

Do Husbands and Wives Agree? Fertility Attitudes and Later Behavior

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Analysis of the extent to which husbands and wives agree in their attitudes toward a number of key issues that may affect fertility behavior shows that although aggregate views of men and women are remarkably similar, marital couples are frequently in disagreement, particularly if measures discounting for chance agreement of responses are employed. In other words, we cannot accept either the husband or the wife as a surrogate respondent. These conclusions are based on data from cross-sectional surveys in a developing society, Taiwan, of 2000 couples in which the wife was of childbearing age. The impact on fertility of such marital disagreement varies with the attitude in question. Followup birth data over a four-year period indicate that, when there is disagreement, it is the wife's attitude that has more influence on fertility, particularly if she has the stronger belief about the future security and status to be derived from a large family and from sons.

In the constellation of factors that may affect fertility, increasing attention has focused recently on the role of the husband and his attitudes toward reproductive goals and toward values and

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beliefs that are potentially related to such goals. In most fertility surveys, the wife has been the focus of attention, partly because detailed information, pregnancy history for example, was more readily and accurately obtained from the wife, although Yaukey's study in Dacca (Yaukey, Roberts, & Griffiths, 1965) raised doubts about the greater accuracy of wives' reports. That the attitudes of the husbands toward fertility should be as pertinent as those of the wife for fertility achievement seems obvious and it has been suggested that, in cultures where males tend to dominate decisions, his views may be the more important (Yaukey, Griffiths, & Roberts, 1967; Mukherjee, 1975).

Considerable emphasis has been given to the issue of communication between husbands and wives on fertility related matters (Mitchell, 1972; Misra, 1966; Yaukey et al., 1967; Stycos, Back, & Hill, 1956) and the possible impact of such communication on use of contraceptives. Kar (1977), for example, shows a positive relationship between husband-wife discussion of fertility goals and acceptance of contraceptive measures by the wife. Discussion, however, is not equivalent to agreement; indeed, it may bring disagreement out into the open and not resolve it. There is relatively little knowledge about how commensurate are the views of marital partners on fertility and fertility-related issues. Data from Thailand (Knodel & Prachuabmoh, 1976) indicate considerable similarity between men and women in family composition preferences and attitudes toward use of contraception. Malaysian data (Coombs & Fernandez 1978) and East Pakistan data (Yaukey et al., 1965) show that congruence of views for marital partners is considerably less than it is for aggregates of men and women.

None of these studies, however, permitted an assessment of how agreement by marital partners affects fertility. For such an assessment, longitudinal data connecting attitude agreement at one point in time to subsequent fertility are required. Data from Taiwan provide the opportunity for such analysis. An extensive series of fertility surveys has been conducted in Taiwan during the past two decades (among many publications, see for example, Freedman & Takeshita, 1969; Sun, Lin, & Freedman, 1978; Coombs & Freedman, 1979). As part of this series, husbands and wives of an island-wide cross-section sample of married women in childbearing ages were interviewed late in 1969 and early in 1970, independently by different interviewers. The interviews, taken a few months apart, were not identical, but there was a considerable overlap in questions regarding fertility goals and fertility-related topics. The

data from the two interviews are matched so that analysis can be carried out on marital pairs. Following the two surveys, information on subsequent births from 1970-1974 was obtained from the Taiwan Population Register, code numbers being used to preserve anonymity for the respondents. This analysis is limited to the 1969 cases where both the husband and the wife were interviewed and where register follow-up data could be obtained (96 percent of those originally interviewed).

The analysis centers on two major issues. The first is the extent to which there is male-female or husband-wife agreement on a number of key attitudes that may affect fertility. We examine the broad issues of whether there are major aggregate differences that need to be taken into account in fertility studies, whether the views of marital partners are similar or dissimilar, and, further, the extent of agreement after chance response factors are weeded out. Since relatively little is known about this topic, it is of major interest in itself. Most fertility studies interview women and it is important to know the extent to which the wife can be considered a surrogate respondent for the husband; that is, can we assume that the wife speaks for the family?

The second focus is on the relation of marital attitude agreement to subsequent childbearing. If attitudes are divergent, to what extent do the differing views affect later fertility behavior? One might assume that where there is high agreement there will be greater likelihood of achieving intentions but it is also possible that, in a somewhat male-dominated culture, the husband's views may be the more important.

EXTENT OF AGREEMENT ON FERTILITY-RELATED ATTITUDES

Information was obtained from both the husband and the wife on 20 attitudes that are potentially relevant to the couple's fertility. They fall into five main categories: 1) attitudes toward number of children thought desirable for themselves and for Taiwanese families in general; 2) preferred number of sons and the strength of this preference; 3) attitudes toward contraception, including use for spacing as well as limiting; 4) expectations about the wife's work and about their children's future activities and contributions to the family; and 5) perceptions of the degree to which present day young people are willing to carry out traditional filial obligations to parents.

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Aggregate Similarities

One of the outstanding findings in these data is the great similarity of the aggregate responses of men and women to these attitudinal questions. The detailed distributions are space-consuming and hence are summarized in the indexes of dissimilarity given in Table 1. This measure indicates the amount of change that is needed to bring two distributions into complete agreement (Freedman & Takeshita, 1969). It is defined as $(\sum |P_i - P'_i|)/2$, where P_i is the percentage in the i^{th} category for one distribution and P'_i is the percentage in the i^{th} category for the other distribution. The higher

Table 1
Aggregate Similarities Between Male and Female Responses
on Fertility Related Attitudes

Attitudes	Index of Dissimilarity ^a
<u>Family Size Ideals</u>	
Ideal number of children for average Taiwanese couple	5.4
Preferred number of children	5.4
Additional children wanted	5.2
Additional boys wanted	3.4
<u>Sex Preference</u>	
Ideal number of boys	3.2
Willingness to keep trying for one son if no boy	10.9
Willingness to keep trying for second son if only one son	10.9
<u>Contraceptive Practices</u>	
Approval of family planning	12.3
Approval of family planning for spacing	7.5
Current use of contraception	2.5
Plans for future use of contraception	15.6
<u>Family Expectations</u>	
Expected means of financial support in old age	8.0
Expect to live with sons when married	12.8
Kind of work desired for sons when grown	17.2
Whether daughter might work before marriage	8.4
Desire for wife's work in future	22.0
<u>Filial Obligation Perceptions</u>	
Willingness of young people to live with parents	6.3
Willingness to give wages to parents	4.3
Willingness to support parents in old age	3.1
Willingness to ask parental advice	8.3

^aThe percentage change required in the distribution of the husbands' responses to make them identical to those of the wives.

the index value, the greater the inconsistency between the two distributions.

At the time of the surveys (1969 and 1970) a majority of both men and women thought that four was an ideal number of children for the average couple in Taiwan, and about a fourth put this number at three. Their preferences for their own families were somewhat smaller, but still concentrated on three or four. (For changes in some of these attitudes since 1970, see Sun, Lin, & Freedman, 1978, pp. 54-70.) About two-thirds of the men and of the women indicated that they wanted no more children, not surprising as over half (54 percent of the women and 58 percent of the men) were over age 30, and their average number of children was 3.7. More men than women wanted additional children, but the low coefficient of dissimilarity (CD) of 5.2 indicates a great similarity in responses.

The additional children wanted were predominantly sons, the CD for this variable and for preferred number of sons being the lowest of all those obtained (3.4 and 3.2). Most men and women (about 70 percent) preferred two sons, and an additional 15 percent preferred three. Both men and women backed this son preference with a willingness to have two or more daughters beyond their "ideal" number of children to ensure having one or two sons, and nearly a fourth of the men and over a third of the women said they would continue to try for a second son regardless of the number beyond their ideal that this would produce. On this issue, however, there is more aggregate divergence in male-female views (CD = 10.9), with stronger support for son preference evidenced by the women.

Approval of the use of contraception was almost universal in 1970, but disapproval or uncertainty was greater among the men (14 percent compared with 5 percent for the women; CD = 12.3). Approval of use before the first child was much lower, however, only 12 percent of the men and 19 percent of the women approving such early use. At the time of the interview, 44 percent of the wives and 42 percent of the husbands said they were using contraception, remarkably similar proportions when it is remembered that there was an interval of some months between the two interviews (CD = 2.5). There was less aggregate agreement on future use of contraception, with considerably more uncertainty expressed by the men (CD = 15.6).

Both men and women overwhelmingly expected help from their children to be their main support in old age, although this was

more characteristic of the women than the men, men being more likely than women to mention a pension or savings as a source of old age support. This support from children was seen largely in terms of living with sons when they are grown and married. Again, this view was held by more women than men ($CD = 12.8$), but held by a high majority of respondents regardless of sex.

While it is generally agreed by both men and women that daughters might work before marriage (79 and 88 percent, respectively), husbands were somewhat more uncertain on this issue. There was far less unanimity regarding the occupation they expected their sons to have (by the time they were 30 years old), the women being much more inclined to favor some kind of government work, whereas the men were more likely to favor business or an entrepreneurial occupation ($CD = 17.2$). The greatest divergence in attitudes between men and women, however, was in regard to the wife's working away from home "when the children are old enough." Although some difference may be due to slight variation in questions, husbands were much more inclined to reply that the wife should remain a full-time housekeeper (72 percent compared to 50 percent for the wives).

On the topic of young people's willingness nowadays to assume traditional roles of filial responsibility the views of both sexes were similar. Greatest agreement is on willingness to support parents in old age, 88 percent of the women and 85 percent of the men thinking this is just as frequent as it used to be. Fewer think young people are as willing as formerly to live with their parents after marriage (53 percent of women and 46 percent of men). Children are still perceived by most women and men as just as willing to give part of their wages to their parents (71 percent and 67 percent respectively) but as less willing to ask parental advice.

Thus, if aggregate attitudes towards fertility and fertility-related values are the focus of concern, it would seem to make little difference whether men or women were interviewed. Only on the questions of suitable occupations for sons and the appropriateness of married women working are there any marked divergences in the views of the sexes.

Attitudes of Marital Partners

The general male-female attitude agreement which characterizes Taiwan households in the aggregate is less frequently found, however, for marital partners. Those with similar views are

not necessarily married to each other, and husbands and wives may disagree. We have used several measures of agreement for the marital pairs. One is the proportion of couples who gave identical answers to the questions, that is, the percent on the main diagonal of a husband-wife matrix. To allow for the chance or random factor in such agreement the C statistic developed by Ryder has been computed and the consistency or reliability index of Brackbill. Both have their limitations (see Brackbill 1974, Coombs 1977 and 1978, and Ryder 1979 for a discussion of the derivation and the strengths and weaknesses of the measures). The reliability index allows for the differences in the male and female population bases, which is appropriate for these data. The C statistic, developed to test non-random consistency over time in the responses of the same individuals, does not allow for such differences. On the other hand, the C statistic is less affected by extreme skewness. Consequently, where a social norm is reflected in a dominating response category, it gives a higher and probably a better measure of agreement than does the index. In general, the index is somewhat higher than the C statistic, although in relative terms they present very similar pictures of the degree of agreement between the spouses on the attitudes under study here.

Table 2 presents the measures of agreement between husbands and wives on the fertility-related attitudes. Because such measures are affected by the number of categories used in the coding, this information is included in the last column of the table. A glance at the first column shows that the responses of husbands and wives are by no means always identical. The degree of agreement varies with the attitudes considered.

Focusing first on statements about reproductive goals, we find greater agreement on the number of additional children wanted than on total goals, whether for the respondents themselves or for others. In the sequential process of family building, next steps may be easier to agree on than ultimate goals, particularly if, as in this sample, nearly two-thirds want no more children. We do not have data as to whether this agreement is a result of discussion or shared cultural values. In any event, about 70 percent of the husbands and wives agree on additional births wanted and the C statistic and consistency index (columns 2 and 3) indicate that, even if allowance is made for chance agreement, the degree of unanimity is high. Couples are less likely to agree on either their own preferred total number of children or what they think is best for the average Taiwanese family.

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Table 2

Measures of Agreement Between Husbands and Wives
on Fertility Related Attitudes

Attitude	Percent Identical Responses (1)	Consistency Index ^a (2)	"C" Statistic ^b (3)	Number of Response Categories (4)
<u>Family Size Ideals</u>				
Ideal Taiwan family	45.9	15.2	7.3	10
Preferred number of children	50.2	27.8	14.6	8
Additional children wanted	69.4	46.2	39.7	9
Additional sons wanted	76.6	53.2	52.4	7
<u>Sex Preference</u>				
Ideal number of sons	65.3	23.5	26.6	9
Try regardless for one son	41.6	40.9	9.9	8
Try regardless for two sons	36.6	21.4	5.3	8
<u>Contraceptive Practices</u>				
Approval of family planning	48.7	17.3	8.6	6
Approval for spacing	52.3	5.6	4.7	6
Current use of contraception	80.7	63.8	61.3	2
Future use of contraception	82.5	74.6	47.2	2
<u>Family Expectations</u>				
Means of financial support	53.5	28.4	16.6	9
Live with sons when married	54.1	22.7	13.8	6
Desired occupation for sons	27.8	21.5	3.2	10
Daughter work before marriage	73.9	13.0	28.6	3
Desire for wife's work in future	54.2	16.1	7.1	3
<u>Filial Obligation Perceptions</u>				
Willingness of young people to:				
Live with parents	57.3	24.6	18.5	3
Give wages to parents	60.4	11.7	14.4	3
Support parents in old age	79.6	13.8	41.4	3
Ask parental advice	57.4	17.2	14.5	3

^aComputed by Brackbill method.

^bComputed by Ryder method.

The value placed on sons has traditionally been an important factor in Taiwanese fertility (Williamson, 1972; Freedman & Coombs, 1974) and there is greater agreement by spouses on preferred number of sons than on preferred total number of children, regardless of the measure used. Supporting the desire for sons is the willingness of many couples to go beyond their preferred number of children to have one or two sons. On this question spouses are less apt to agree, although there is a greater congruency of views about accepting "unwanted fertility" to get one son than to get two. The source of disagreement lies mainly in

the greater willingness of wives to keep trying for two sons regardless of the number of daughters already born. Although reliance on sons for both filial and economic reasons is strong among both men and women in Taiwan, wives may be more dependent than husbands on sons to achieve status and an accepted role in society (Wolf, 1972).

Husbands and wives tend to agree on attitudes toward contraception (mostly positive) but the degree of approval in general is somewhat greater among husbands. Couples are quite likely to agree about the undesirability of use before the first child is born. For both of these contraceptive use attitudes, however, agreement is low if chance factors are removed (columns 2 and 3). In regard to their personal situation, 80 percent agree as to whether they are using contraception currently (disagreement may be partly affected by the differences in date of interview), and 73 percent agree about plans for future use. Reassuringly, chance factors appear to play little role in these responses, as both the C statistic and the index are high.

Spouse agreement about what they expect from their children, however, is only moderate. About half have the same expectations about the role of children and other sources of financial support in their old age and about the same proportion agree about whether they will live with their sons when they are married. Husbands and wives are more likely to have the same view about whether their daughters might work before they are married; 74 percent gave identical responses and the C ratio is 28.6. This agreement about daughters working before marriage may not extend to their working after marriage and childbearing begins. No direct question on this subject was asked in either interview, but couples were asked about their attitude toward the wife working after the children were "old enough". This question was limited to the 82 percent of the households where the wife was not currently employed outside the home, and referred to attitudes toward future work. About 50 percent of the spouses gave identical responses, with a heavy weighting of negative attitudes. Only four percent of the couples agreed that it would be a good idea for the wife to work, although 25 percent of the wives took this view.

Less than a third of the marital partners agreed about what a son's future occupation should be. If allowance is made for chance factors, the consistency index and C statistic are low, 22 and 3 respectively. Part of this lack of congruence might be attributed to coding problems and the detail of occupation categories

used but, even when the categories are condensed to minimize this effect, it is clear that spouses do not see eye to eye on this subject. For example, among couples where the wife expects her sons to pursue some kind of government career (the choice of nearly 40 percent of the wives), only one husband out of four agrees with this goal. The husbands are more likely to hope for a role in business or industry for their sons. How much this difference results from the wife's greater need for security in old age is open to question, but it is an hypothesis worth entertaining in view of the greater tendency among wives to expect support in their old age from their children.

The issue of whether young people are as willing as formerly to support parents in old age is one on which there was very high agreement between spouses. Eighty percent gave identical responses (overwhelmingly feeling children are as filial as formerly) and the measure of agreement is especially high for the C statistic, which is not affected by the skewness in responses on this strongly held social norm. There was less congruence in husband-wife views about the willingness of children to live with their parents after marriage, just over half the couples being in complete agreement on this issue. The off-diagonal responses tend to concentrate in husbands viewing children as less willing to live with parents after marriage than do their wives. The pattern is similar for perceptions of the willingness of young people to give part of their wages to their parents and to ask parental advice about their affairs.

Status Variation

Couple agreement on most of these attitudes is not status dependent, the level of agreement being about the same regardless of education, urbanization, age, marriage duration, or parity, irrespective of the agreement measure used (data not shown). There are a few interesting exceptions, however. Poorly educated husbands and wives are less likely to agree about the use of family planning, but more likely than the better educated to agree about the number of children wanted, about expected source of support in their old age, and about anticipation of living with married sons. Significant rural-urban difference in couple agreement is found only for expected old age support; rural couples are much more likely to agree that children are the expected source of support. Younger husbands and wives, and those who have been married for fewer years, are less likely to agree about the number

of children wanted but more likely to agree that they would "try regardless" to have a son. Higher parity produces greater agreement on additional children wanted and approval of family planning, as well as on expectations about living with married sons and old age support. There are probably few uncertainties about the future for couples longer established, and they are more likely to agree.

Thus we see that although for some familial attitudes there is a relatively high degree of spouse agreement, for others there is a considerable margin of difference, more than would be expected from aggregate comparisons of men's and women's attitudes. Neither marital partner can be considered a surrogate respondent for the other. The extent to which this agreement or disagreement affects a couple's later fertility is examined in the following section.

ATTITUDE AGREEMENT AND LATER FERTILITY

Conjugal agreement on some of the attitudes we have been exploring, while interesting in itself, appears to have little to do with the subsequent fertility of the couple. Congruent attitudes on generalized ideals about number and sex of offspring, or on general approval of contraception to achieve these ideals, make no appreciable difference in the number of births in the four year follow-up period, even after adjusting for marriage duration and number of children already born (data not shown). In general, there is high consensus on these matters, so there is little opportunity for the effects of husband-wife differences to appear. For attitudes that are more specific or are supportive of family size goals, however, we find a number of interesting relationships to subsequent fertility.

In this part of our analysis it is crucial to know not just whether husbands and wives agree in their attitudes, but what they agree on and the nature of the disagreement if it exists. Consequently, we will use more detailed indicators, rather than the measures of degree of consistency presented earlier. We find in these data that two broad attitudinal domains bear on later fertility: the first, attitudes toward benefits of children to parents; the second, attitudes toward additional children and the means of achieving such goals.

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Filial Relationships and Obligations

Table 3 presents the variation in mean number of births in the follow-up period of 1970-1974 by categories of husband and wife agreement on expected support or living arrangements with their children, and on perceived willingness of children today to carry out selected filial obligations compared to the past. Because the

Table 3
Number of Follow-up Period Births, and Number of Births, Marriage through Follow-up, on Selected Attitudes on Filial Relationships

Attitudes on Filial Relationships	Mean Number of Live Births 1970-1974		Marriage to 1974		Number of Cases*
	Actual	Adjusted for Marriage Duration	Actual	Adjusted for Marriage Duration	
<u>Expect support from children in old age</u>					
Neither H nor W expects	.37	.29	3.78	3.96	506
W doesn't; H does	.33	.38	4.46	4.40	250
W does; H doesn't	.44	.45	4.50	4.56	348
Both H and W expect	.48	.52	4.76	4.68	815
<u>Expect to live with sons</u>					
Neither H nor W expects	.34	.29	3.93	4.00	368
W doesn't; H does	.43	.39	4.26	4.34	220
W does; H doesn't	.43	.42	4.45	4.47	461
Both H and W expect	.46	.48	4.62	4.77	889
<u>Present Filial Willingness vs. the Past:</u>					
<u>To support parents</u>					
W thinks less willing than H	.37	.38	4.29	4.20	166
W and H agree	.45	.43	4.38	4.41	1532
W thinks more willing than H	.32	.35	4.62	4.49	229
<u>To live with parents</u>					
W thinks less willing than H	.44	.42	4.24	4.24	316
W and H agree	.45	.43	4.38	4.41	1078
W thinks more willing than H	.38	.40	4.57	4.49	490
<u>To contribute wages to parents</u>					
W thinks less willing than H	.37	.37	4.27	4.28	320
W and H agree	.47	.45	4.42	4.45	1130
W thinks more willing than H	.35	.37	4.44	4.37	425
<u>To ask parental advice</u>					
W thinks less willing than H	.39	.38	4.26	4.27	316
W and H agree	.46	.45	4.46	4.46	1088
W thinks more willing than H	.38	.37	4.42	4.43	502
Grand Mean	.42		4.40		1939

*Total number of cases varies due to exclusion of non-responses.

length of time married has such a strong relationship to continued childbearing, we control for this factor in the adjusted means derived through dummy variable regression analysis (Andrews, Morgan, Sonquist, & Klem, 1973). Further controls for number of living children and for pregnancy status in 1970 produced similar results and hence are not included in the table.

We anticipated that the expectation that children will be their primary source of financial support in old age and that they will live with their married sons the rest of their lives would be strong bolstering social mechanisms for having more children. We find couples agreeing that children will be their source of support had a greater number of births in the prospective period than did those agreeing that children will not be their main old age support, with this relationship accentuated by marriage duration controls. If the couple disagrees, prospective fertility is at an intermediate level, but it is the wife's view of future support that has the greater fertility impact. If she expects support from her children, she has more births in the follow-up period. The relationships to expected filial living arrangements are similar. While the differences are small, almost inevitably so for the brief followup period, the pattern is consistent. If viewed over the completed span of married life, the birth differences between the extreme categories are about .75 children, a fairly sizable demographic impact.

More general views of the willingness of present day young people to fulfill the filial obligations prescribed in the past are also related to subsequent fertility, but not to as great an extent. The agreement on these various issues is considerable and the overwhelming view is that children are as willing as formerly to support parents in old age, to live with them after marriage, to contribute wages before marriage, and to ask parental advice. For each attitude, agreement between husband and wife is associated with more births in the follow-up period. The disagreement pattern is that there are fewer births if it is the wife rather than the husband who thinks children are less filial. These birth differences are changed little when marriage duration is controlled. Although the differences are relatively small, the pattern is systematic and the attitudes have a consistent impact on fertility. There is a certain ambiguity in questions about such general attitudes relating to broad social changes in which the reference point may be different for each respondent. In other work, we found these questions to elicit relatively inconsistent responses on re-interview (Coombs, 1977). Nevertheless, they appear to tap a domain of attitudinal

support for greater childbearing, although not as important in this regard as views about the respondents' expectations from their own children.

Reproductive Goals

Even more important for prospective fertility is the agreement of husband and wife about additional childbearing. The first bank in Table 4 shows considerable variation in the number of follow-up period births depending on whether or not the husband and wife agreed about the number of additional births they wanted, and what that agreement was. If both wanted no more births, prospective fertility was very low, .12 births over the four-year period. If both wanted at least one birth, they had an average of 1.10 births. If they disagreed about additional births, later childbearing was at an intermediate level but the wife's view appears the more crucial. If she wanted another child and her husband did not, they were almost twice as likely to have one than if the situation was reversed. These relationships are quite strong considering the relatively small number of births in the follow-up period for the sample as a whole, and are reduced only slightly when marriage duration is controlled.

Congruence between husband's and wife's views about having an additional son also has a strong relation to subsequent fertility (Table 4). Fewest births occurred if they agreed on this issue, the agreement largely being that no more were wanted. If the wife wanted more additional sons than the husband, the subsequent birth rate was higher than if the husband wanted more.

We appear to be finding a picture of domination of the role of the wife in fertility decisions. This would be an oversimplification in a society which traditionally has been male-oriented, albeit the wife in Taiwan has always had an important familial role. Her security in the role, however, has been tied to bearing children and particularly sons, and one reflection of their importance is in her attitude toward trying to have two sons regardless of how many children she had to bear in order to do so. If she is willing to "try regardless", the couple has more children in the follow-up period. The differences are quite substantial, indicating the important bolstering effect on fertility of this attitude. (Table 4, second bank). Moreover, this is true whether or not the couple already has two or more sons (data not shown). Apparently the basic attitude itself is important for fertility, not just the achieved sex composition. If husband and wife disagree, the subsequent birth rates are inter-

mediate, but in the one comparison possible the follow-up period birth rate (adjusted for marriage duration) is higher if it is the husband who would continue regardless, a reversal of the general pattern found in these data.

Contraceptive Practice

Husband-wife differences in general approval of contraceptive practice made no appreciable difference in the couple's subsequent fertility, once marriage duration was taken into consideration (data not shown). Attitude toward use before the first birth is somewhat more relevant to follow-up period births. This question must tap a dimension of broader attitudes toward fertility control, as nearly all of these wives had already had their first birth by 1970. Agreement in approving use right after marriage is related to fewer births in the follow-up period (Table 4, third bank). If the wife approves more than the husband, subsequent fertility is similar to that for couples who agree, after marriage duration is taken into consideration. If the wife approves less, however, they are likely to have more births in the follow-up period.

As might be expected, however, the behavior of the couples, their actual practice of contraception, was more important for later fertility than were the attitudes toward such practice. The reports of husband and wife about current contraceptive use were not always identical, although in 80 percent of the cases they were in complete agreement. The discrepancies may have a variety of sources. First, of course, is the differing interview date; actual changes in practice may have occurred. But there may also be differences in how contraceptive practice was defined by the husband and wife, as well as inaccuracies in reporting or recording the information. Nevertheless, follow-up births are clearly related to consistencies of reported use. Births are fewest if both spouses report use and most numerous if neither reports use, with the rates for those with mixed reports falling in between, but much closer to the rates of the agreed users. They are also lower if it is the husband who reports use than if it is the wife who does so. This would argue in favor of greater accuracy of the husband's reports than of the wives. It is possible there is more tendency among women to over-report contraceptive use, perhaps to please interviewers, than there is among the men. Of course, we should also consider the fact that there may be more subfecundity among wives reporting

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no current use of a method while their husbands do report use, which could contribute to lower birth rates for these women, but we do not have the data to check this out.

DISCUSSION

While the attitudes of Taiwanese men and women about a variety of fertility-related topics do not differ greatly, it would be a

Table 4

Number of Follow-up Period Births, by Husband-Wife Agreement on Additional Children Wanted and Contraceptive Practice

Mean Number of Births 1970-1974						
	Actual	Adjusted ^a	(N)	Actual	Adjusted ^a	(N) ^b
<u>Additional children wanted</u>						
W=0; H=0	.12	.19	1,140			
W=0; H=1+	.40	.34	201			
W=1+; H=0	.70	.69	136			
W=1+; H=1+	1.10	.93	474			
<u>Would try regardless for two sons</u>						
<u>Have no sons</u>						
W=No; H=No	.88	.69	60			
W=No; H=Yes	-	-	9			
W=Yes; H=No	1.34	1.15	21			
W=Yes; H=Yes	1.54	1.20	32			
<u>Approve contraception before first birth</u>						
W-H agree	.39	.40	946			
W approves > H	.42	.40	386			
W approves < H	.50	.47	237			
<u>Additional boys wanted</u>						
W = H	.34	.39	1,542			
W < H	.67	.44	202			
W > H	.84	.71	131			
<u>Would try regardless for two sons</u>						
<u>Have one son</u>						
W=No; H=No	.47	.37	184			
W=No; H=Yes	.99	.94	25			
W=Yes; H=No	1.04	.77	47			
W=Yes; H=Yes	1.23	1.01	39			
<u>Current use of contraception</u>						
W=Yes; H=Yes	.10	.20	661			
W=No; H=Yes	.19	.23	214			
W=Yes; H=No	.28	.34	167			
W=No; H=No	.75	.65	903			
Grand Mean	.42			4.40		1,939

^aAdjusted for marriage duration.

^bTotal number of cases varies due to exclusion of non-responses.

-Less than 20 cases.

mistake to assume that it makes no difference which sex is interviewed in fertility studies. The general aggregate male-female agreement does not necessarily extend to marital partners. While the degree of congruence in views is remarkably high on some topics, particularly those that relate to traditional familial norms such as willingness of children to carry out filial obligations, for others considerably less than half the couples share identical views; and, if allowance is made for chance identity of responses, the proportion agreeing is considerably lower. Since we find that these fertility-related attitudes do affect the rate of subsequent childbearing, both husband and wife views are important. It would be hazardous to rely on the "surrogate respondent" or to assume that one partner speaks for the family.

It might be supposed that increased urbanization and education, accompanied as it is by a breaking away from parentally arranged marriages and consequently more self selection of mates, would promote more similar values and attitudes between husbands and wives, but such is not the case for the Taiwanese couples in this study. Greater agreement is found among the less educated and more rural couples who may not have shared the changes in familial values and norms which the better educated have been experiencing. Thus with rising education we may find it increasingly important to obtain information from both marital partners.

Identical or very similar views on the part of husbands and wives are mutually supportive and have an impact on their fertility. Longitudinal data provide a better perspective on such relationships than do cross-sectional data, although in analysis not reported we found similar effects for lifetime fertility. But cross-sectional correlates of fertility may lead to inferences about the relationship of particular attitudes to behavior that are misleading. The attitude may follow behavior rather than vice versa or, of course, both may be attributable to other, unmeasured factors. We find in these longitudinal data that, when husbands and wives have mutually supportive views of a more traditional character, their subsequent fertility is higher than if these views are less traditional, irrespective of the length of marriage or the number of children they already have.

If there is spouse disagreement in attitudes later fertility is generally lower. In these situations the wife's views appear to be the more important for continued childbearing. This may appear

incongruous in a society that traditionally has been oriented strongly toward males. However, many of the attitudes we have been comparing are related to traditional views about the utility of children, and in this context the wife may see her familial role as strongly related to her security both current and future. She is likely to see her social and familial status as clearly tied to the bearing of children and of sons, and consequently her attitudes are the more likely to be strong and prevail. The implication of this for economic development is that the society needs to provide other means of social and economic security for women if birth rates are to continue to decline. There has been considerable discussion about the role of social security or pension systems in fertility changes in developing countries. These data would indicate that unless such systems are clearly tied to benefits for wives, especially if they outlive husbands, they will fall short in their hoped-for fertility impact. Where wives see themselves as dependent on children in their old age, they tend to have more of them, and the dependence on sons is an added impetus in this direction.

It is not just future economic security that may be important, however. In other analyses (Coombs & Freedman, 1979) we have found that increased education appears to affect the wife's fertility goals heavily through her increased exposure to non-home-oriented activities and influences. Work in the modern market sector is one such activity. Such work, however, can affect fertility not only through a broadened outlook or time constraints on child-rearing, but also through her increased status and influence because of her economic contribution to the household. Her current as well as her future security need not be as strongly tied to the bearing of children as it has been in the past. Research by Fried and Udry (1979) finds that the wife's role in decisions about child-bearing is more dominant if she does not work, the inference being that her greater home orientation means she has more at stake on such issues. The situation may be similar in Taiwan. But attitudes toward future work for wives is one area on which there was considerable disagreement in these data, with husbands much less favorable to such participation. A broadened educational system which is not accompanied by greater economic opportunities for women may fall short of expected fertility effects. Education is often viewed as a liberating influence, but unless it opens more avenues for women, including a broader, less exclusively home-

oriented, life style and work opportunities in the modern market sector, it may not have the impact on fertility that is conventionally expected.

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