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Strategic leadership and management in the Philippines: dynamics of gender and culture

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Abstract

A recent study of Filipina¹ managers and entrepreneurs found that the meaning of *strategic* leadership and managerial behaviour in the Philippines was embedded in culture and gender dimensions. The study examined industry peer and employee perceptions and expectations of strategic leaders and strategic managers in the Philippines, and the ways in which effective Filipina business leaders in Metro Manila enact their roles in everyday work situations.

Many effective Filipina business leaders integrated direct power roles—traditionally associated with male Filipinos—indirect power and influence strategies, and formal position power to achieve their strategic objectives. Gendered values in perceptions and expectations of women in leadership are identified, as are the ways in which effective leaders reconciled these tensions. The ways in which Filipino businesswomen integrated ethical leadership practices with gender role expectations and cultural dynamics are also analysed.

The paper concludes that dimensions of business leadership must be examined through multiple lenses of gender as well as culture for a more complete understanding of effective strategic leadership and management.

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Background

Traditional management theory has defined the functions of the manager in terms of planning and budgeting, organising and staffing, motivating, controlling and problem-solving (Bass and Stogdill 1990; Kotter 1988, 1990). In modern corporate management models, strategic leaders help develop a vision of their firm's future, promote the firm's vision and mission, take a clear stand which is consistent with the organisation's mission and philosophy, stimulate change, influence others by enthusiasm and inspiration, and motivate employees to achieve the firm's goals (Bass 1985; Boyatzis 1993; Drucker 1995; Kanter 1983; Kotter 1990).

In contrast, strategic managers are usually responsible for developing and implementing business plans to ensure their firm's long-range survival (Ansoff and McDonnell 1990; Thompson and Strickland 1996). Managerial roles focus on establishing and maintaining competitive advantage, planning and allocating resources, problem-solving and influence by consensus, and producing predictable results (Boyatzis 1993:6). Not all effective strategic managers are effective leaders, and not all effective strategic leaders are effective managers (Kotter 1988, 1990; Mintzberg 1973, 1975). In analysing the changes required for modern organisations to deal with rapid environmental changes, Kotter has emphasised the importance of competent leadership to develop and maintain an organisational culture which in turn 'can foster both leadership and management' (Kotter 1990:137).

While Filipino management literature has discussed some elements of Filipino culture which arguably affect organisational behaviour in the Philippines, it has paid insufficient attention to the *strategic* business leadership characteristics of Filipino businesswomen. Abdoolcarim (1993), and Licuanan (1992a, 1992b, 1992c) and Tapales (1985) have documented the increased profile and awareness of women in positions of responsibility in the Philippine public and private sectors. Andres (1981, 1985), Franco (1987), Gonzalez (1987), and Jocano (1990) examined the managerial and organisational implications of *pakikisama*, the Tagalog term for a Filipino preference for conformity to group decisions and for the maintenance of 'smooth interpersonal relationships' (SIR), rather than acting as an individual. 'Smooth interpersonal relationships' serve to maintain *amor propio* (self-respect) and avoid *hiya* (shame). Despite the presence of a significant and increasing minority of women in management and administrative positions in the Philippines (International Labour Organization 1996, Tapales 1985), none of the above writers examined the implications of smooth interpersonal relationships, *amor propio*, or *hiya* from a female manager's perspective. With notable research exceptions (for example, Alvarez and Alvarez 1972; Hoffarth 1989, 1990, 1992; Licuanan 1992a, 1992b, 1992c; Tapales 1985) management literature has generally assumed that Filipino business leaders are male.

Hoffarth and Licuanan provided the most comprehensive studies available to date of the background characteristics of Filipina managers and entrepreneurs. There has been

little research, however, on the ways in which Filipino women executives, senior managers and entrepreneurs exercise the strategic elements of their business leadership roles, or investigation of the gendered cultural dynamics which provide the context for effective strategic leadership. The most extensive research on women in business leadership has been conducted in Western countries, and international research literature contains scant material on the characteristics and organisational contexts of effective female strategic leaders and managers in Southeast Asian countries.

While this study focuses on Filipina business leadership in the 1990s, the Philippines business and political environment during the 1970s and 1980s provides the background context for the development of 'effective' female business leaders.

Philippine business leadership: contextual issues

In comparison with other countries in the region, Filipino women are widely perceived to have high status in contemporary business and public sector activities (Abdoolcarim 1993; Aguilar 1990; Licuanan 1992b; Tapales 1985). Data from the International Labor Organization for the period 1986–95 indicate that while women's participation increased marginally from 64.1 to 64.3 per cent of total employment in professional and technical positions in the Philippines, their representation in administrative and managerial positions increased from 22.7 to 32.8 per cent (International Labour Organization 1996). The stronger representation of women in

public sector management in the Philippines (over 30 per cent at senior administrative level and 50 per cent at middle administrative levels) is confounded by the inclusion of teachers and educational administrators. Tapales' research indicates that Filipino women in public sector management occupy 'apprenticeship' positions before being promoted to senior management positions. In their analysis of 1973 Bureau of Census and Statistics data, Montiel and Hollnsteiner (1976:19) reported that 'female-dominated jobs seldom entail strategic, decision-making tasks', with male Filipinos occupying 77.9 per cent of administrative, executive, and managerial positions at that time. There has been insufficient recent published research to permit comprehensive analysis of Filipino women's career trajectories in the private sector, and aggregate ILO data preclude identification of the *strategic* leadership roles or decision-making authority of women in administrative and managerial positions.

Family alliances, kinship dynamics or personal alliance system (Davis and Hollnsteiner 1969; Hollnsteiner 1975) and 'adherence to personal leaders' (particularly 'kinsmen') underpin political structures and processes in the Philippines (Lande 1968:727). The historical connection between Philippines family business enterprises and political processes reflects dyadic alliances and transactions of strategic benefit to both parties. While Lande (1968:736) argued that such alliances transcended 'economic group and class' boundaries in Philippine politics, Tapales (1985) and Tancangco (1990) focused on gendered dimensions of political and government structures in the Philippines. Tapales found no significant gender

differences between Filipino government administrators in their perceptions of their influence on policy formulation (Tapales 1985:54–55). The status of women in Philippine political leadership received increased international attention during Cory Aquino's presidency. While 'women have always been part of Philippine election campaigns' (Tancangco 1990:345), they are underrepresented as both candidates and elected political leaders relative to the actual proportion of women in the population. Filipino perceptions of women's suitability for political leadership has been equivocal (Tancangco 1990). Filipino voters perceive women as being less corrupt and having more integrity and sincerity than males. Despite these perceptions, and women's rating of 'moral integrity and honesty' as the main desired characteristic of elected political leaders in the late 1980s (Tancangco 1990:357), Filipinos still emphasise the family rather than public political roles as women's primary responsibility. In describing the political communication processes and alliances in the Philippines, Asuncion-Lande and Lande (1992) subsume political candidates under the masculine pronoun.

[T]he candidate forges alliances with candidates from other regions, both in his own party and the opposing one...a senator seeking votes in another region promises to direct some of his 'pork barrel' there (Asuncion-Lande and Lande 1992:411).

Absolute ownership of land by the leading Filipino families (*principales*), Spanish officials, Chinese merchants, and *mestizos* (Spanish-Filipino and Chinese-

Filipino families) resulted in land-based wealth historically being in the hands of comparatively few families in the Philippines (Eviota 1992; Lande 1968). Chinese-Filipino business families contribute significantly to contemporary Philippines business operations in a wide range of industries, including manufacturing, retail, investment and trading enterprises (Amante 1994; Hamlin 1997; Roman et al. 1996). Some family-owned enterprises still prefer to appoint sons to executive positions (Roman et al. 1996), but there is some convergence of hiring and internal promotion practices between Japanese-owned, Western-owned and Chinese-Filipino owned firms (Amante 1994) and in modifications of Western management practices by leading Asian companies to fit with specific business ownership structure, goals and strategies (Hamlin 1997).

Although family élites have tended to dominate legislature and business connections, family-owned enterprises are required to compete as the country is increasingly exposed to global competition and the participation of multinational corporations in major industrial sectors. The public profile and business performance of leading family enterprises varied during the Marcos, Aquino, and Ramos presidencies (Manapat 1991, 1992; Hamlin 1997; Roman et al. 1996). Many powerful business families in the Philippines have reportedly attempted to 'build their businesses on solid management and market fundamentals rather than political favouritism' (*Asian Intelligence* 1997:11). Family business conglomerates such as those operated by the Lopez and Ayala interests have incorporated

contemporary business practices and international professional standards, including employment of Western trained professionals and technocrats. Although Chinese-Filipino family business enterprises reflect mixed attitudes towards employing professionals and skilled managers from outside the owner-manager system, there is a trend towards increased professionalisation while maintaining effective management control mechanisms as enterprise size and complexity increase (Roman et al. 1996).

Gender and culture in management

While researchers such as Hofstede (1980a, 1980b, 1991) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) prompted culturally embedded critiques of ethnocentric management and leadership theories, there has been less cross-cultural analysis of the gendered nature of organisation and management theories. The ways in which gender is constructed within a society affects the manner in which organisations are structured and managed (Collinson and Hearn 1996; King 1995). King argues that 'sex roles and gendered behavior are institutionalized as part of a culture and reflect important aspects of the culture itself' (1995:82). In interpreting Hofstede's 'masculinity' cultural values dimension, King suggests that 'countries with lower masculinity tend to have more women in better jobs and more positive attitudes about women and leadership and believe that organizational and private life should be separate' (King 1995:83). Extrapolating from Hofstede's results, this assertion should apply to the Philippines.

King, however, has given insufficient attention to both the socioeconomic class domain and the power dynamics which affect business leadership. There have traditionally been gender differences in the power roles and boundaries between Filipino men and women (Licuanan 1991; Roces 1996), and in economic participation patterns (Eviota 1992; Illo 1991). Alvarez and Alvarez found that Filipino women executives of family-owned businesses in Cebu exercise their 'authority through the position of assistant manager or treasurer' (1972:561). Similarly, Jocano's (1990) description of the indirect influence of Filipino businesswomen on enterprise strategy formulation and implementation through their positions as either Vice-President or treasurer of family enterprises is consistent with Roces' (1996, 1998) descriptions of the indirect power traditionally exercised by Filipino women in the political arena. The ideal construct of *malakas* (a Tagalog term referring to a person's powerful or influential status) is usually associated with Filipino males who exercise direct power. Roces (1996, 1998) suggests that Filipino women wield substantial unofficial power—a culturally acceptable form of power—and therefore their economic power may be greater than that of women in Western countries. Eviota (1992:128), however, has argued that 'only when [Filipino] women are independent entrepreneurs do they become decision-makers and this is because they have greater control of the production processes'.

Influential management and leadership theories (For example, Fiedler 1964, 1967; House 1971; Mintzberg 1973, 1975) fail to

indicate the ways in which 'men managers are socially constructed *as men* through either the practice of managing or the impact of other social forces such as the processes of boys becoming adult men, the organization of domestic life or broader cultural and religious practices' (Collinson and Hearn 1996:6, emphasis in the original). In analysing dominant discourses on 'management', Collinson and Hearn (1996) argue that

conventional discourses [on management] rarely question managerial power, the elitist nature of most decision making or the terms and conditions of employment that are associated with the function. While these dominant modes of analysis are immensely varied, most share a reluctance to explore questions of gender that would otherwise tend to disrupt taken-for-granted ways of thinking about management (1996:5).

Through analysis of written texts, interview transcripts, conversations and behaviours, this study aimed to generate a richer understanding of the relationship between the gender and culture discourses in linguistic terms, and the social *practice* of Filipina business leadership.

Research design

The qualitative research methods were informed by grounded theory (Glaser 1992; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1994) and indigenous research principles (Enriquez 1977, 1982, 1993; Ho 1998)². The study elicited industry peer descriptions of criteria for identifying effective strategic leaders and

strategic managers in the Philippines, identified Filipina managers and entrepreneurs who fit such criteria, and analysed the attributes, behaviours, and organisational contexts of effective Filipina strategic leaders and managers. First, female managers and entrepreneurs in a range of industries in the Philippines completed a mail survey. The open-ended questionnaire was designed to elicit key constructs that are perceived to be important in the opinion of business people in the Philippines, rather than imposing constructs derived largely from research on North American, European or Japanese companies (for example, Kotter 1988, 1990; Kanter 1983; Misumi 1985). The researcher then interviewed female entrepreneurs and managers whom industry peers considered to be both effective strategic leaders and strategic managers, interviewed work associates, participated in organisational activities, and analysed pertinent documents. Field observation methods included formal interviews and informal conversations with peers, subordinates and superiors, attendance at committee meetings and training sessions, participation in work-related social activities, and conducting professional activities as a business educator and strategic planner. Follow-up communications with research participants ensured accuracy of qualitative data coding and categorisation and provided additional background information.

Female entrepreneurs, managers, and executives in industries based in Metro Manila, the dominant business location in the Philippines, comprised the research population. Filipinas managing small-scale

ventures such as *sari-sari* stores, footpath vending and market stalls, and participants in the informal economy (Austin 1990; Ofreneo 1999) were not included in the study. The author first visited Manila in 1994, to consult with Filipina executives and entrepreneurs regarding the research scope and design. In November 1994, a sample of Filipina managers completed pilot questionnaires. A revised questionnaire was completed by 56 Filipina managers and entrepreneurs in 1995. The 25.2 per cent response rate compared reasonably with previous mail surveys of business leaders in developing economies (see Salehi-Sangari and Lemar 1993; Syrett 1995; Yin 1995). Filipina managers and entrepreneurs of large and medium sized organisations were over-represented given the number of small family businesses in the Philippines (Eviota 1992; Hoffarth 1990; Licuanan 1992a; Samonte 1990). Table 1 summarises the characteristics of questionnaire respondents according to industry and organisation size using the Philippines National Census and Statistics Office classifications.

Questionnaire respondents nominated 35 women whom they considered to have characteristics of both effective strategic managers *and* strategic leaders. The responses to the initial questionnaire identified a disproportionately high number of effective Filipina strategic leaders and strategic managers in large and medium sized organisations in comparison with those in small enterprises. The author subsequently conducted interviews and field observations in Manila, and collected pertinent organisational documents. All

industry sectors except agriculture were represented in the final sample of 21 organisations which participated in the field research phases.

The study, completed in 1998, included cross-case analysis of data from organisations within the same industry, between industries, and between large, medium, and small enterprises. The cross-site qualitative data analysis methodologies expounded by Miles and Huberman (1984; 1994) were also adapted by examining data from multiple theoretical perspectives and differing cultural orientations.

Results: culture and gender in Philippine management

While the businesswomen and entrepreneurs who participated in the research have direct power and influence through their official positions as business leaders, they exercise this power within the wider context of gender roles and power in the Philippines. The interaction between the gender and culture domains informed Filipina business leaders' attitudes, values, 'presentation of self' (Goffman 1959), behaviours and strategic leadership effectiveness. This interaction included national culture considerations of women's roles, gendered social values, organisational contexts, employees' expectations and individual businesswomen's experiences and values. While maintaining research participants' anonymity, the dynamics are discussed with reference to direct quotes from female and male managers and employees.³

Table 1 Survey response distribution—Industry sector by enterprise size

Industry sector	Small	Medium	Large	Not stated	Total
Agriculture	1				1
Manufacture	1	1	5		7
Retail trade			1		1
Construction		1	1		2
Mining			1		1
Finance, real estate, insurance, businesses	2	4	16		22
Community, social, personal	5	4	6		15
Utilities		1			1
Transport, communication	2		2	2	6
Total	11	11	32	2	56

Perceptions, image and effective leadership behaviour

Perceptions of gender appropriate image and behaviour influenced both peer nomination of effective business leaders, and their responses to leader behaviours. Consistent with Tagumpay-Castillo and Hilomen-Guerrero (1969), and Tancangco’s (1990) research on women in Philippines politics, such perceptions embraced culturally specific ideal types of power and gendered characteristics. Licuanan emphasised the need for ASEAN women, including Filipinas, aiming for managerial careers to integrate cultural gender role expectations and interpersonal styles with their leadership behaviours. She advised them to use ‘persuasion, tolerance’ and at times a ‘conciliatory style vis-à-vis their subordinates and colleagues (usually male, since successful women are a distinct minority at the very senior level)’ (Licuanan 1992b:204).

In the present study, Filipina business leaders tended to be considered ‘effective’ if they were perceived as combining business success and power (*malakas*) with

idealised characteristics of Filipinas as beautiful and virtuous (*maganda*). *Maganda* refers to a Filipino woman’s socially acceptable or ‘virtuous’ conduct, as well as physical ‘beauty’ and fashionable dress (Roces 1996). In linking economics with ‘beauty’, Tagumpay-Castillo and Hilomen-Guerrero (1969:29) argued that women in wealthy Filipino families who earn independent income, use their money for independence, financial security, and ‘vanity and glamour’.

While descriptions of Filipinos as *malakas* are normally reserved for males in positions of power and influence, research participants highlighted the *strategic* importance of both *maganda* and *malakas* constructs in Filipino perceptions of effective women business leaders. The behaviours of ‘effective’ women managers were congruent across all situations in which they were observed. They sustained a consistent ‘presentation of self’ to peers, subordinates, and the public, and enacted managerial roles in ways congruent with their ‘image’. Their ‘public images’ included professional competence as well as situationally

appropriate gendered roles. While exercising direct power and influence, many effective Filipino businesswomen demonstrated considerable charm, persuasion, and diplomacy (*carino* or *lambing*) in their negotiations with male colleagues, and embodied characteristics of the 'virtuous Filipina' idea. They negotiated with male colleagues and supervised male staff in ways that maintained male *amor propio* (self-esteem) and avoided *hiya* (shame).

Contemporary Filipino women construct 'beauty' in terms of globalised beauty standards, such as fashionable clothes, shoes, jewellery, professional coiffures and impeccable grooming (Illo 1999; Roces 1996, 1998). Filipino businesswomen who were powerful in their own right were likely to adopt the material expressions of 'beauty' through fashionable clothing, accessories, and grooming, in all industries other than the manufacturing sector. A senior woman executive in the services sector emphasised good grooming as well as professional competency for her female colleagues.

My concern also you should look your best, you should look your best, you should not look like a mother who has five kids...one supervisor I have, oh, she gets it from me every day if she's not well groomed...I thought, I will not have you go in front of those people [executives] looking like that.

Women managers and entrepreneurs who held prominent roles in business and community networks tended to adopt external manifestations of female beauty in their dress and physical grooming, and enacted 'feminine' behaviours in their business leadership roles. Technical

knowledge, planning ability, and decision-making skills, however, were necessary prerequisites for effective strategic leadership. One *maganda* engineering consultant, a member of influential business councils, boards, and umbrella organisations, maintained an impeccable public image of glamour and style. As chair of a committee meeting dominated by businessmen, she used both task-oriented decisiveness and flattery to steer discussions and influence decision-making.

'Feminine' characteristics, however, were not a sufficient condition for exercising power and influence. Feminine mannerisms of endearment were not predictors of influence on peer behaviour, or of leadership effectiveness in daily workplace activities *per se*. As reported by the senior woman executive in a large Manila corporation, '*I don't fight it the way we are feminine*'. A professionally competent Filipina entrepreneur used *carino* and *lambing* behaviours to influence and persuade a predominantly male business group to support her strategies. In contrast to the chair's combination of task competence, industry knowledge and 'feminine' characteristics, the *maganda* attributes and *carino* and *lambing* behaviours used by a female group member were ineffective. As her suggestions did not relate directly to the strategic issues or goals of the group, they were ignored by the male business leaders.

Individual Filipina businesswomen's expressions of direct power were acceptable, as long as the business leader belonged to an extended professional and social network. While one influential Filipino

woman had direct position power as an executive in a large family corporation, a senior male colleague described the gendered dimensions in her exercise of indirect power to support his organisational change strategies. In her role as the 'emotional anchor of this organisation', she 'holds it together. If somebody has a problem and he can't talk to his boss, he will talk to [her]'. In this indirect power role, she provided vital information on the organisational climate and readiness for change.

She's the safety valve. By pushing them too hard, they go crying to her. But the interesting part is that I've sometimes been a little too hesitant, and she's the one who tells me, go ahead, don't worry about that, the culture will accept it.

Women owner-managers of family enterprises, and entrepreneurial executives in the present study, however, demonstrated fewer 'conciliatory' attitudes and behaviours than the cultural norms described by Licuanan (1992b). The organisational culture, individual leadership traits and enterprise ownership determined the extent to which Filipina managers and entrepreneurs followed traditional gender behavioural norms. In exercising her leadership and influence within a large family corporation, a woman executive combined both traditional gendered behavioural expectations and professional competence. Whereas male executives enacted roles of extrovert strategy initiator and logical strategy analyst, the only senior woman in the leadership team was described by the president in the following terms

She's very comfortable in [the organisation], where she knows that she is very well respected and liked. And therefore she will express her views publicly and forcefully...[r]ather than in the big meetings. It's also part of the style because somehow the only guy who talks in the big meetings is myself...[the organisation] is a collegial body of people who consider the company to be theirs, and therefore Y...is assertive about talking about it. Especially in the management committee level. We founded this company so to speak. We have worked in it together, although I obviously have authority over the group and have a very forceful personality...Y behaves differently [from male colleagues]. Her personality is still the same, she will never raise her voice above two decibels. She will wait for a pause in the conversation before she asserts herself. But again we run it in a different way.

Although this woman executive described was professionally competent and had extensive industry experience, her 'informal role within the management group' was consistent with gendered unofficial power in the Philippines. Similarly, the description of her quiet voice, waiting 'for a pause in the conversation before she asserts herself' reflects culturally acceptable norms of female behaviour. The effectiveness of her exercise of gender-appropriate power, combined with her professional expertise, illustrated the ways in which effective Filipina business leaders negotiate the boundaries of the gender and culture discourses to achieve their goals.

Middle level managers interviewed in relation to a senior woman executive commented consistently on her ability to

remain 'feminine' while in an executive role. The following comment from a female line manager indicates a preference for 'gender complementarity' rather than a Western 'gender equity' approach (Adler 1991).

She has these very basic qualities that would perhaps come as a surprise to women who try to be men in the corporate world. She has retained the ladylike composure, genuineness and sincerity, and ah, she does not have the trappings of power as a person, but is able to get the respect and trust of people in her quiet ways...because she exudes a lot of strength of character that is needed in an organisation that continuously faces changes. So she is like an anchor. And as [————] said, 'It's quite difficult to be less of a gentleman in front of a lady like [————]'.

This description of a Filipina executive is consistent with Stivens' (1998) suggestion that in 'Asian family discourse...[t]he public and the modern are gendered as male...this masculinity is tempered by a complementary idealised femininity [which] draws on long-standing notions of relative male–female equality and complementarity within popular and scholarly ideologies in Southeast Asia' (Stivens 1998:17).

In family business succession planning, *maganda* attributes, use of *palakasan* dynamics and developing adult children's management competencies were integral components of prominent Filipina entrepreneurs' strategies. Physical attractiveness and good grooming, public recognition through success in beauty competitions, education in prestigious institutions both in the Philippines and

overseas, and developing strategic kinship group alliances within Philippine and international business connections were intertwined. For example, the role of the matriarch in Filipino society, *palakasan* dynamics, and the strategic importance of 'beauty', enhanced the effectiveness of a large retail store's domestic success and international expansion strategy. The family matriarch was the driving force behind fashion product design. As her daughter pointed out, '*Filipinos love to shop*', and the matriarch '*was the first person to introduce ready-to-wear in the Philippines*'. Domestic political connections and contemporary government policy enhanced access to export markets and international distribution channels. The business emphasised product quality and the aesthetic compatibility with '*the living room of a very beautiful apartment in New York city*' to ensure international competitiveness.

Access to overseas markets, however, had been affected by international perceptions both of women managers and the quality of Philippine goods.

It's not very easy I tell you being a woman and coming from the Philippines. They would like the product [fashion accessories], and they thought it's Italian. They would never know where it's made because of the quality...but once they know it's the Philippines, 'Oh I'm sorry, we cannot buy from the Philippines'.

The ethical dimensions of Filipina businesswomen's behaviour and values, and their relationship to management strategies, were also connected to the ways in which they exercise power, and the cultural context of 'beauty'.

Power, beauty, ethical leadership, and business strategies

The study identified a complex relationship between kinship politics, traditional Filipino expectations of gender roles, individual managerial style, and contemporary business leadership demands. Female business leaders whom peers identified as effective strategists exercised strategic and ethical dimensions of *utang na loob* (reciprocal obligation). A research participant described *utang na loob* as

a debt of gratitude...When somebody did a favour for your some time in the past it is a statement. You are obliged to return that favor. I would say it's common to us Filipinos.

There was a link between economic independence, gendered politics of 'beauty', interpersonal dynamics, and ethical business leadership. Women in positions of formal power who were perceived as *malakas* resisted attempts to influence their decision-making through appeals to beauty and glamour. An executive who had 'a lot of inheritance from my family in terms of agricultural lands' was selected for a senior administrative position for her 'integrity' as well as 'competence'. She resisted both financial 'gifts' and 'beautiful' goods (*silky materials which are very beautiful*) in performing her duties, during a major organisational upheaval.

In describing the ways in which her superior exercised business leadership power, a line manager commented

She rarely uses her formal power within the organisation to influence people...she'd much rather do it at the personal level...[Y]ou really cannot feel her ego, and in fact I haven't yet

experienced in the short time I was here, of the need to stroke ruffled feathers, because she seems to be above that.

The line manager then contrasted her experience of working for a woman executive with her previous experiences of working with executive males in different organisations, indicating less need to 'stroke the ego' of her current boss. In the same context, a gendered sense of personal modesty, equity, justice, fairness and non-favouritism emerged. Situations within the organisation, and public expressions of justice and personal courage during a previous political regime, were described.

She's also the type to get embarrassed if you start praising her. She's a fair person, fair, and she talks in the same manner to a messenger as she would to the chairman of the organisation, I have observed her talking to a wide range of people, and she basically speaks her mind, and she has the courage to express even controversial opinions. And, er, the reason why she has this courage is that she has always the best interests of the company in mind, um, as opposed to having her own agenda.

The links between this Filipina executive's ethical position and her professional competence were apparent in a manager's observation that

...she has this quiet knowledge that she is good as a professional and a person, and that she is able to influence events and people towards a common good ... And this gives her, therefore, the courage to go through whatever odds she has to go through, because she knows she is championing a good cause. And she doesn't have to hide her tracks, because she has nothing to hide.

Perceptions of desirable expressions of power for women managers were also contingent on industry context and enterprise ownership. Research participants in family businesses, communications, real estate, and finance sectors, and who described effective Filipina business leaders in terms consistent with traditional *maganda* attributes, were unlikely to perceive aggressive or assertive behaviours as desirable in Filipina business leaders. In contrast, an employee in a freight forwarding firm described her Filipina executive's persistence and independent attitude.

She's persistent...if she believes in an idea she will really fight for it and she's not scared of whoever, she's not afraid or she doesn't care.

As a multinational subsidiary, the firm's strategy was driven by US headquarters. In generating new clients and implementing business strategy, this '*strong woman*' executive relied on international business connections rather than Manila social networks.

Other *maganda* Filipino businesswomen were more sensitive to peer approval of assertive behaviours and direct expressions of power. These women harnessed perceptions of culturally appropriate 'female power' and 'beauty' to their business advantage in negotiating with colleagues, peers, and clients. An impeccably dressed prominent Filipina businesswoman epitomised gendered elements of Philippine urban-rural tensions in perceptions of 'beauty'. In replying to a compliment on her outfit, she said '*I was worried I might look as though I came from the provinces*'.

The business leadership challenges were particularly acute for provincial women wanting to establish operations in Metro Manila. Entrepreneurs who came from small villages, other provinces or islands in the Philippines either studied overseas or had substantial resources from family estates to underwrite their business activities and provide powerful kinship group alliances. Perceived social acceptability and superior work performance in comparison with male peers were both considered essential.

If you're from the province, are you good enough? Is your education good enough, are your manners good enough, are your movements just fast enough?...[A] woman coming from a province had to work...doubly faster than the executives who were male.

These comments confirm the dilemmas which faced a leading Filipina entrepreneur whose family estate was on one of the Philippines islands some distance from Luzon. Although her enterprise had been based in Manila for some time, she had experienced difficulties in gaining access to influential Manila business networks. As a result, her business resource and development strategies bypassed the Manila networks. The family's regional area was a key source of labour. Her daughter, who had studied overseas, was assuming increased management and strategy decision-making responsibilities in the enterprise. The daughter combined assertive behaviours and professional competence with culturally appropriate external manifestations of 'beauty' in her fashionable dress and grooming.

Businesswomen's strategic use of kinship networks and their perceived *malakas* status to achieve corporate objectives extended beyond industry boundaries. Through her extended family and powerful professional networks, the head of a corporate foundation was able to access significant resources to implement philanthropic projects. These projects were designed to support national economic development and resolve local employment challenges.

Culture, management, and 'family': implications for Filipina business leaders

Although there were reported managerial advantages for Filipino women in comparison with Filipino men, the dualities of being responsible for Filipino 'familism' in the domestic and business arenas, as well as leading business enterprises in an increasingly competitive environment, remain a central issue for Filipina business leaders.

Interviews, site visits and observations of organisational interactions validated research participants' perceptions of many Filipina businesswomen as 'nurturing' *gabay* leaders (guides). In workplace interactions, the processes by which Filipina business leaders fulfilled managerial roles were further embedded in a gendered cultural context. The Philippines organisation was frequently referred to as '*a family*'. Effective Filipina managers used leadership processes such as consulting, persuading, nurturing, encouraging, cajoling, chastising, rebuking, and supporting and listening roles and behaviours commonly associated with Filipino women as the family mainstay. In addition, employees described the role of effective women business leaders in

developing and maintaining trust and social cohesion through hospitality (*she regularly invites us to their house...there is always a gathering of partners and their spouses just to get along with one another*) and personalised concern (*she's generous every time somebody needs help*).

Filipino women are still perceived as being in charge of family financial matters. As one senior woman manager said, '*she controls the purse and the children...women are relied upon to [provide the support]*'. Another Filipina corporate executive explained that

it's up to the wife to budget, to spend, to make sure that there is enough food, for the basic necessities, for educating the children. So the husband just turns over the income to the wife.

These descriptions are consistent with Alvarez and Alvarez's (1972) interpretations, and with Jocano's (1990) description of Filipino women as the family treasurer. Research participants' comments, however, also confirm Eviota's argument that the family finances which Filipino women actually control are limited to household management, rather than business investment capital (Eviota 1992).

Similarly, research participants' references to the supplementary role of women's earnings indicate that traditional boundaries of financial power in the Philippines have not changed. In a country where per capita GDP exceeded US\$1,000 for the first time in 1995 (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 1995:22), Filipino women's supplementary household income is essential for basic family needs (Eviota 1992). It has also been estimated that Filipino 'women receive only

between 50% to 80% of the income men receive in the same type of occupation' (Hoffarth 1989:13).

While one Filipina executive emphasised gender equality of educational opportunity in the Philippines (*We give equal opportunity to male and female children*), she also summarised the gendered dimensions of economic power.

It's very common also that women have their own business on the side to supplement the husband. So it's not uncommon for women to work...I guess the characteristic of our society, women have always been working if only to supplement the income of the husband.

Research participants in all industry sectors accepted the Filipino woman's dual responsibilities for management and family. Nonetheless, Filipina business leaders differed in their application of this dual role expectation to their management orientation. Their personal experiences influenced their attitudes and expectations. A travel agency manager stated

I think as a woman I would, or a woman would have a better understanding of the difficulties that women go through in their work in relation to their homes. I learned to be a little bit more sympathetic to them. And I think they appreciate that. I'm a family woman myself and I know that, I have difficulties. In a sense my children have sacrificed with me. When they were growing up I was also trying to make a career so some kind of understanding needs to be developed.

A senior banking executive's comments reflected a gendered managerial discourse around women managers' roles and responsibilities, support and guidance for staff, and staff career development issues.

[F]or the younger people I always see myself when I was their age, and I always advise them at least in your career, you have to make a decision, do you want to be like this, or do you want to be just what you are now? And a decision that will have an impact in terms of your career and family, and you cannot have both I said, you have to make the decision now because some things will have to come first before the other.

Interviewer: And you say the same thing to all your staff?

Whether it's a female or it's a male.

Interviewer: And do you get different reactions?

Yes. Well there are some females who prefer to be a wife, housewife. That's their choice. But there are some who really want to be a career woman. And some can do both. Like what I . And I think my children turned out OK, and you just have to learn how to balance everything. For me it's always balancing, and I guess I'm lucky, I have a very supportive husband.

While managers and employees described the Philippines as a 'matriarchal society', women business leaders exercise their strategic management within a 'macho' society. According to a leading Filipina executive,

[i]n a society which is still macho, you know, you just have to show them that you are a partner who wants to accomplish things not because of your own self...[but] because it's what's going to be good for all of us.

Young, single participants gave another perspective on the social context of Filipina professionals working in a highly competitive industry. The long working hours expected of higher level professionals

conflicted with a social protectionist attitude towards young women that reinforced family dependency dynamics. A senior Filipina executive described the issues facing career women in the Philippines, saying

We work late and it's very difficult for them, it's very hard for a woman to be in here, because here, like the women here are more sheltered. You don't go out, you have to have somebody with you...Most of us get fetched by parents or by driver or by brother. Because it's very dangerous to be going out late, or you stay in the office. Even now I stay overnight. Like when I was rushing something.

Gender alone was not the sole consideration at this point of Philippine social history. There had been spasmodic kidnappings and robberies prior to and during the fieldwork period, and many of the women who participated in the study expressed concerns regarding their own and the researcher's safety. It was not considered safe for either businessmen or businesswomen to be out alone at night, but younger, single businesswomen felt particularly vulnerable. At peak work periods, it was sometimes more sensible for young single women in positions of responsibility to stay at the office and continue working than to be driven home late at night. Nonetheless, personal safety considerations and risk-taking behaviours were influenced by gendered cultural values—young male professionals were not likely to be 'fetched by parents' or 'by brother'.

Perceptions of male and female leaders

Research participants' comments reflected both traditional cultural norms and increased awareness of strategic leadership behaviours exhibited by Filipino women in a changing business environment.

'First generation', older Filipina business leaders in family-based organisations did not consider gender to be a key consideration in business leadership. There were conflicting data from younger Filipina executives and their chronological peers. One departmental head said '*I think there's more caring, I think there's more sensitivity to management with women, and also there's less competition*'. Some research participants indicated that they saw no difference between men and women managers. One manager stated that '*what's important is to do the job, regardless of gender*'. A female section manager in a large service organisation emphasised work performance as the fundamental consideration.

Based on my experience, I never really saw myself as a woman manager. I'm just a manager, period. I just do my job. And neither do I see the rest of my colleagues as women managers or as male managers. They're just there, they're doing their job. So we interact on that basis. He has a job to do, I have a job to do, you know, he has his personality, I have mine. It's no big deal, you know, and everybody does their own work to the best of their capacity.

At the same time, she described the Philippines society as matriarchal.

I think, my own theory, is this is a matriarchal society. You know how the grandmothers, you know how a little old lady can have a say on the life of the grandson about who he will marry, you know. Not to, not to actually make things happen, but her pleasure or displeasure would get communicated to that person.

Interpersonal communication patterns were affected by gender dynamics. A Filipina executive described '*a big difference*' in communicating with male managers in

comparison with females, and attributed this difference to cultural gender role expectations and dynamics, in which Filipino women are expected to listen while men talk.

Men managers...sometimes don't listen, or they pretend to be listening but they don't hear...I've tried to explain to a manager, and I know he was trying to listen but he wasn't really hearing me at all.

The indirect communication patterns associated with Philippine interpersonal dynamics (*our culture is very different. You cannot go straight, you cannot go straight to the point*) influence both male and female leadership style. However, a Filipina manager who communicates more directly than is expected of women may be labelled a 'personality problem' because '*they think that is not very feminine. That it is not female*'. As Filipina managers in a large Manila corporation observed, discernment, role flexibility and competence are all required for businesswomen to be effective.

You have to be very sensitive in what role you are going to play next...I'm very flexible.

Her colleague confirmed the perception, adding the need for competency beyond that expected of males at the same level.

We have to really prove ourselves that we are very good, or very competent, and we are talking about doing very good work here, we deliver that, even better. Even better than a guy.

Both female and male participants from within the same organisation perceived gendered differences in business leadership style. A female subordinate who reported

directly to one executive whose leadership style was collaborative/supportive rather than individualistic/competitive noted that

she wasn't the type who'd ride on the accomplishments of other people, to gain favour for herself. I mentioned it to her, and her response is, 'Well, it's not really in vogue here, to do that', and she said 'well we don't really try to steal merits from other people'...I said to her that 'It's good that we have such models, such women exemplars who don't have to be men'.

The Filipina executive's superior described her as '*the voice of reason that keeps us from flying off in too many directions...[She] is a very soft spoken person, and that is one thing that endears her to many people and that's why she is well liked and has a great deal of influence on a lot of people*'. In this large family-owned corporation, a mix of personality, gender, and technical competence shaped the context of effective strategic leadership.

Participant comments about gender differences in management style required interpretation in the context of their employment experience. One senior Filipina staff member had worked under autocratic Filipina managers, but linked 'autocratic' behaviour with being 'focused', goal-oriented and perfectionistic.

I think most of the women are perfectionists. We are very focused. We are more autocratic than men. But we accomplish more and we perform much better than the men...I think it's because we are focused and we really have our targets in mind.

A line manager in another organisation contrasted her Filipina executive with male managers, in the following terms: '*compared*

with an aggressive person, or with a male boss, she shows a basic trust in the person'. While this comment reflected the participant's own previous employment experience, the emphasis on the empowering nature of the Filipina executive's trust in subordinates to perform their work duties and make appropriate decisions was reinforced by all other participants in the organisation.

Research participants' perspectives on women managers reflected competing values. Such mixed reactions are consistent with Tancangco's (1990) discussion of Filipino perceptions of women in the political arena. Contemporary Filipino businesswomen are questioning traditional 'feminine' norms, but opinions were divided. During a public forum on women in management in the Philippines, a prominent Filipina business leader asserted that her mother *'taught me, when you shoot, you don't shoot to hurt, because you'll have more problems...you shoot to kill'*. Her rhetoric was in the context of peer discussions of effective business leadership requirements. While one communications executive emphasised the strategic advantages of being *'assertive in a lot of subtle ways'*, a colleague complained that Filipinas who are *'too soft, emotional... too passive, afraid to take risks'* tend to *'avoid conflict'*, and lack *'the winning attitude'*. A Filipina senior manager described the advantages of women being more *'single-minded'* than men in their management. In response to further enquiry, the following dialogue took place

Not many people would like to work with a woman manager...because they say that a woman manager is much stricter.

Interviewer: So the men and the women would say that they don't want to work for a woman manager?

Yes, but even women don't like to work with a woman manager. There are some. So it makes the difference between a liked and not liked woman manager. The liked one would be one who still achieves her purpose, but through her softer ways. She can perform in other ways but she can be soft as well in managing people.

Interviewer: And are there some of those around?

Yes. Many.

A woman financial services manager asserted that *'the men are not as focused and not as parochial as a woman manager'*. When asked to explain what she meant by *'parochial'*, she replied *'parochial meaning single minded...but single mindedness can be negative or positive...our single mindedness is to meeting the targets'*. The same manager emphasised the adaptability and flexibility of women supervisors, in contrast to male supervisors.

The women supervisors, you can put them in anywhere, you can put them into research, I can ask them to write, they can do anything...very flexible.

Interviewer: And the men?

The men seem to be good in one area but not in all areas.

Interviewer: Why is that?

They have less patience than women. And it could be that they were more distracted...The women managers excel over the male. And I know English is not our mother language so it needed a lot of practice on our part when we

were growing up to achieve the skills, so it could be that they were less patient or they were distracted.

One financial services manager observed that *'the more successful managers are women because they manage their time better than men—the male manager would usually focus on the business side'*. Subsequent clarification led to the following response: *'from a Filipina executive perspective, relationship maintenance, time management, handling multiple roles are important components of effective management'*.

Technical competencies and gendered attributes both contributed to the selection of engineers in a small environmental technology business, although the Filipina entrepreneur considered this to be a function of the most suitably qualified applicants at that point in time.

They would say [for a] very manly job, I have an all woman force—by the way, all of my employees are women right now...just so happens that they are the competent...among the lot that...we have been interviewing—even engineers. They are the ones who are patient, because it requires patience—meticulous work.

While technical and / or professional competencies were primary considerations in staffing, gendered attributes were also mentioned by research participants in financial services and travel industries. In differentiating between Filipino men and women in the workplace, business leaders and other research participants emphasised female interpersonal skills and attention to detail. A senior banking executive reported that *'the female unit heads are more detailed in the way they do their work...they are really hands on—they're more involved'*.

The head of a small travel business appointed women to the 'front line' of customer contact, because the job 'requires much patience' and 'males don't have it'. As a senior financial executive explained when describing Filipino managers: *'That's one thing with women managers. Our endurance to work is much more.'* While there were more male than female supervisors in the organisation, *'the women supervisors, you can put them in anywhere, you can put them into research, I can ask them to write, they can do anything'*. Further probing revealed that this was perceived as a characteristic of Filipina managers who had *'made it to the top'*, rather than Filipino women in general.

As the Philippine businesswomen's networks debate strategies for increasing women's participation at managerial levels, they are grappling with competing cultural values and 'developmental lags' in gender role expectations. The tensions arising from Filipina business leaders' direct exercise of power were reflected in one businesswoman's comment on her *'failed marriage'*.

There are many marriages in the Philippines in our age group that are falling apart. And the reason for that, I think, is that we have nurtured our men in a different environment, and they just cannot accept—although they outwardly do accept, but emotionally they cannot accept it.

She observed that, as Filipina businesswomen increase their direct exercise of power and develop *'successful career practices'*, *'you do not become submissive in the way Filipino men want their women to be submissive'*. Her former husband's difficulties in adjusting his expectations of

a wife arose from her lack of submissiveness (*He told me... 'I didn't know that you would become president of a company—and I guess I would like to have somebody submissive to me'*).

'Smooth personal relationships'? Gendered meanings in interpersonal dynamics

The study provided new evidence of gendered meanings in the relationship between gender, power, smooth interpersonal relationships and *pakikisama* dynamics. A research participant indicated that there are

lots of powerful people here, very powerful. The Filipinos have the so-called, what you call in our dialect, the pakikisama system, and that's a very strong trait here.

This study supports Raquel Edralin Tiglao's (1990)⁴ contention that while *pakikisama* may mean 'favors in exchange' from a male perspective, it may also mean 'cooperation for the good of others' from a female perspective. As a Filipina manager explained,

Here [in the Philippines] people can be selfless, like you work for the institution, that's OK, it's enough for them that somebody thought well of them. People in Asia are very personable, they want to help each other.

A senior male executive in a large family business conglomerate reported (with some humour) that

Smooth personal relationships are a very strong value in this company. And it's up and down the line. This company is...pakikisama. It's very strong, then again it has a very strong immune system, it rejects foreign bodies.

The *strategic intent* of the male and female managers' comments may be similar, in emphasising commitment of individual employees to organisational goals. The women managers, however, emphasised horizontal collaboration and individual affirmation, whereas the male executive's perspective reflected the organisation's hierarchical structure and intensely competitive strategy.

Elements of *pakikisama* dynamics which may transcend gender considerations were reflected in the difficulties one woman executive experienced in implementing organisational change strategies.

What is funny about the Philippine setup is, we call it pakikisama, which means trying to get along with everybody...They cannot draw the line between the job and the personal friendship. And I said 'you will, there are certain decisions which you have to make that are not popular decisions', but these are good for the company and the people concerned in the long term, but they cannot see it right now...and their pride is offended, and sometimes in your eagerness not to hurt them you try to please them, but it's very wrong.

This dynamic, however, may describe more accurately the ways in which Filipino male managers operate. A senior female travel executive commented

I think pakikisama is more applicable to the men than to the women. I have three managers who are males...and if they don't go straight to the point and hit them in the gut, they do it by pakikisama. So it's sometimes in the extreme. So either they hit hard or they don't do anything at all because of pakikisama.

It has been suggested that the need to preserve individual self-respect and dignity (*amor propio*) in the workplace reflects Filipino commitment to the whole group ('we are all in this together').⁵ This interpretation of *amor propio*, when linked with 'smooth interpersonal relations' (SIR), is consistent with Helgesen's 'web of inclusion', which she argues characterises Western female effective managerial behaviour in contrast to the individual competitiveness more closely associated with Western male managers (Helgesen 1995:40–60; Marshall 1984). This gendered interpretation may transcend the description of *amor propio* solely in terms of an individual ego need.

A dynamic Filipina executive described the impediments to innovation inherent in *pakikisama* dynamics, noting that

they don't really come out right away with their apprehensions...I sometimes think we lack, this ability to discuss, debate, and really have a devil's advocate within the group, which is very crucial to clarifying your thinking process.

Nonetheless, her enabling leadership style facilitated positive expressions of *pakikisama* ('in a way the *pakikisama* idea...helps in the sense that they will always be willing to try it your way, rather than immediately saying "No, I don't believe in your idea"').

Trends in work practices and changing social roles

Technology is assisting some Filipina managers and entrepreneurial small enterprise owner/operators to reconcile tensions inherent in effective business leadership and 'family caregiver' roles,

through home-based business operations. As a Filipina partner in an accounting firm predicted,

with all this communications, and with all this technology, the fax machine, the telephones...Plus because the office space is becoming very expensive and therefore we would like our people to be working in all the clients' office, our partners probably not having a permanent office in the building and probably staying at home and giving instructions.

Despite changes in education and career development for women, and the ready identification of effective women business leaders, the boundary-spanning challenges of 'Filipina as family strength' and contemporary business leadership roles remain. An environmental management consultant described her strategies for meeting both work and family expectations, saying

unlike the other women that you have talked with that hold their business outside, I have insisted to hold my office at home...[F]ortunately I have a big enough house for my needs...and so I converted—now we have three rooms that are converted into offices and I always say that since this is a 'thinking work', I really love to have it there...because of that, I have been able to, I think, attend in a balanced way to my home responsibilities and the very high demand of my work. Consulting is very demanding work. I have to work, like until 2 o'clock in the morning, but then I am at home, so I don't have any problem.

The changing roles of women in contemporary Philippines society was also seen to be increasing the pressure on Filipino males. According to one successful Filipina entrepreneur,

there are two pressures on our men, the fact that—also at that age group they are also successful...and then they have to cope with wives who are successful, and busy, and independent...I think it is changing...the women—some of them are now marrying foreigners who are older...

At the same time, the Philippines government was actively encouraging professionally educated Filipinos working overseas to return home to assist in developing the country's competitive position.

Conclusion: emic and etic perspectives on business leadership

Although functional role parameters of business management (planning, coordinating and allocating resources) may be universal, the *enactment* of these roles is moderated by culture and gender dynamics. Characteristics of effective Filipina business leaders embedded in the culture and gender discourses include strategies for exercising power, and for negotiating the boundaries of traditional female role expectations, values and behaviours.

The 'visionary' and long-term orientation required of 'strategic leaders' also appears to transcend cultural boundaries, but the ways in which Filipina executives and managers communicate their strategic vision, generate support for their strategies, and implement their long-run strategies have distinctive meanings within the context of cultural values, dynamics, and gender roles. The manner in which each woman negotiated strategic advantages for her organisation was contingent on the

nature of her leadership style, characteristics of her colleagues and subordinates, and community level connections.

In the Philippine context of public images of power and influence, *perceptions* of effective business leadership play a significant role in developing and maintaining a strategic business advantage. Strategic leadership requires instrumental networking with powerful allies within the Philippines and in the international business arena. The perceptions and expectations of their industry peers, organisational colleagues, and subordinates enhanced Filipina leadership effectiveness.

There are elements in the gender discourse which appear to be universal, across both individualistic Western societies and collectivist societies such as the Philippines. Key gendered domains pertinent to women in management and leadership positions include the dual work-family responsibilities still expected as the cultural norm in both industrialised and developing economies, and the predominantly 'masculine' nature of both the business organisation and strategy-making (Calas and Smircich 1993; Collinson and Hearn 1996; Fondas 1997).

The gendered elements of power and influence in the Philippines affect the ways in which women executives and entrepreneurs exercise their business leadership. Debates about 'women's ways of leading' (Rosener 1990) or 'the female advantage' (Helgesen 1995), grounded in individualistic social structures and industrialised economies, have been generated from cultural contexts that

provide only a partial fit with the Philippines business environment. The assumptions behind the 'feminine-in-management' discourse (Calas and Smircich 1993) are based largely on Western research indicating that women in general are more relationship-oriented, flexible, adaptable and less hierarchical than men, and hence more appropriate business leaders for contemporary turbulent business environments. It has been argued, however, that this discourse may, in fact, 'incorporate a patriarchally defined 'female' into traditional managerial activities and their instrumental orientation' (Calas and Smircich 1993:74). The 'masculinity' discourse embedded in hierarchical structures and processes in Philippines organisations is consistent with those described by Collinson and Hearn (1996) and Kanter (1977) in relation to Western organisations and assumptions about management.

'Effective strategic leadership' by women in the Philippines is a complex synthesis of class, gender and cultural factors. The economic and social class structures of the Philippines differ in such substantial ways from those of developed industrial economies that Western research and debates on the 'feminine-in-management' have not been embraced to a comparable extent within Philippines management discourses. Regardless of gender, entrepreneurs in large family-owned enterprises have a distinctive advantage in developing economies where there is an unequal distribution of wealth. Although this study did not have the background characteristics of successful entrepreneurs as

its focus, the political economy of gender in the Philippines (Eviota 1992) forms the economic and social context for Filipina managers and entrepreneurs. These gendered economic considerations are a subset of the global business economy and influence women's participation in national wealth creation and development (Ofreneo 1999). Women in the Philippines contribute significantly to both the formal and informal economies. In a global business environment, Filipina women risk being relegated to low-paid positions which require 'attention to detail', 'persistence' and compliance, so that Philippines businesses can compete effectively. At the same time, Licuanan (1992b, 1992c) has suggested that Filipino women who wish to develop managerial career paths may lose some of the domestic support traditionally available from within the extended family and paid household help. This career dilemma is exacerbated by global business strategies and organisational structures, and socioeconomic class divisions (Eviota 1992; Ofreneo 1999).

When the study began in 1994, forecasts of economic development in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian economies were optimistic. There were also expectations of increased participation of Filipino and other ASEAN women at managerial levels (Licuanan 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). Such optimism was based on an assumption that positive effects of increased national wealth would flow on to women as well as men in the Philippines and elsewhere in the region. As consumption increases in emerging Asian markets 'the development of elaborate new femininities based on the consumer /

wife/mother and the consumer/beautiful young woman in the region can be seen as central to the very development of these burgeoning economies' (Stevens 1998:6). By 1998, however, the Asian financial crisis undermined the rate of development of the Philippines and other ASEAN countries. Given the changed economic conditions, forecasts made by Licuanan (1992b, 1992c) about Filipino women's increased participation at managerial levels warrant review.

In their public credibility and peer approval, the female executives and entrepreneurs in this study provide a form of 'role model' for future Filipina business leaders. It appears, however, that minimum baseline conditions are required for Filipino women to assume leadership positions and to exercise that leadership effectively. Not all potential business leaders in the Philippines have had the educational and economic opportunities available to the majority of women who participated in this study. The political dynamics, economic context and social class structures in which Manila-based executives and entrepreneurs operate differ substantially from those affecting rural Philippines and women working in the informal sector (Eviota 1992; Pertierra 1995; Rutten 1990).

As countries move from agricultural to manufacturing economies, women have historically increased their representation in urban labour forces (del Rosario 1995; Hoffarth 1989, 1990; Adler and Izraeli 1994). Developing economies and industrialised nations alike have seen an increase in the proportion of women with educational and technical qualifications consistent with those

of males in organisations, but comparatively slow rates of promotion to management positions (Adler and Izraeli 1988, 1994). The processes by which women move into management positions varies between countries, and reflects the specific political, cultural and economic conditions in each country.

While it has been argued that Filipino women control the purse strings and dominate household management more than in some other developing economies (Hoffarth 1989), the extent of the class gap in wealth distribution in the Philippines prevents a substantial proportion of Filipino women and men from accessing resources which would provide the minimum competencies necessary for effective business leadership. Eviota (1992) articulates concerns that increased industrialisation in the Philippines may increase the economic class disparities, and that Filipino women will bear the burden of economic development.

There are indications that the construction of 'class' in the Philippines is changing to accommodate broader definitions of the 'middle class', as 'the middle class, middle strata or middle sectors are now being seen as important in political, economic and cultural terms' (Turner 1995:97). Such reconstructions do not necessarily deal with the gendered dimensions of economic power and business influence (Eviota 1992; Ofreneo 1999), or the class dimensions of deeply embedded family alliance structures (Asuncion-Lande and Lande 1992; Lande 1968). Until barriers restricting access to financial resources, leadership competency development and family support systems are lowered, it will

be difficult for many Filipino women to reach managerial levels, even though role models are already visible. The ready availability of low cost domestic labour makes it possible for 'upper class' and 'middle class' Filipino businesswomen to fulfil the time-consuming demands of competitive business leadership, while simultaneously meeting 'family' obligations, for less financial outlay than that incurred by women managers in other countries. In many industrialised economies, outsourcing domestic services and household maintenance activities is a significant cost for female professionals, managers and dual career families.

This paper has illustrated ways in which effective Filipina business leaders exercise strategic leadership in the context of competing culture and gender role expectations, values, and dynamics. Most have adapted modern professional management skills and strategic orientations to fit the distinctive characteristics of contemporary business dynamics in the Philippines. At the same time, they have grappled with the conflicts and dilemmas in gendered power roles and dynamics, and conflicting perceptions and expectations of modern Filipino women in public and family arenas.

In interpretations of the relationship between gender and culture, 'the repeated production of cultural discourses of gender establishes the range of meanings which position women and men as different kinds of persons' (Evans 1997:15). The categories 'woman' and 'man' employed by these discourses 'have something to do with the representations, self-representations and

day-to-day practices of individual women and men' (Moore 1994:51), and a construction of the individual can be understood only 'with reference to a culturally and historically specific set of categories' (Moore 1994:51). The findings of this study indicate that convergence of effective business leadership *behaviour* or peer/subordinate *expectations* across culture and gender dimensions cannot be assumed. The ways in which Filipina business leaders in the study motivated and inspired their staff have culture and gender-specific components. Dimensions of leadership in developing economies must be examined through multiple lenses of gender as well as culture, for a more complete understanding of effective strategic leadership and management.

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Notes

¹ The term 'Filipina' is used with reference to Filipino women. The term 'Filipino' is used both generically and with reference to males.

² See Parker and Roffey (1997) and Roffey (1999) for more extensive discussions of research design.

³ Direct quotes are italicised.

⁴ Comments by Raquel Edralin Tiglao as reported by Estrada-Claudio (1990:6).

⁵ Conversation (21 August 1995) with Dr Manuel Tipgos, Professor of Accounting, University of Indiana, during his visiting professorship at the University of the Philippines.