Hence, marital power or decision-making power may be considered to represent the domestic status or the power relationship between couples.

Criticisms concerning the use of decision-making outcomes as a valid indicator of the family power pattern center around the specific content of decisions, the restriction of the resource concept, and the absence of cultural considerations, as well as the bias of having collected the wife's sample only (Scanzoni, 1979; Williams & Thompson, 1985; Szinovacz, 1987; Godwin & Scanzoni, 1989; Yi, et al., 1992; Yi, 1999). However, for a family system like Taiwan's, where the wife traditionally subordinates to her husband and is supposed to have no voice in familial decisions, it is interesting to investigate whether the domestic power structure echoes societal changes and is moving toward an egalitarian relation at home. This hypothesis is of particular importance in the context of a wife's possible economic contribution, as directly brought from her outside employment. In other words, while the traditional norm endows males with unquestioned dominance, the opposing evidence indicates that personal resources under the social exchange rules may affect the power position at home (Yi & Tsai, 1989; Thomson, 1990; Yi & Yang, 1995).

Using the dynamic model of resource-process-outcome framework, the conjugal power structure in Taiwan has revealed several interesting patterns. The dominant outcome found in familial decision-making is the joint pattern (Yi, et al., 1998). In the most important issue reported by the respondents, namely child-rearing and family economy, 54 percent to 72 percent indicate that joint decision-making is the pattern practiced at home (Yi, et al., 2000). Shared involvement between couples in the contemporary Taiwanese family is clearly an important aspect of family life.

Besides the basic egalitarian relations reported at home, previous studies suggest that the marital power structure in Taiwan falls under dual influences. On one hand, the patriarchal rule which prescribes husbands with the ultimate power remains strong, especially among those couples with generally more traditional characteristics. Hence, the lower educated and those with rural residence are more likely to report no conflict present in the process of decision-making (Yi, et al., 1992). On the other hand, the resource model is also applicable in that couples with higher socioeconomic resources follow the exchange rule at home. The employment status of the wife as well as the higher family life cycle tend to enhance a wife's decision power at home (Yi & Yang, 1995; Yi, et al., 1998). Therefore, the dual effects of both traditional

patriarchy and modern power rules shed light on the complex nature of marital power in Taiwan. The research result also points out the necessity to examine a wife's personal resources in the dynamic process of the domestic power structure in Taiwan.

Another noteworthy finding related to female status at home is the impact of the cultural element. As stated previously, strong patriarchal influence is still existent, yet the positive association between personal resources and family status suggests this traditional norm is loosening (Warner, et al., 1986; Yi, 1999). One way to examine changes of dominant social norms is to study the trend of gender role attitudes. Modern gender role attitudes endorse gender equality in work and at home (Waite, 1978; Molm, 1978; Yi & Kao, 1986; Yi, et al., 1998). Those with modern gender role attitudes are more likely to achieve employment continuity in work as well as to practice egalitarian relations at home. Thus, gender role attitudes are taken as a proxy to observe cultural influences in the social environment. From relevant results, it is shown that gender role attitudes are indeed significant in the conjugal power structure (Yi, 1999). A positive attitude toward modern gender roles is associated with nontraditional or joint decision-making patterns in the family. In other words, modern gender role attitudes are conducive to a wife's domestic status.

The Importance of Family Life Cycle

Due to the normative constraint on gender roles, a female's status is closely related to her family life cycle. In addition to personal resources, familial demands, external work conditions, as well as cultural expectations, a fundamental mechanism affecting a Taiwanese female's status comes from her own family life cycle. While females' work continuity has been shown to respond to the demand of family responsibility in various life stages (Yi & Chien, 1999, 2000), a female's domestic status in Taiwan also corresponds to her family life cycle. Unfortunately, there has been a relative lack of attention given to the female's family and work roles across various family life cycles with regard to the linkage between family and employment.

The importance of family stage variation in the decision-making process has been documented. One common attempt is to delineate variations of decision-making patterns (or a wife's domestic status) with the advancement of family life cycles. The relative status between husband and wife in different family stages will enable us to specify the power relations between the couples. Whether couples are happier at early or later stages of life has always been intriguing (Vaillant & Vaillant, 1993; Roger & Amato, 1997); similarly, whether the wife has

more power at earlier or later family life cycles will reveal an important aspect of the conjugal relationship.

To sum up previous studies done in Taiwan, it can be stated that a wife's status as revealed by her familial decision-making power progresses with the development of family life cycles. Among couples from the Taipei metropolitan area, progressing family life cycle is positively associated with the wife's having more active involvement in the household economic management (Yi & Tsai, 1989). Wives with adult children are also more likely to report having higher decision power than wives with smaller children. Similarly, research on couples islandwide indicates that a wife is more likely to decide on household expenses at later family stages. Specifically, a wife's status is slightly higher when compared with her husband's at the middle and later family life cycles (Yi & Tsai, 1989). With the progress of family stages, the Taiwanese wife tends to have more active involvement at home.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that family life cycle still presents a real constraint to females' overall status. Take female employment, for example. Not only does the question of whether mothers with preschoolers should take outside employment remain a controversial issue worldwide, but Taiwanese females in particular at this family stage have generally exhibited a lower employment rate (Yi & Kao, 1986). In other words, if the analysis of the female's status needs to take into account sociocultural norms as reflected in gender role attitudes, then the family life cycle is an equally important variable because of its close linkage to the gender role expectation society places on females in general.

In what follows, two main subjects are targeted. With regard to the Taiwanese female's work role, the official statistics on female education and labor force participation over the last two to three decades will be presented. Relying on relevant survey data, a special effort will be made to show the importance of informal employment to a female's work status in Taiwan. The second focus will be on the female family role through the use of islandwide survey data to demonstrate the domestic power structure in Taiwan. It is the intention of this chapter to examine possible interactions between the female's work role and her family role so as to show the possible economic and cultural effect on the female's changing status at home.

THE FEMALE'S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TAIWAN

The rapid increase of female educational achievement will best illustrate the changing context in which the female's status exists in

Taiwan. Education serves as an important human capital and personal resource; it also results in employment opportunities afterward. The prevalence of educational opportunities for females has repeatedly been shown to be the major factor accounting for the gender equality gradually emerging in Taiwanese society (Yi & Kao, 1986; Tsai, 1996). With the decrease of the education gap between the genders, the rise of labor force participation among Taiwanese females is suggested to reflect the improved educational qualifications of females (Yi, 1993).

To be specific, the educational development of females in Taiwan will be examined from her enrollment in all school levels to further educational opportunities after graduation. Table 17-1 shows that with regard to the literacy rate, it can be seen that although females have a lower literacy rate than males, greater improvement over the decades is observed among the female population, especially after the 1980s. Figures at the primary educational level only have the total rate of males and females combined. This also exhibits a steady increase. The development of secondary education including both junior high and senior high levels has revealed the most interesting pattern. Besides the marked progress of the overall enrollment, which is facilitated by the expansion of mandatory education from 6 years to 9 years since 1968, the gender gap has not only narrowed quickly, but eventually females achieved a

TABLE 17-1. Educational Enrollment in Taiwan: 1960-1998 (%)

| | 1960 | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1998 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Literacy (ages 15+) | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | 83.6 | 89.3 | 92.0 | 94.1 | 95.6 | 95.8 ^a | 96.9 ^a | 98.2 ^a |
| Female | | 59.8 | 68.1 | 75.6 | 80.8 | 84.8 | 87.2 ^a | 89.6a | 91.5 ^a |
| Total | | 71.8 | 79.4 | 84.3 | 87.8 | 90.4 | 92.4 ^a | 94.0 ^a | 94.9a |
| Primary Education (ages 6-11) | 95.6 | 97.2 | 98.0 | 99.3 | 99.7 | 99.9 | 100.5 | 101.4 | 99.8 |
| Secondary Education (ages 12-17) | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 39.1 | 45.9 | 63.5 | 71.5 | 80.9 | 89.0 | 92.9 | 93.8 | 97.1 |
| Female | 21.3 | 29.2 | 44.7 | 59.8 | 79.8 | 92.0 | 97.3 | 97.6 | 100.1 |
| Total | 30.2 | 37.6 | 54.1 | 65.7 | 80.4 | 90.5 | 95.0 | 95.7 | 98.6 |
| College Education (ages 18-24) | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 4.9 | 9.8 | 10.2 | 11.5 | 20.2 ^b | 24.9 ^b | 34.4 ^b | 45.1 ^b | 52.6 ^b |
| Female | 1.3 | 3.5 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 15.5 ^b | 21.3 ^b | 33.9 ^b | 47.8 ^b | 59.8 ^b |
| Total | 3.1 | 6.7 | 8.3 | 9.3 | 17.9 ^b | 23.2b | 34.1 ^b | 46.4 ^b | 56.1 ^b |

Sources: Statistical Yearbook of the ROC (1988, 1999); Taiwan-Fukien Demographic Fact Book, ROC (1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 1998).

^a Figures refer to the population aged 15 and over.

^b College Education (ages 18-21).

higher enrollment rate after the mid-1980s. College-level education, similar to the secondary school, also reveals a higher rate of increase as well as a higher absolute rate of enrollment after 1995 for females. Overall educational development over the last three decades has clearly shown the gender gap decreasing with females' more active enrollment at all educational levels in Taiwan.

The improvement of female educational enrollment over the years is certainly related, but not equivalent to the average educational level attained between the genders. Males consistently enjoy more privilege in educational levels above junior high than females (Table 17-2). Females only at the primary or lower educational levels exceed males proportionately. However, females receiving higher education (junior high and above) have gained significant increases since 1975. As a consequence, the yearly distribution pattern between genders becomes more similar at all educational levels (e.g., 1995 or 1998). By combining the information in Tables 17-1 and 17-2, it becomes evident that over

TABLE 17-2. Educational Attainment in Taiwan^a

| | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1998 ^b |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| Graduate School | | | | | | |
| Male | 0.09 | 0.16 | 0.27 | 0.38 | 0.47 | 1.15 |
| Female | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.47 |
| University | | | | | | |
| Male | 3.52 | 4.58 | 5.18 | 5.56 | 5.36 | 8.06 |
| Female | 1.49 | 2.34 | 3.01 | 3.66 | 3.34 | 5.89 |
| College | | | | | | |
| Male | 3.41 | 4.62 | 5.93 | 7.15 | 6.29 | 9.61 |
| Female | 1.99 | 2.99 | 4.18 | 5.48 | 4.78 | 8.27 |
| Senior or Senior Vocational School | | | | | | |
| Male | 15.46 | 19.17 | 22.96 | 26.15 | 22.47 | 29.22 |
| Female | 10.36 | 15.13 | 20.13 | 24.14 | 20.74 | 27.36 |
| Junior High School | | | | | | |
| Male | 19.12 | 21.15 | 21.57 | 22.00 | 31.08 | 26.04 |
| Female | 14.76 | 17.20 | 17.93 | 18.86 | 28.53 | 22.17 |
| Primary School | | | | | | |
| Male | 48.38 | 42.40 | 37.82 | 34.12 | 30.92 | 23.38 |
| Female | 49.52 | 44.21 | 39.81 | 36.21 | 32.99 | 26.63 |
| Illiterate & Self-taught | | | | | | |
| Male | 10.02 | 7.91 | 6.27 | 4.65 | 3.40 | 2.55 |
| Female | 21.84 | 18.10 | 14.86 | 11.50 | 9.47 | 9.21 |

Source: Taiwan-Fukien Demographic Fact Book, ROC (1975-1998)

^a % of the population aged 6 and above

^b % of the population aged 15 and above

the decades almost the whole female population has received post-elementary education, as have males; females have shown proportionately increasing enrollment at the college level, too. The educational development of Taiwanese females over the last three decades may be described as steadily increasing, and all the while there has been a noticeable decrease in the gender gap.

Another way to examine this issue is to look into changes occurring in the proportion of female students after they graduate from junior high. This is because junior high has become the median educational level in Taiwan. Table 17-3 shows the percentage of males and females entering senior high school, senior vocational high school, or the five-year college since 1950. For the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, enrolled males are in greater proportion to females in the higher educational levels. However, after 1970 females exceed males in the percentage receiving further education. This may be largely owing to the higher numbers of females entering night school as well as extension classes. However, since the most active employment as well as nontraditional gender attitudes are usually observed among this group, the magnitude of change may be regarded as representative of the female's average resources in the society. In other words, official data seem to point in the same direction—that the educational gap in Taiwan between genders is decreasing, and females are approaching the male pattern rather quickly.

TABLE 17-3. Net Percentage of Junior High Graduates Entering Advanced Levels in Taiwan: 1950–1998

| | <i>Average</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> |
|------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1950 | 51.15 | 56.07 | 39.38 |
| 1955 | 63.13 | 67.21 | 54.41 |
| 1960 | 75.88 | 82.59 | 64.02 |
| 1965 | 78.52 | 81.22 | 74.47 |
| 1970 | 82.66 | 81.76 | 84.04 |
| 1975 | 65.82 | 64.14 | 67.97 |
| 1980 | 65.16 | 63.10 | 67.48 |
| 1985 | 71.31 | 70.08 | 72.62 |
| 1990 | 84.70 | 81.40 | 88.09 |
| 1995 | 89.17 | 86.73 | 91.71 |
| 1998 | 93.94 | 92.64 | 95.30 |

Source: Education Statistics of the Republic of China, Ministry of Education, ROC (1998).

THE FEMALES' LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN TAIWAN

The steady increase of female labor force participation in Taiwan echoes the increase of female educational achievement as well as the economic development of the island. As documented repeatedly, the rise of female labor force participation (LFP) slowed down after the mid-1980s, moving gradually from 43.5 percent to 46.3 percent in 1999, but never reaching one-half of the female population (see Table 17-4). It is obviously still lower than in most developed countries and appears to face some fundamental difficulty in breaking the present threshold. However, a close scrutiny of the distribution of employed females by age shows that the general LFP has demonstrated a maturation trend in that not only does the largest age category move from 20–24 to 25–29, but middle-aged and older females also participate in the labor force in higher proportion. In addition, the rate of increase indicates that while the group aged 20 to 24 appears to be stagnant, women aged 25 to 34 have experienced a 68.66 percent and 56.93 percent increase of employment over the last two decades.

Numerous reports have pointed out that the increase in female LFP is achieved by married, rather than unmarried, females. Based on official statistics of Taiwan, if we decompose the general rise in female LFP rate, the unmarried sector actually drops from 60.19 percent to 51.32 percent (1978–1997) while the married sector rises from 31.94

TABLE 17-4. Females' Labor Force Participation Rate in Taiwan: 1980–1999

| | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1999 | Percentage Rate of Increase |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| Ages 20-24 | 57.8 | 62.4 | 64.3 | 61.6 | 58.3 | 9.70 |
| Ages 25-29 | 41.8 | 50.4 | 58.8 | 65.2 | 70.5 | 68.66 |
| Ages 30-34 | 39.7 | 49.2 | 53.3 | 58.3 | 62.3 | 56.93 |
| Ages 35-39 | 43.0 | 52.2 | 54.7 | 59.1 | 63.9 | 48.60 |
| Ages 40-44 | 42.7 | 51.8 | 54.0 | 58.7 | 62.0 | 45.20 |
| Ages 45-49 | 39.1 | 46.0 | 47.9 | 52.0 | 54.8 | 40.10 |
| Ages 50-54 | 30.7 | 38.4 | 38.4 | 41.3 | 42.1 | 37.10 |
| Ages 55-59 | 22.9 | 28.1 | 28.1 | 31.1 | 31.3 | 36.70 |
| Ages 60-64 | 12.4 | 17.0 | 17.0 | 21.1 | 20.6 | 66.10 |
| Total | 39.3 | 43.5 | 44.5 | 45.3 | 46.3 | |

Source: Report on the Manpower Utilization Survey in Taiwan Area, ROC (1980–1999).

percent to 46.09 percent, respectively. In other words, although unmarried females continue to have a higher LFP rate, it is married females who have demonstrated a more active involvement in the labor force. Taiwan clearly corresponds to the global trend of female LFP patterns as well (Yi, 1993).

As can be seen from Table 17-5, the highest married female LFP rate is observed among middle-aged females 30 to 49. Married Taiwanese females of the youngest age group (20 to 24) have shown a relatively low LFP rate—even lower than the average of those in their fifties. However, as to the rate of increase, females in the 25 to 29 age group, regardless of marital status, have the highest rate of increase. In contrast, females aged 20 to 24 (married or not) have shown a relatively low rate of increase. Due to the fact that the general LFP rate for this young group is high, but for the married sector is low, possible constraints from family life cycle such as marriage and childbirth are suspected.

Table 17-6 thus distinguishes the LFP rate of married females with children in various age groups from 1980–1998. Although there has been a general rising trend of all groups over the years, a comparison of those with preschool-age children versus those with older children points out the following noteworthy aspects.

Regarding *absolute LFP rate*:

1. The highest LFP rate has always been married females without children.

TABLE 17-5. Married Females' Labor Force Participation Rate in Taiwan: 1980–1999

| | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1999 | Percentage Rate of Increase |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| Ages 20-24 | 24.7 | 35.3 | 41.7 | 41.7 | 33.9 | 37.25 |
| Ages 25-29 | 30.7 | 38.9 | 46.3 | 48.4 | 53.9 | 75.57 |
| Ages 30-34 | 38.0 | 46.4 | 48.3 | 52.6 | 56.0 | 47.37 |
| Ages 35-39 | 42.6 | 50.9 | 53.1 | 57.2 | 60.9 | 72.96 |
| Ages 40-44 | 43.5 | 50.7 | 52.7 | 58.3 | 60.2 | 38.39 |
| Ages 45-49 | 43.1 | 44.9 | 46.4 | 48.9 | 53.0 | 22.97 |
| Ages 50-54 | 29.7 | 39.5 | 37.6 | 42.6 | 40.7 | 37.04 |
| Ages 55-59 | 25.2 | 25.6 | 28.4 | 31.7 | 31.1 | 23.41 |
| Ages 60-64 | 13.9 | 14.6 | 19.4 | 22.5 | 20.8 | 49.64 |
| Total | 33.2 | 39.8 | 42.5 | 45.8 | 46.8 | |

Source: Report on the Manpower Utilization Survey in Taiwan Area, ROC (1980-1999).

TABLE 17-6. Married Females' Labor Force Participation Rate in Taiwan: By Children's Age Group

| | Have children under 6 years | | | | A | | | B | | Total | No Children | Total | % |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|---|
| | All children under 3 | | All children under 6 | | Total | All children between 6-17 | | All children above 18 | | | | | |
| | All children under 3 | All children under 6 | All children between 6-17 | All children above 18 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1980 | | 26.43 | 33.05 | 28.90 | 43.88 | 23.51 | 35.64 | 39.10 | 33.23 | | | | |
| 1981 | | 26.53 | 31.22 | 28.26 | 39.93 | 22.15 | 32.75 | 39.30 | 31.42 | | | | |
| 1982 | | 28.10 | 30.51 | 28.99 | 40.02 | 21.91 | 32.29 | 41.12 | 31.51 | | | | |
| 1983 | | 30.64 | 38.17 | 33.40 | 43.98 | 25.24 | 35.70 | 48.89 | 35.53 | | | | |
| 1984 | | 34.69 | 42.07 | 37.34 | 47.82 | 27.06 | 38.55 | 50.88 | 38.74 | | | | |
| 1985 | | 37.00 | 42.85 | 39.07 | 49.14 | 27.88 | 39.63 | 48.95 | 39.84 | | | | |
| 1986 | | 39.00 | 43.25 | 40.55 | 51.71 | 29.88 | 41.85 | 50.62 | 41.82 | | | | |
| 1987 | | 40.85 | 46.55 | 42.95 | 54.18 | 30.45 | 43.18 | 56.75 | 43.74 | | | | |
| 1988 | | 40.83 | 44.49 | 42.29 | 52.23 | 30.20 | 41.82 | 56.55 | 42.66 | | | | |
| 1989 | | 43.67 | 46.19 | 44.64 | 53.54 | 30.00 | 42.35 | 54.79 | 43.65 | | | | |
| 1990 | | 43.30 | 44.30 | 43.69 | 52.06 | 29.14 | 41.04 | 55.21 | 42.49 | | | | |
| 1991 | 42.77 | 42.76 | 47.33 | 44.36 | 52.56 | 32.02 | 42.66 | 60.50 | 44.00 | | | | |
| 1992 | 40.36 | 41.21 | 44.18 | 42.30 | 54.25 | 30.28 | 42.49 | 58.24 | 43.23 | | | | |
| 1993 | 41.73 | 41.50 | 45.63 | 42.99 | 55.76 | 31.32 | 43.78 | 59.71 | 44.39 | | | | |
| 1994 | 45.18 | 44.09 | 48.77 | 45.73 | 57.46 | 30.83 | 44.03 | 64.16 | 45.41 | | | | |
| 1995 | 41.39 | 43.55 | 49.57 | 45.75 | 57.51 | 32.30 | 44.45 | 65.01 | 45.75 | | | | |
| 1996 | 43.64 | 46.27 | 51.34 | 48.15 | 59.22 | 33.15 | 45.70 | 62.66 | 47.11 | | | | |
| 1997 | 45.92 | 47.02 | 50.14 | 48.16 | 60.94 | 32.04 | 45.48 | 62.42 | 46.98 | | | | |
| 1998 | 46.84 | 48.73 | 51.04 | 49.60 | 59.23 | 31.28 | 44.20 | 65.58 | 46.50 | | | | |
| □ of Increase ('80-'98) | | 84.40 | 54.4 | 71.60 | 34.98 | 33.05 | 24.02 | 67.7 | 39.93 | | | | |
| □ of Increase ('91-'98) | 9.50 | 14.00 | 7.84 | 11.80 | 12.69 | -2.30 | 3.61 | 8.4 | 5.7 | | | | |

Source: Report on the Manpower Utilization Survey in Taiwan Area, ROC (1980-1999)

2. Among mothers, the highest LFP rate has been females with school-age children (6–17). This phenomenon has been attributed to the lightening of familial demands.
3. Females with children aged 18 or above have consistently assumed the lowest LFP. These are older women who grew up with limited employment opportunities at that time. Their LFP has actually fluctuated since 1990 leading to a negative growth during the 1990s.
4. The LFP rate of married females with the youngest children (under 3 years of age) is second to the lowest among all groups, both in the absolute and in the relative sense. The constant care demand needed by children under 3 clearly presents a constraint for married females' labor force participation.

Regarding the rate of increase:

1. The overall rate of increase from 1980–1998 is the most salient among married females having children under 6 (a total of 71.6 percent versus 24 percent of those with children above 6).
2. Among further classified subgroups, mothers with all children under 6 reveal the strongest progress in their LFP with an 84.4 percent increase rate over the last two decades.
3. If we only focus on mothers with children under 18, it is clear that mothers with the smallest children under 3, although they are relatively less represented in the labor force than mothers with children in other age groups, show a noticeable rate of increase in employment since 1991. These data imply that small children no longer hinder young mothers' LFP.

In short, patterns with regard to married females' labor force participation in Taiwan indicate that despite the general upward trend over the last two decades, the increase is most noticeable among married females, especially those with small children. The age stratification points out that young females in their late twenties, married or not, have the highest rate of increase. When married females are further stratified according to their family life cycle, young mothers with children under 6 (but not under 3) reveal the highest rate of growth in labor force participation. But it is still mothers with school-age children (6–17) who demonstrate the highest labor force participation rate, indicating the importance of child care demands in females' employment behaviors. Of course, we must note that except for older females, female groups have shown an average of more than 40 percent labor force participation rate since the mid-1980s. It is certain that this relatively high proportion of married females' labor force participation has contributed to the rising female's general social status as well as to improved gender relations in Taiwan.

Informal Employment

Another aspect that will receive further discussion is the role of informal employment among Taiwanese females. A substantial proportion of family enterprises and small businesses in Taiwan require manpower from the family, and females usually assume essential roles in daily operations. Previous studies have accurately documented the important functions of informal employment among married females in Taiwan (Lu, 1994; Li & Ka, 1994; Yi, et al., 1998; Yi & Chien, 1999). The most recent report contends that employment in the informal sector before and after marriage is the crucial structural factor contributing to females' continual employment pattern in Taiwan (Yi & Chien, 2000).

Among possible informal employment categories, unpaid family work and self-employed business make up major components of this employment pattern. From 1978 to 1998, females who are engaged in informal work constitute 35 percent to 25 percent of all employed females (Table 17-7); the corresponding figure for males is 38.8 percent to 32.5 percent. Although the general trend is gradually falling, the importance of the informal sector in the Taiwanese economic structure is evident. Between the genders, it is also clear that the family business of a husband's family is the key to a female's continual employment in

TABLE 17-7. Employment Patterns in Taiwan: 1978-1998 (%)

| | <i>Female</i> | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <i>1978</i> | <i>1980</i> | <i>1985</i> | <i>1990</i> | <i>1995</i> | <i>1998</i> |
| Informal Employment | 35.25 | 33.09 | 32.19 | 28.02 | 26.33 | 24.71 |
| Employers ^a | 2.77 | 4.00 | 4.01 | 5.28 | 6.97 | 7.70 |
| Own-account workers ^b | 30.06 | 31.45 | 30.73 | 32.03 | 32.03 | 33.22 |
| Unpaid family workers | 67.17 | 64.55 | 65.25 | 62.69 | 61.00 | 59.08 |
| Formal Employment | 64.75 | 66.91 | 67.81 | 72.01 | 73.70 | 75.29 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | <i>Male</i> | | | | | |
| | <i>1978</i> | <i>1980</i> | <i>1985</i> | <i>1990</i> | <i>1995</i> | <i>1998</i> |
| Informal Employment | 38.82 | 36.88 | 38.02 | 35.09 | 33.59 | 32.53 |
| Employers ^a | 10.90 | 16.24 | 15.83 | 19.44 | 22.28 | 23.89 |
| Own-account workers ^b | 71.24 | 69.26 | 71.13 | 69.60 | 66.58 | 66.30 |
| Unpaid family workers | 17.86 | 14.50 | 13.04 | 10.96 | 11.14 | 9.81 |
| Formal Employment | 61.18 | 63.09 | 61.98 | 64.91 | 66.41 | 67.49 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Yearbook of Manpower Statistics in Taiwan Area, ROC (1978-1998).

^apartner or owner with employees.

^bpartner or owner without employees.

the informal sector (Yi & Chien, 2000). As reflected in the role of family workers, while females are dominant in this category, it is the least important category among males. Instead, owners without or with employees are the salient informal work for males in Taiwan.

It should be pointed out that the role of the boss's wife is indeed essential in all family business (Kao, 1999; Lu, 1998). However, whether to report oneself as partner or owner of an enterprise without employees versus as unpaid family worker is sometimes difficult to distinguish. This is because an unmarried daughter may work for the family without pay and continues the unpaid status in her husband's family. But her roles in the natal family and in her husband's family are likely to be different, with expectations of more responsibilities as the boss's wife after marriage.

THE FEMALE'S DOMESTIC STATUS IN TAIWAN

It has long been argued that the Chinese female's domestic status is largely determined by the cultural and normative expectations of the society (Hsu, 1948). Researchers from Western society point out that among higher classes, the female may appear to enjoy more say in the family decision-making, but her power is actually achieved through the consent of her husband whose greater resources include possible exposure to Western egalitarian norms (Rodman, 1972; Rank, 1982). Relevant studies in Taiwan do not endorse this conclusion (Yi & Tsai, 1989). Instead, as reviewed in the previous section, the dual effects of patriarchy and the resources framework are suspected to account for the domestic power structure in contemporary Taiwan (Yi, et al., 1992; Yi, 1999). In order to validate this argument, besides various resource backgrounds, gender role attitudes as well as family life cycle variation will also be incorporated in the analysis.

This chapter will focus on one aspect of the family status—the conjugal power structure. It is contended that decision-making outcomes will serve as the indicator of marital power or the status relationship at home. Therefore, the perceived decision-making pattern is assumed to reveal a female's relative domestic status. Data are taken from an islandwide survey with a random sample of 500 married couples and 500 married females aged 20 to 64. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in 1995. The husbands' reports are included for the purpose of comparison.

The Familial Decision-Making Pattern

Regarding decision-making patterns in the family, joint decision-making is the most common pattern (see Appendix). Decision items

investigated include financial management (household expenses, savings and investment, amount of money gifts, housing purchase, as well as the decision to move), parental support (coresidence with elders, ways of parental support), and child-related issues (decision to have a child, child discipline, children's schooling). Overall, Taiwanese husbands and wives appear to share decisions in these important family matters.

There are a few exceptions worth mentioning. The husband's occupation is predominantly decided by the husband alone; the wife's participation is almost nil. On the other hand, although wives are most likely to determine their own occupation, the husbands' involvement is still substantial. Children are gaining significant autonomy in their own marital decisions: excluding nonapplicable respondents, only about one-quarter indicated parental arrangements in their marriage. Parental support is another area with a high percentage distribution of decision by others. This is mainly because coresidence with paternal parents was an understood arrangement going into marriage and was not a decision to be decided between the couple.

In addition, despite reports of joint decision-making patterns, the relative power between husbands and wives can be delineated. From the report of both husbands and wives, it is clear that a consensus has been reached regarding the most important familial decision at home (Yi, et al., 2000). After adjusting for couples without nonadult children, financial management is the most important type of decision (Yi et al. 2000). A closer scrutiny reveals that among various items included in family finance, household expenses become the most salient decision among these families (an average of 25 percent) (Yi, et al., 1998).

Therefore, in the following analyses, household expenses will be used to represent the most important familial decision. The relative degree of a wife's involvement in the decision outcome is considered to indicate her relative power position at home. Due to the low proportion of other family members' involvement (around 7 percent), this chapter will focus on decision outcomes between the couple only.

For our major dependent variable, the decision-making pattern is categorized into three types: *mainly husband* includes both "husband only" and "husband mostly," *mainly wife* includes both "wife only" and "wife mostly," and the *joint pattern*. In the following multinomial logistic regression, three sets of coefficients are compared—husband/wife, husband/joint, joint/wife. In addition to personal background factors, the females' employment patterns, family life cycle, as well as the respondents' sex-role attitudes are included in the model in order to analyze the relative importance of various variables on decision-making patterns in the Taiwanese family.

Factors Accounting for Family Decision-Making Patterns: An Analysis of Household Expenses in Taiwan

Separate equations for husbands and wives are estimated; the results of which are presented in Table 17-8 and Table 17-9. Both equations are highly significant as indicated by the likelihood ratio test, and most signs of exogenous variables are consistent with the hypothetical relations as described previously. To compare a wife's and a husband's results concerning household expenses, first, similar patterns will be delineated.

It has been documented that a female's status is related to levels of economic development as well as her social-economic resources. In our analysis, the effect of *urbanization* on both male and female samples is found significant regarding joint versus wife decision-making. The higher the urbanization level, the more likely a wife is to exercise decision power (as compared with the joint pattern). In other words, the urban female in contrast with her rural counterparts tends to have more involvement in decisions on household expenses.

As to *sex role attitudes*, both samples exhibit similar patterns in that the more modern the sex role attitudes, the more likely this decision is not made by husbands. It can be seen that the wife rather than the husband and joint decision instead of decision made only by the husband are favored by respondents with modern attitudes. These findings point out the decrease of a husband's power in relation to the modernity of sex role attitudes.

For the family related variables, the effect of family type is unexpectedly insignificant for both samples. *Family life cycle*, however, exhibits various patterns in different stages. The most observable finding is the comparison between joint versus wife-only decisions. Both Table 17-8 and Table 17-9 show that after children enter school (from ages 7 to 20) as well as after children grow up (20 years and above), a wife is much more likely to dominate in the decision of household expenses. In addition, according to wives' reports, the wife in contrast to the husband has more power in making schooling decisions about the couple's children. This implies that a husband's power, either indicated by his own decision pattern or by his involvement in the shared pattern, is significantly curtailed as the family life cycle gradually matures from having small children to having school-age children. In other words, it appears that as the family life cycle advances, the wife in general enhances her decision power in the family finances.

Previous studies generally agree that the *employment pattern* of the wife or a lessened discrepancy between a husband's and a wife's occupational prestige will result in the wife's more active participation in familial decision-making. In our sample of wives, partial data support

TABLE 17-8. Multinomial Logit Coefficients and Estimated Standard Errors of Household Expenses Decision-Making Pattern: Wife's Sample

| Variables | Ln%P ₁ / P ₃ % | | Ln%P ₂ / P ₃ % | | Ln%P ₁ / P ₂ % | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| | Coefficient | Std. Error | Coefficient | Std. Error | Coefficient | Std. Error |
| Age | 0.0041 | 0.0198 | 0.0177 | 0.0155 | -0.0136 | 0.0189 |
| Education | 0.0256 | 0.0304 | 0.0303 | 0.0244 | -0.0047 | 0.0287 |
| Occupational Prestige | -0.0010** | 0.0005 | -0.0004 | 0.0004 | -0.0006 | 0.0005 |
| Urban vs. Rural | -0.1630 | 0.2221 | -0.2884* | 0.1649 | 0.1254 | 0.2147 |
| Sex-Role Attitudes | -0.1005*** | 0.0211 | 0.0005 | 0.0167 | -0.1010*** | 0.0203 |
| Female's Employment | | | | | | |
| Informal vs. None | 0.1008 | 0.2745 | 0.5734*** | 0.2113 | -0.4727* | 0.2585 |
| Formal vs. None | -0.6257* | 0.3666 | 0.3720 | 0.2626 | -0.9976*** | 0.3494 |
| Family Type | | | | | | |
| Stem vs. Nuclear | 0.0805 | 0.2426 | 0.1050 | 0.1844 | -0.0245 | 0.2314 |
| Extended vs. Nuclear | 0.2195 | 0.3729 | 0.1064 | 0.3241 | 0.1131 | 0.3478 |
| Family Life Cycle | | | | | | |
| Stage2 vs. Stage1 | -0.5915* | 0.3279 | -0.6747*** | 0.2389 | 0.0832 | 0.3084 |
| Stage3 vs. Stage1 | -0.3995 | 0.5177 | -1.1140 | 0.4018 | 0.7145 | 0.4921 |
| Family Total Income | | | | | | |
| \$50,000-\$200,000 vs. under \$50,000 | -0.4094 | 0.2491 | 0.0660 | 0.1768 | -0.4753** | 0.2393 |
| No Answer vs. under \$50,000 | -0.1888 | 0.3180 | -0.0432 | 0.2561 | -0.1456 | 0.3054 |
| Ethnic Origins | | | | | | |
| Hakka vs. Fukienese | 1.0752*** | 0.2865 | 0.5723** | 0.2376 | 0.5028** | 0.2502 |
| Mainlander vs. Fukienese | 0.7746** | 0.3919 | 0.0309 | 0.2957 | 0.7437** | 0.3805 |
| Constant | 2.0338** | 0.9634 | -0.0245 | 0.7647 | 2.0582** | 0.9220 |
| Log-Likelihood | -847.29 | | | | | |
| Likelihood Ratio Test | 132.68*** | | | | | |

Where 1 = Mainly Husband; 2 = Joint; 3 = Mainly Wife

* P < 0.1, ** P < 0.05, *** P < 0.0154

Family Life Cycle: Stage1: youngest child aged 6 and under

Stage2: youngest child aged 7-20

Stage3: youngest child aged 20 and above

this argument. In Table 17-8, it is shown that when the nature of work is categorized into formal work, informal work, and housewife only, wives who specify that they are currently working as informal workers tend to indicate joint decisions in household expenses. Findings concerning joint versus wife and also husband versus joint decision-making clearly indicate this pattern. This may be due to the fact that informal work is largely composed of family enterprise or family farm work, which combines family life and work life at the same location and

TABLE 17-9. Multinomial Logit Coefficients and Estimated Standard Errors of Household Expenses Decision-Making Pattern: Husband's Sample

| Variables | (N=477) | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| | Ln%P ₁ / P ₃ % | | Ln%P ₂ / P ₃ % | | Ln%P ₁ / P ₂ % | |
| | Coefficient | Std. Error | Coefficient | Std. Error | Coefficient | Std. Error |
| Age | 0.0120 | 0.0250 | 0.0182 | 0.0176 | -0.0062 | 0.0237 |
| Education | -0.0136 | 0.0428 | -0.0247 | 0.0334 | 0.0111 | 0.0400 |
| Occupational Prestige | -0.0004 | 0.0005 | -0.0001 | 0.0004 | -0.0002 | 0.0005 |
| Urban vs. Rural | -0.0107 | 0.3208 | -0.3833* | 0.2327 | 0.3726 | 0.3048 |
| Sex-Role Attitudes | -0.0526* | 0.0288 | 0.0123 | 0.0218 | -0.0649** | 0.0273 |
| Male's Employment | | | | | | |
| Formal v.s. Informal & None | 0.0849* | 0.3182 | 0.1293 | 0.2294 | -0.0444 | 0.3011 |
| Family Type | | | | | | |
| Stem vs. Nuclear | 0.4703 | 0.3184 | 0.0045 | 0.2501 | 0.4658 | 0.2996 |
| Extended vs. Nuclear | 0.6298 | 0.5234 | 0.4393 | 0.4484 | 0.1905 | 0.4563 |
| Family Life Cycle | | | | | | |
| Stage2 vs. Stage1 | -0.6343 | 0.4578 | -0.7043** | 0.3146 | 0.0700 | 0.4280 |
| Stage3 vs. Stage1 | 0.0880 | 0.7128 | -0.8898* | 0.5219 | 0.9778 | 0.6665 |
| Family Total Income | | | | | | |
| \$50,000-\$200,000 vs. under \$50,000 | 0.0369 | 0.3193 | 0.1947 | 0.2304 | -0.1578 | 0.2999 |
| No Answer vs. under \$50,000 | -0.1244 | 0.5043 | -0.0981 | 0.4135 | -0.0263 | 0.4753 |
| Ethnic Origins | | | | | | |
| Hakka vs. Fukienese | 0.6014 | 0.4000 | 0.0196 | 0.3249 | 0.5818 | 0.3624 |
| Mainlander vs. Fukienese | -0.8703* | 0.5217 | -0.6106 | 0.3323 | -0.2597 | 0.5187 |
| Constant | 0.0133 | 1.2160 | 0.0179 | 0.8889 | -0.4578 | 1.1550 |
| Log-Likelihood | | | | -847.29 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio Test | | | | 132.68*** | | |

Where 1 = Mainly Husband; 2 = Joint; 3 = Mainly Wife

* P < 0.1, ** P < 0.05, *** P < 0.01

Family Life Cycle: Stage1: youngest child aged 6 and under

Stage2: youngest child aged 7-20

Stage3: youngest child aged 20 and above

during the same time span. Therefore, couples who share life together are likely to decide family economic affairs together.

Results concerning formal work point out that a wife who works at a formal job in contrast to a nonworking wife is favored in household expenses decisions relative to her husband's power. A wife who has formal work tends to exercise joint decision-making versus her husband's dominance in this family economic issue. In other words, when a wife works outside on a formal basis, the husband's power in

decisions about household expenses seems to decrease and gives way to either the wife or to the couple's shared decision outcome.

With regard to *family income*, analysis of our husbands' sample yields insignificant effects. But the wives' sample shows that the higher the family income, the more likely a couple will share decisions rather than for the husband to decide alone. It should be noted that among our wives, joint decision-making in household expenses is the most common pattern for families with higher income, and the husband's domination is least likely. However, among reports by husbands, the husband appears to be more likely than the wife to decide this issue in families with higher income. This result may be attributed to different attitudes toward the importance of household expenses held by husbands and wives. It may also imply different perceptions on personal status in the decision-making pattern.

Perhaps the most interesting finding lies in the result concerning effects of *ethnicity* which yields inconsistent data among husbands versus wives. Previous studies argue that Hakka females enjoy higher domestic status due to their traditionally active role in the household related works/chores (Chuang, 1994). However, according to our unreported analysis, shared decision-making is the most common pattern among Hakka samples (53 percent). In addition, among three major ethnic groups—Fukienese, Hakka, and mainlander, Hakka has the highest distribution of the husband dominant pattern (26 percent versus 17 percent, 18 percent) and the lowest proportion of wife dominant outcomes (21 percent versus 30+ percent).

Results of the multinomial regression shows that after controlling for relevant variables, ethnic origin is indeed a significant factor. A Hakka husband in contrast with a Fukienese husband is more likely to dominate in decisions about household expenses. Conversely, a Hakka wife tends to exert less decision-making power than a Fukienese wife. This is evidenced in all three comparison sets and is significant in the wives' sample while consistent among the husbands' sample.

Nevertheless, the contrast between the mainlander sample as compared to the Fukienese sample leads to conflicting results for husband and wife samples. In the wives' sample, as seen in Table 17-8, mainlanders report more husband's power than Fukienese in both the contrast between husband versus wife and husband versus joint decisions. But for husband's sample (Table 17-9), it was clear that mainlanders report a wife's greater decision-making power than Fukienese in husband versus wife. Since the ethnic origin of a spouse is not considered in the analysis, it will be interesting to see if different combinations of ethnic origins of couples may produce various patterns which help to explain the preceding conflicting findings. Hence, we explore this issue further in Table 17-10.

TABLE 17-10. The Decision-Making Pattern of Household Expenses for Various Ethnic Origins

| Ethnic Origins | Decision-Making Pattern | | | | %(N of Cases) | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|--|
| | Mainly Husband | Joint | Mainly Wife | Others | N of Cases | |
| <i>Wife's Sample</i> | | | | | | |
| H / W: Mainlander | 11.76 (4) | 41.18 (14) | 44.12 (15) | 2.94 (1) | 34 | |
| H / W: Fukienese | 15.36 (98) | 42.16 (269) | 34.80 (222) | 7.68 (49) | 638 | |
| H / W: Hakka | 23.16 (22) | 50.53 (48) | 16.84 (16) | 9.47 (9) | 95 | |
| Mainlander / Fukienese | 6.38 (3) | 46.81 (22) | 34.04 (16) | 12.77 (6) | 47 | |
| Mainlander / Hakka | 20.00 (3) | 46.47 (7) | 26.67 (4) | 6.67 (1) | 15 | |
| Fukienese / Hakka | 25.53 (12) | 44.68 (21) | 23.40 (11) | 6.38 (3) | 47 | |
| Fukienese / Mainlander | 21.21 (7) | 51.52 (17) | 24.24 (8) | 3.03 (1) | 33 | |
| Hakka / Fukienese | 25.58 (11) | 46.51 (20) | 23.26 (10) | 4.65 (2) | 43 | |
| Hakka / Mainlander | 33.33 (2) | 50.00 (3) | 16.67 (1) | 0 | 6 | |
| <i>Husband's Sample</i> | | | | | | |
| H / W: Mainlander | 4.69 (2) | 26.92 (7) | 57.69 (15) | 7.69 (2) | 26 | |
| H / W: Fukienese | 15.48 (50) | 46.44 (150) | 31.27 (101) | 6.81 (22) | 323 | |
| H / W: Hakka | 23.53 (12) | 45.10 (23) | 21.57 (11) | 9.80 (5) | 51 | |
| Mainlander / Fukienese | 11.54 (3) | 42.31 (11) | 38.46 (10) | 7.69 (2) | 26 | |
| Mainlander / Hakka | 10.00 (1) | 70.00 (7) | 10.00 (1) | 10.00 (1) | 10 | |
| Fukienese / Hakka | 20.59 (7) | 47.06 (16) | 23.53 (8) | 8.82 (3) | 34 | |
| Fukienese / Mainlander | 16.67 (3) | 55.56 (10) | 22.20 (4) | 5.56 (1) | 18 | |
| Hakka / Fukienese | 12.50 (3) | 50.00 (12) | 33.30 (8) | 4.17 (1) | 24 | |
| Hakka / Mainlander | 50.00 (2) | 25.00 (1) | 0 | 25.00 (1) | 4 | |

Table 17-10 reports the decision-making pattern of various ethnic combinations of our sample. From the first three rows of both husband's and wife's samples, we can derive a preliminary ranking order of female family status at home for couples with the same ethnic origins. Mainlanders undoubtedly demonstrate that wives have the greatest power in that the percentage of wife domination is higher than either joint or husband's decision. The Fukienese sample ranks second in the power of wives in that while the wife's domination is lower than the joint pattern, it is much higher than the husband's power. Hakka's wives enjoy the least power at home in that not only are joint decisions the most common, but the "mainly husband" category also exceeds the "mainly wife" in proportion. Therefore, regarding wife's decision-making power, it is shown that the mainlander wife has the highest power, followed by the Fukienese, and Hakka wives rank last.

For the mixed combination of couple's ethnic origins, Table 17-10 points out that joint decision-making is the most predominant pattern among our sample (ranging from 42 percent to 70 percent)—except the

husbands' sample of Hakka/mainlander mixed marriages. Despite the joint decision-making pattern, the percentage difference between the wives' reports versus their husbands' reveals:

1. The wife of a mainlander husband is more likely to have more final power in the decision as shown by the higher percentage of "mainly wife" responses.
2. The wife of a Fukienese husband shows the same tendency, but the percentage difference between the "mainly wife" category and the "mainly husband" category is much smaller. (The wife's sample from mixed Fukienese/Hakka marriages actually indicates the slightly higher "mainly husband" response.)
3. The wife of Hakka husband is the only mixed category that reports the wife's subordination to the husband's power (except the husbands' sample of Hakka/Fukienese mixed marriages).

It seems that marriage to a mainlander husband or a Fukienese husband results in the wife's higher status at home, while marrying a Hakka husband may lead to a lesser power position in decision-making. The preliminary analyses imply that the ranking order of mainlander-Fukienese-Hakka regarding the wife's decision power is generally valid. The percentage difference among various mixed ethnic couple's background in Table 17-10 not only coincides with the preceding ranking, but it also supports the significance of ethnicity as a factor in the evaluation of the female's domestic status.

CONCLUSION

This chapter examines Taiwanese females' status in the process of modernization. Females' work role and family role are two main domains of the investigation. Using official statistics, the overall educational development as well as the labor force participation are described with an attempt to delineate contextual background affecting the status improvement of Taiwanese females. The conjugal power structure, indicated by the decision-making outcome, is taken to reflect the females' relative domestic status in Taiwan. The availability of islandwide survey data allows us to analyze possible interactions of females' employment patterns and family status. The importance of informal employment—particular to the Taiwanese setting—as well as the effect of the family life cycle are considered in the discussion of female status in Taiwan.

The report points out that over the last three decades, Taiwanese females have shown a clear rise in educational enrollment and attainment.

The gender gap in education has rapidly decreased with females' educational pattern approaching the males' educational pattern. As to labor force participation, females between 25 and 44 have gradually assumed a higher proportion in the labor force. However, it is married Taiwanese females, especially those with small children under the age of 6, who demonstrated the highest rate of increase in the labor force. The fact that mothers with school-age children continue to have the highest labor force participation rate in contrast with the lower rate of increase for mothers with children under 3 leads us to suspect that strong constraints are placed on a mother's employment behaviors because of child care demands during the family life cycle.

The special contribution of informal employment for Taiwanese females is most evident in its effect on continual employment patterns. Females working for a family enterprise before and after marriage largely constitute this group. Since approximately one-half of females who maintain continual employment fall into the informal category, it is argued that their work role is perhaps an extension of the family role due to the compromise of heavy familial demands during specific family life stages.

Results of a study of the females' domestic status in Taiwan reveal a clear pattern of joint decision-making on most family items. Females appear to enjoy equal status at home. However, a close scrutiny of the most important family issue, namely household expenses, shows that a female's power varies according to personal and family resource variables and sex role attitudes, as well as ethnic background. To be specific, a domestic status improves with employment in the formal sector, advancement of the family life cycle, urban residence, and modern sex role attitudes, as well as with having a mainlander husband. Informal employment, on the other hand, contributes to a joint decision-making pattern. Perhaps the close relationship between couples in business produces a togetherness in the management of family finances. Since household expense is obviously more complicated for these families, shared responsibilities become the normal practice.

Findings concerning the effect of ethnic origin on a female's power relations at home yield interesting results. Mainlanders exhibit the highest rate of female decision-making power, followed by Fukienese, and lastly by Hakka. Even among mixed marriages, the wife of a mainlander husband still enjoys a greater voice. This is probably owing to less normative restrictions on mainlanders who are less likely to coreside with elderly parents because of nonavailability. As a result, wives who marry mainlanders are situated in a more favorable context which allows them to exert influence in the decision-making process.

In sum, the study of female status points out that urbanization and modernization concomitant with economic development in Taiwan result in female labor force participation in formal as well as in informal employment, which in turn enhances a wife's decision-making power and her status at home. This finding adds to and echoes our previous argument in that the growth of contextual factors such as a female's educational development certainly facilitates the female's overall social status in Taiwan. From both the demographic data as well as the survey report, it is documented that specific behavioral and cultural factors, such as informal employment and sex role attitudes, need to be considered in the explanation of the changing status of females in Taiwan.

APPENDIX

Familial Decision-Making Patterns in Taiwan*

| Decision Items | % (N of Cases) | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|--------|-------|------|-------|
| | Mainly Husband | | Joint | | Mainly Wife | | Others | | N.A. | |
| <i>Husband's Sample</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Husband's Job | 82.5 | (426) | 10.1 | (52) | 0.4 | (2) | 6.8 | (35) | 0.2 | (1) |
| Wife's Job | 12.6 | (65) | 29.5 | (152) | 47.1 | (243) | 8.2 | (42) | 2.7 | (14) |
| Household Expenses | 16.0 | (83) | 45.9 | (237) | 30.6 | (158) | 7.2 | (37) | 0.2 | (1) |
| Saving & Investment | 20.0 | (103) | 51.7 | (267) | 19.4 | (100) | 7.2 | (37) | 1.7 | (9) |
| Amount of Money Gift | 25.5 | (132) | 51.4 | (265) | 12.4 | (64) | 10.5 | (54) | 0.2 | (1) |
| Housing Purchase | 12.8 | (66) | 53.9 | (278) | 5.6 | (29) | 18.4 | (95) | 9.3 | (48) |
| Decision of Moving | 12.6 | (65) | 52.7 | (272) | 4.5 | (23) | 20.8 | (107) | 9.5 | (49) |
| Co-Residence with Elders | 15.7 | (81) | 46.1 | (238) | 1.2 | (6) | 33.9 | (175) | 3.1 | (16) |
| Ways of Parental Support | 17.7 | (91) | 45.9 | (237) | 2.2 | (11) | 29.6 | (153) | 4.5 | (23) |
| Child-Birth Decision | 8.2 | (42) | 70.5 | (364) | 5.3 | (27) | 13.8 | (71) | 2.3 | (12) |
| Children Discipline | 10.3 | (53) | 66.3 | (342) | 16.7 | (86) | 5.3 | (27) | 1.6 | (8) |
| Children's Schooling | 8.1 | (42) | 47.1 | (243) | 6.6 | (34) | 30.6 | (158) | 7.6 | (39) |
| Children's Marriage | 1.9 | (10) | 17.1 | (88) | 1.0 | (5) | 41.3 | (213) | 38.8 | (200) |
| <i>Wife's Sample</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Husband's Job | 82.0 | (786) | 10.9 | (104) | 0.3 | (3) | 3.0 | (29) | 3.8 | (36) |
| Wife's Job | 14.0 | (134) | 28.1 | (269) | 44.4 | (425) | 2.4 | (23) | 11.2 | (107) |
| Household Expenses | 16.9 | (162) | 43.9 | (421) | 31.6 | (303) | 5.6 | (54) | 1.9 | (18) |
| Saving & Investment | 22.8 | (218) | 47.4 | (454) | 18.3 | (175) | 4.1 | (40) | 7.4 | (71) |
| Amount of Money Gift | 26.2 | (251) | 51.6 | (494) | 11.2 | (107) | 5.1 | (49) | 5.9 | (57) |
| Housing Purchase | 15.1 | (145) | 48.5 | (465) | 5.2 | (50) | 10.3 | (98) | 20.9 | (200) |
| Decision of Moving | 15.0 | (144) | 48.1 | (461) | 4.1 | (39) | 9.4 | (90) | 23.4 | (224) |
| Co-Residence with Elders | 13.6 | (130) | 41.3 | (396) | 2.7 | (26) | 38.0 | (364) | 4.4 | (42) |
| Ways of Parental Support | 17.2 | (165) | 42.9 | (411) | 3.4 | (33) | 31.7 | (304) | 4.7 | (45) |

(continued)

APPENDIX (continued)

| Decision Items | % (N of Cases) | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|--|
| | Mainly Husband | Joint | Mainly Wife | Others | N.A. | |
| Child-Birth Decision | 8.6 (82) | 66.2 (634) | 8.5 (81) | 2.5 (24) | 14.3 (137) | |
| Children Discipline | 9.6 (92) | 60.9 (583) | 22.0 (211) | 4.0 (38) | 3.5 (34) | |
| Children's Schooling | 7.7 (74) | 43.1 (413) | 8.7 (83) | 29.2 (279) | 11.4 (109) | |
| Children's Marriage | 2.4 (23) | 14.9 (143) | 2.0 (19) | 36.2 (347) | 44.5 (426) | |

N of Husband's Sample = 516; N of Wife's Sample = 958

*Data are taken from "A Study of the Family Status of Women: A Example of Family Decision-Making Pattern." (Yi, et al., 1998)

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