

Abstract

**Remarriage among Childbearing Women in Metro Cebu,
Philippines**

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Demographic studies on marriage in Asia have focused almost exclusively on first marriage. Personal, familial and societal circumstances, particularly of women, have been extensively explored in relation to first entry into marriage. Whether and when people in a society marry are important research questions, as are the changes in the patterns and timing of first unions. Lately, the dissolution of first marriages by separation or divorce in erstwhile traditional Asian societies has also aroused the interest of a number of social scientist. What remains unexplored, however, is the extent of, and circumstances surrounding, subsequent marriages after the first marriage ends. This too should be of interest to Asian demographers, especially considering the fast pace of development and modernization in many Asian countries.

With longitudinal data from a cohort of about 2,000 childbearing women residing in Metropolitan Cebu, Philippines, this study will examine contemporary patterns and determinants of remarriage among women with at least one child in a highly urbanized area of the Philippines. The broad age range of these women (currently 35-69 years old) and the historical data obtained on their education, employment, marriage and fertility experiences, will permit a relatively thorough investigation of the demographic, economic, and psychosocial circumstances leading to women's multiple marriages. A detailed profile of mothers who have remarried as opposed to those who did not can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of marriage and the family in contemporary Philippine society.

The latest round of the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey (CLHNS) has shown that of the 2,018 mothers (out of about 3,000) who have remained in the study since the time they gave birth in 1983-84, 207 (or 10%) reported having gotten married at least twice. Twenty-six of these women reported remarrying more than once. More interesting is the observation that of those who had remarried, 44% are currently in a consensual union. Moreover, majority of those who remarried and are presently in consensual unions were also consensually married in their first union. The data further show that, on average, women who have remarried are younger than those who did not remarry or had stayed in a single union.