

Family Planning, Work and Women's Economic and Social Autonomy in Indonesia

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The population programme should cater to the time constraints that women face and try to reduce their double burden caused by the inequitable division of domestic responsibilities

In Indonesia, a commonly held social view is that women's primary role in the family is reproductive and that women's productive role is primarily related to domestic tasks. Society considers men to be responsible primarily for economic support of the family (Woodcroft-Lee, 1983; Raharjo and Hull, 1984; Niehof, 1994). The image of the ideal woman as the dependent and obedient wife influences even the government's view of the place and position of women in social life. "On the one hand, women are called upon to dedicate themselves to 'the development of the nation,' by pursuing education, participating in the labor market, and sustaining economic development and modernization. On the other hand, it is emphasized that their participation in the process of national development should concentrate on the domains which 'best correspond with their female nature and their biological constitution'," report Slaats and Portier (1994:36). Men's and women's roles are even specified in the national marriage law of 1974. Does this gender division of labour result in unequal gender relations in the family? Economic dependence on their husbands may put wives in a subordinate position, with less power than their husbands.

Women who work for an income are hypothesized to be more economically and socially autonomous than those who do not, although this point has been widely debated. Most studies on women's status in Indonesia have been conducted in rural areas of the country. Stoler (1977) found that poor rural Javanese women had access to more kinds of employment opportunities, albeit menial labour, than wealthy women and therefore more access to a regular source of income which might also allow more autonomy. Wealthier village women gained autonomy through access to resources, which led them to have more equal relationships with their husbands and to have more control over the activities (including labour force participation) of other household members. Wolf (1992) found that when decisions were made by couples with unequal power relationships, women were generally disadvantaged (also see Sadli, 1995). Hull (1980), in a study of the status of women in rural central Java, argued that social class had a complex impact on the relationship between women's work and female autonomy. In her village study, many of the lower class women had greater autonomy than the more privileged upper class women. This was because the poor women were more likely to use divorce as a tool to rid themselves of an unwanted spouse, while the well-to-do women were often tied to unhappy unions by financial dependence on their husbands.

Economic and social autonomy should allow wives to be involved in the process of negotiations with their husbands on important matters such as making purchases and exercising their reproductive rights. Having more autonomy should free women from the ideology of "gender and maternal altruism" (Whitehead, 1984) through which Indonesian women are expected to put the needs of all family members (particularly males) ahead of their own needs.

For more than 25 years the Indonesian government has promoted family planning as a means of improving family welfare and the lives of women by freeing women's time for other activities (Hull and Hull, 1997). As a result, the total fertility rate has fallen from 5.2 children per woman in the 1970s to 2.9 in 1994 (CBS, 1995). Virtually all (95 per cent) contraceptive users are women. One way in which the use of family planning may improve family welfare and the lives of women is through women's employment. Women may enhance their opportunities to secure employment and progress in their careers by controlling their fertility through the use of contraception. Women may also gain social autonomy in the household if they gain self-confidence through the ability to control their reproduction.

This article explores women's economic and social autonomy in the household and describes the effects of contraceptive use and working outside the home on women's autonomy in two urban areas of Indonesia. The article uses data collected through a 1996 study^{1/} conducted under the auspices of the Women's Studies Project of Family Health International.

Data and methods

The study included a survey of 770 women and 30 in-depth interviews with women and their husbands, conducted in two urban areas of Indonesia: Jakarta (the national capital, which is located on the island of Java) and Ujung Pandang (the capital of the province of South Sulawesi). In Jakarta, the study areas included two mixed social class residential areas in South Jakarta. The two residential areas chosen in Ujung Pandang were also meant to have a mixture of social classes, but once fieldwork had begun the researchers discovered that one area was inhabited predominantly by civil servants, who were more well-to-do than their neighbours. However, since the study is not a direct comparison of communities, but rather an investigation of the situation of women in contrasting urban communities, this did not present problems in analysis.

In Jakarta, the sample included 400 women. In Ujung Pandang, the target sample was 400 women, but 30 women had to be dropped from the analysis because they fell outside the age range for the study. The samples of women from the selected neighbourhoods were drawn through multi-stage probability sampling from all women in the neighbourhoods who were married and between the ages of 30 and 45 years. Fieldwork for the survey in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang lasted from July through December 1996.

In-depth interview participants were chosen to represent women with a variety of contraceptive use histories and employment experiences. The in-depth interview participants, a subset of the survey respondents, were selected purposively and were not intended to be representative of all women in Jakarta or Ujung Pandang, or even representative of all women in their respective neighbourhoods. We expected to conduct in-depth interviews with 18 couples in each city. However, in Jakarta, only 12 couples could be interviewed.^{2/} Female researchers interviewed the wives, and male researchers interviewed the husbands. Wives and husbands were to be interviewed separately; however, in some cases, the spouse or another family member was unavoidably present. (For more information on the methodology and sampling for this study, see Amal and others, 1997).

Economic autonomy was measured by home ownership (whether the wife or her family owned the respondent's home), the husband's influence over the respondent's work (as reported by the respondents), and the woman's participation in contributing money to the household. To understand the woman's role in the household, respondents were also asked who participated in a variety of daily tasks, including cooking, cleaning, caring for children and making house repairs. Women were also asked the extent to which their wishes prevailed in decision-making on various economic issues, such as buying and selling family property and purchasing major appliances. Aspects of women's social autonomy in the household measured in this study encompassed husband and wife communication on subjects such as family planning (whether the wife had spoken to her husband about family planning and whether she had asked her husband to use family planning), and spousal agreement on the number of children the couple has or wants to have. Finally, women were asked the extent to which their wishes prevailed in decisions on various social issues, such as taking an ill child to the doctor, having another child, sending children to school and a woman's own travel outside the community.

The data from the survey were analysed using the SPSS software package for microcomputers. Data analysis consisted of frequency distributions and cross tabulations with chi-squared tests of significance where relevant. Examined in the study were the bivariate relationships between the independent variables of interest, family planning and work, and aspects of women's economic and social autonomy. The findings are presented separately for Jakarta and Ujung Pandang, and the statistical differences between the two are not tested. The qualitative data from the in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim from the tape recordings by the interviewers themselves. Then, narrative summaries of each of the 60 interviews were written. The data were organized according to pre-defined themes and a principal investigator conducted the analysis. Direct quotes from women and men are used in this article to illustrate points frequently made or representing commonly expressed views.

Results

Background characteristics of the women

The Jakarta community comprised a more mixed economic setting and was less well-off than the Ujung Pandang community. This is reflected in the social, cultural and educational characteristics of the women.

All the women were married at the time of the study, and 11 per cent of the women in both cities had been married more than once. The women in this study were between the ages of 30 and 45; in both provinces, the mean age of the respondents was 36 years (table 1). Women in Jakarta had an average of 4.3 births compared with 3.3 births for women in Ujung Pandang.

Women in the Ujung Pandang community were more likely to have completed senior high school and to have gone on to university than those in Jakarta. Women in Ujung Pandang were more likely to be living in households with high socio-economic status, as defined for this study, than those in Jakarta (38.8 and 29.7 per cent respectively).

Table 1. Background characteristics of the Indonesian women surveyed

(per cent)

Item	Jakarta	Ujung Pandang
Age		
30-34 years	39.1	37.0
35-39 years	34.4	34.2
40-45 years	26.8	28.8
Number of cases	(400)	(370)

Mean number of children	4.3	3.3
Number of cases	(394)	(362)
Education		
No schooling	6.8	6.8
Elementary or less	42.3	15.1
Junior high school	20.3	13.7
Senior high school	25.0	39.2
Academy graduate	3.0	9.3
University graduate	2.8	15.9
Number of cases	(400)	(365)
Socio-economic status index ^a		
Low		
0-5	5.1	5.0
Medium		
6-10	29.9	28.5
11-15	35.9	27.7
High		
16-20	18.6	22.3
20-25	11.1	16.5
Number of cases	(400)	(369)

^a Designations of low, medium and high socio-economic status refer to this study and are not necessarily representative of Indonesia as a whole. The index of socio-economic status is a compilation of the household's wattage of electricity, toilet facilities and ownership of consumer goods, namely radio, television, refrigerator, bicycle, motorcycle and car. Each item in the index was weighted (for example, a radio received a weight of 1 point, whereas a car received a weight of 6 points).

Family planning use

Not surprisingly, given Indonesia's strong family planning programme, most of the women in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang said that they had used family planning at some time in their lives (78 per cent in Jakarta and 62 per cent in Ujung Pandang) (table 2). At the time of the survey, almost 70 per cent of women in Jakarta and 62 per cent of women in Ujung Pandang were using contraception, most notably, oral contraceptives, IUDs and injectables.

Table 2. Percentage of past and current use of family planning among the Indonesian women surveyed and percentage distribution of current use of family planning

Item	Jakarta	Ujung Pandang
Ever used family planning?		
Yes	77.6	62.2
Number of cases	(393)	(357)
Current use of family planning		
Number of cases	(400)	(350)
Percentage distribution of current use of family planning		
Oral contraceptives	28.1	25.2
IUD	22.3	29.2
Injectable	29.5	19.0
Female sterilization	7.6	9.3
Periodic abstinence	5.4	5.4
Condom	3.6	4.0
Other	3.6	7.8
Total	100.1	99.9

According to the respondents who were interviewed in depth, the decision to delay or to stop childbearing was not the woman's decision alone. The opinions of the husband, regarded as the legal and economic head of household, were influential. To the husbands, delaying or stopping childbearing was seen as a way to reduce their burden as the main economic providers in the family, either by having fewer children to support or by enabling their wives to work outside the home.

In Jakarta, a husband of a family planning user who worked said: "[My wife is] using contraception because my income is insufficient". A family planning user who was working added: "It would be difficult for me to quit work because relying only on my husband's income is not enough".

In Ujung Pandang, husbands had various opinions. According to the husband of a user who worked, "My wife is using contraception because both of us are working, and it was my wife who was bearing the burden. Apart from that, it was also due to economic considerations". The husband of a user who was a housewife remarked: "The phrase 'many children, more economic fortune' is out of date. Today, many children means lots of problems, lots of responsibility".

Women's reasons for spacing births or ending childbearing were also largely economic. However, some women also gave reasons linked to their reproductive health and rights, and their own well-being. A user in Jakarta who was not working said: "If I have to stay at home, it's unbearable for me. Before using contraception, I could not participate in community activities because the children were small". In Ujung Pandang, some women also expressed personal motivations for using family planning, such as one woman who uses family planning and works: "I have had many children. I was concerned about my own health".

Women's work experience

Women in Ujung Pandang were much more likely to report that they were working for pay than were women in Jakarta (41 and 26 per cent respectively) (table 3). In part, this situation reflected the more "middle class" nature of the community sampled in Ujung Pandang. The most notable difference in the jobs that women in the two cities held was that 23 per cent of women in Ujung Pandang worked as civil servants, whereas only 4 per cent of women in Jakarta worked as such (table 3).

Table 3. Current occupation of the Indonesian women surveyed

(per cent)

Occupation	Jakarta	Ujung Pandang
Not working outside the home	74.3	59.1
Civil servant	4.0	22.8
Entrepreneur	11.6	12.1
Other	10.1	6.0
Number of cases	(400)	(364)

Work and family planning

In Jakarta, 74 per cent of working women and 68 per cent of non-working women were currently using family planning. In Ujung Pandang, 65 per cent of workers and 61 per cent of non-workers were currently using family planning (table 4). Thus, working women do have a slightly higher level of contraceptive use than non-working women; however, the difference is not significant.

Table 4. Percentage of family planning use among working and non-working women in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang, Indonesia, 1996

Current family planning use	Jakarta ^a		Ujung Pandang ^b	
	Currently working	Not working	Currently working	Not working
Currently using family planning	74.2	68.0	64.6	61.0
Not using family planning	28.8	32.0	35.4	39.0
Number of cases	(97)	(303)	(144)	(205)

a X² for Jakarta = 1.35 (p = .245).

b X² for Ujung Panjang = .47 (p = .493).

Husband's influence on the decision to work

About half of the women in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang were married when they first started working. Among the women who had ever worked, 81 per cent in Jakarta and 58 per cent in Ujung Pandang had asked their husbands if they could start working, or continue working in the case of the women who had been working when they got married (data not shown in tables). Similarly, the majority of women (77 per cent in Jakarta and 67 per cent in Ujung Pandang) reported seeking their husband's permission to take (or keep) their current job. Virtually all of the women who worked said their husbands liked them to work. However, among the women who worked, 14 per cent in Jakarta and 5 per cent in Ujung Pandang said their husbands at some time had tried to prevent them from working.

Reasons for working or not working

Among the women currently working in Jakarta, most said they started working because they needed the money (40 per cent) or for personal satisfaction (31 per cent) (data not shown in tables). Among working women in Ujung Pandang, those reasons were reversed: nearly 44 per cent said that they started working for personal satisfaction, while 34 per cent said that they did so for the income.

Among the women who had never worked or had stopped working, child care was the main reason the women gave for not working (47 per cent in Jakarta and 30 per cent in Ujung Pandang) or for stopping work (38 per cent in both cities) (data not shown in tables). The other predominant reason that women cited for stopping work was their husband's request that they stop working or not work (23 per cent in Jakarta and 31 per cent in Ujung Pandang).

Among the women who had never worked, not having enough skills or education to get a job was often cited as a reason for not working (23 per cent in Jakarta and 30 per cent in Ujung Pandang) (data not shown in tables). In addition, 16 per cent of women in Jakarta and 22 per cent of women in Ujung Pandang who had never worked said that they did not want to work. Some women (10 per cent in Jakarta and 15 per cent in Ujung Pandang) said they did not work because their husbands did not want them to work.

Desire to change work status

All women in the survey were asked if they would like to change their work status. Women in both cities tended to want to maintain their current work status (table 5). Among the women in Jakarta, however, 18 per cent of the non-working women said that they would like to work, while only 4 per cent of working women said that they preferred not to work. In Ujung Pandang, the results were similar: among women not working, 25 per cent wanted jobs, while fewer than 3 per cent of working women said that they would rather not work. Women who worked in both provinces had similar desires about changing (or maintaining) their work status.

Table 5. Desired work status, by current work status, for women in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang, Indonesia, 1996

Desired work status	Current work status			
	Jakarta		Ujung Pandang	
	Working	Not working	Working	Not working
I want to work ^a	93.8	17.8	95.3	25.4
I do not want to work	4.1	75.9	2.7	73.2
Other	2.1	6.3	2.0	1.4
Number of cases	(97)	(303)	(149)	(213)

^a This category includes women who would like to change jobs, but still want to work.

Failure to use family planning did not appear to be a factor that kept women from working. In fact, women who were not working but wanted to work were more likely than others to be using family planning. Among non-workers who wanted to work, 76 per cent in Jakarta and 66 per cent in Ujung Pandang were using family planning (data not shown in tables). In comparison, among the overall study sample, the contraceptive prevalence was 78 per cent in Jakarta and 62 per cent in Ujung Pandang. The non-working women who said that they wanted to be working tended to be younger, on average, than the women in the study populations in each city.

Women's economic autonomy in the household

Home ownership status

In both cities, home ownership tended to be in the name of the husband or the husband's family. In over half the households, the husband or his family owned the house in which the respondent lived (63 per cent in Jakarta and 54 per cent in Ujung Pandang) (data not shown in tables). In 20 per cent of households in Ujung Pandang and 26 per cent of households in Jakarta, women said they or their parents owned the house in which their family lived. About one in five families in both cities (17 per cent in Jakarta and 20 per cent in Ujung Pandang) rented their house, were supplied housing through work, or had some other living arrangement.

Division of labour in the household

The survey findings indicate a fairly traditional gender-based division of labour. With the exception of making house repairs, fewer than 4 per cent of men were the household members primarily responsible for any household activity (table 6). Women were overwhelmingly responsible for cooking and caring for children. In general, larger percentages of women in Ujung Pandang than in Jakarta relied on others to help them with household tasks. This situation is probably because middle class households that could afford household servants were more often included in the Ujung Pandang sample.

Table 6. Percentage of participation in household activities reported by women in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang, Indonesia, 1996

Task	Jakarta					Ujung Pandang				
	Only/ mostly wife	Only/ mostly husband	Both	Others	Number of cases	Only/ mostly wife	Only/ mostly husband	Both	Others	Number of cases
Daily cooking	90.1	0.8	1.0	8.3	(400)	82.7	0.8	1.4	15.2	(369)
Cleaning the house	66.3	1.3	5.3	27.3	(400)	63.5	0.3	8.2	28.1	(367)
Clearing the yard	67.1	1.3	5.0	26.8	(400)	45.7	4.1	10.6	39.7	(368)
Caring for children	87.0	0.8	8.4	3.9	(393)	71.1	2.3	20.9	5.6	(359)
Washing clothes	64.6	1.8	4.8	29.0	(400)	56.3	1.6	4.3	37.8	(368)
Making house repairs	6.1	51.8	3.3	39.0	(400)	1.4	50.6	4.1	44.0	(368)

The in-depth interviews also revealed that, in both cities, the division of labour in most households was gender-based. Neither women's contraceptive use status nor their work status appeared to influence the household division of labour. While women were considered responsible for household tasks, men sometimes said they "helped" their wives with housework and child care because they recognized that their wives were tired and busy, especially if the wives also worked outside the home.

In Jakarta, the husband of a family planning user who was working said: "Women are more tired than men. They look after children, wash clothes and dishes, prepare meals for us and the children. We just appreciate what they have done for us. I realize that, so I help her by washing the dishes". In Ujung Pandang, men said similar things. The husband of a former family planning user who was working said: "Yeah [I would help] if the situation pushed me to help her. If I have time, I do clothes and dishwashing, feed the children".

Women's participation in earning money and contributing towards household expenses

In most families, only the husbands supported the family financially (76 per cent in Jakarta and 62 per cent in Ujung Pandang) (data not shown in tables). The wife was the only (or the predominant) source of income in less than 3 per cent of families. In the remaining families, both wives and husbands earned money for the family. As shown in table 7, in Jakarta, both working husbands and working wives tended to contribute more than half of their incomes for household expenses (86 and 79 per cent respectively). In Ujung Pandang, while 84 per cent of husbands contributed more than half of their earnings for household expenses, only 57 per cent of working women did so. When asked what they did with the income which they did not contribute to household expenses, most women said that they saved it — for their children, the family, relatives or for emergencies. Some women put the money towards business expenses. Very few women said that they used the money for themselves.

Table 7. Proportion of income contributed to household by working Indonesian women and men

(per cent)

Amount	Jakarta		Ujung Pandang	
	Respondent	Husband	Respondent	Husband

None	3.1	0.3	2.0	1.1
Less than half	4.1	0.5	8.0	1.1
About half	13.4	12.0	33.3	14.3
Almost all	47.4	30.0	36.0	36.3
All	32.0	56.0	20.7	47.4
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Number of cases	(97)	(395)	(150)	(370)

Women's say in economic decision-making in the household

To assess further their autonomy in the household, women were asked in the survey whose wishes prevailed in economic decision-making. On decisions related to purchasing and selling family property and purchasing major appliances, women in both cities, with few exceptions, said they made the decisions by themselves or jointly with their husbands (data not shown in tables). Women in Ujung Pandang were far more likely to report joint decision-making on economic issues than were women in Jakarta.

Association between family planning and work status and women's economic autonomy

In Jakarta, family planning use was not significantly associated with the aspects of economic autonomy measured in the survey (table 8). In Ujung Pandang, family planning use was significantly, but negatively, associated with only one aspect of economic autonomy: family planning users in Ujung Pandang were less likely to be contributing money to the household income.

Current work status was positively associated with three aspects of women's economic autonomy. In both cities, women who worked were, predictably, significantly more likely to participate in earning money for the household and to contribute to household expenses than non-working women. Unexpectedly, in Jakarta only, women who worked were less likely to report that their wishes prevailed with regard to purchasing major appliances for the family.

Table 8. Relationship between Indonesian women's work and family planning status and aspects of women's economic autonomy

(per cent)

Economic autonomy item	Currently using family planning						Currently working					
	Jakarta			Ujung Pandang			Jakarta			Ujung Pandang		
	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$
Home owned by woman or her family	21.2	21.3	1.72 (.189)	24.7	28.8	.723 (.395)	21.6	18.8	.377 (.539)	25.3	26.4	.051 (.820)
Woman earns money for household	24.8	21.3	.581 (.747)	36.4	40.3	6.13 (.047)	91.7	2.0	327.11 (.000)	86.1	4.0	253.01 (.000)
Woman contributes some of her income to family expenses	25.5	18.8	4.84 (.089)	41.2	37.1	2.38 (.304)	96.9	0.0	383.83 (.000)	96.7	0.0	348.82 (.000)
Woman's wishes prevail in economic decision-making on:												
Buying/selling family property	56.1	50.8	.959 (.327)	5.4	8.5	1.30 (.253)	46.4	57.1	3.39 (.065)	8.2	4.7	1.93 (.164)
Buying major appliances	55.4	54.1	.057 (.810)	16.6	21.8	1.60 (.205)	43.3	58.7	7.08 (.008)	17.7	19.6	.226 (.634)

Women's and men's views on women's economic autonomy from the in-depth interviews

According to the in-depth interviews, women in Jakarta, regardless of their family planning use or work status, said that much of the family's economic decision-making was in the hands of their husband, although women were expected to maintain the family budget for daily purchases and activities. The husbands usually made expenditure on large items.

Husbands in Jakarta gave a range of responses regarding controlling the family's money. The husband of a non-user who was an unpaid family worker stated: "Every morning I give her [money] for that day's expenses... If that amount of money is

not enough, she can ask for some additional money. For her own needs, she asks too.... Most people here in this neighbourhood do the same thing as me". The husband of a non-working woman who formerly used family planning said: "I am a poor person. I am the only one who works. I trust her to manage and control the money.... The important thing is trusting each other. Otherwise, why raise a family?"

Similarly, several women interviewed in Jakarta said they controlled money for everyday expenses and had to request money and permission from their husbands for any larger expenditure. In general, working women in Jakarta seemed to have more discretion in economic decision-making for their personal needs than Jakarta women who did not earn any income. However, they tended to focus on the needs of their families, particularly their children, before their own personal needs. A user who owned a small business with two employees reflected: "Yes, you could say that I am free to spend the household income, but I myself do not have many personal needs. What I am thinking about now is how can we have our own house, how can I give a better education to my children". A non-user who was an unpaid family worker said: "I am helping my husband to earn a living. It is my husband who controls the money. He gives me some money every morning for that day's expenses. The electricity bill, the children's tuition fees are my husband's responsibility. I never take money for myself.... If I want to buy something for myself, I ask him".

Working women from Ujung Pandang tended to have more flexibility than women with their own incomes in Jakarta, but working women in both cities were more concerned with their families' needs than with their own personal needs. As in Jakarta, both working and non-working women seemed to be responsible for managing daily household expenses. A working woman in Ujung Pandang who did not use family planning noted: "Although I am free to use the household income, I am only free to manage the daily household expenditure. We pool our incomes, but I have to divide it according to our needs. I also put aside some amount of money whenever I can, as savings".

Most husbands from Ujung Pandang said that their wives, working or non-working, were responsible for managing the household finances and making the available money stretch to meet the family's needs. The husband of a non-user of family planning who was not working said: "The money she asks for is for the children's needs, not for herself.... So, since she really uses it for the children, there is no point in my controlling the money".

Women's social autonomy in the household

Spousal communication

An important part of women's autonomy is their ability to communicate with their spouses on a number of issues. Women in both cities reported that their communication with their husbands was good. Women said that they could talk freely with their husbands about economic issues (daily household expenses and expenditure on expensive consumer items, and financial problems), on the division of household labour, on social issues (problems their children were having, the children's schooling), and on personal problems (marital problems, sex, the extended family and job problems). With the exception of personal problems, over 95 per cent of the women in both cities said that they could talk freely with their husbands (data not shown in tables). Sex was the most difficult issue to discuss; yet 87 per cent of women in Jakarta and 83 per cent of women in Ujung Pandang said that they could talk freely with their husbands about sex. Less than 3 per cent of women in either city said that their husbands did not respect their opinions on these topics.

Women were asked if using family planning had made any difference in their communication with their husbands. Among the women who used family planning, women in Ujung Pandang were much more likely to say that their husbands had become more receptive to their opinions since they started using family planning (57 per cent) than were women in Jakarta (27 per cent) (data not shown in tables). Most women in Jakarta (71 per cent) said using family planning had made no difference in how responsive their husbands were to their opinions compared with 41 per cent in Ujung Pandang.

Husband's involvement in family planning and family size decisions

One aspect of social autonomy measured on the survey was women's ability to discuss family planning and negotiate contraceptive use with their husbands. The large majority of women (64 per cent in Jakarta and 69 per cent in Ujung Pandang) said that they had asked how their husbands felt about family planning: 87 per cent of the women in Jakarta and 83 per cent in Ujung Pandang said that their husbands approved of family planning. However, relatively few women (21 per cent in Jakarta and 15 per cent in Ujung Pandang) said that they had asked their husbands to use family planning, indicating that family planning is considered to be a woman's responsibility.

More than three-quarters of the women in both cities (76 per cent in Jakarta and 79 per cent in Ujung Pandang) said that they were in agreement with their husbands about the number of children they either had or wanted to have. Among the spouses who had disagreed on the number of children to have, husbands in both cities were more likely to want more children than their wives (64 per cent in Jakarta and 75 per cent in Ujung Pandang).

Women's say in social decision-making in the household

Women were also asked in the survey whose wishes prevailed in decisions on social issues. As with decisions on economic issues, women in both cities, with some exceptions, said that social decisions (such as taking an ill child to the

doctor, having another child, sending children to school and the woman's own travel outside the community) were made either by themselves or jointly with their husbands. Again, women in Ujung Pandang were more likely to report joint decision-making on social issues than were women in Jakarta. Interestingly, in Jakarta, 56 per cent of women reported that their husbands' wishes prevailed when making the decision to have another child; only 16 per cent said that the decision would be made jointly (data not shown in tables). On the other hand, in Ujung Pandang, 77 per cent of the women said that they made decisions on childbearing together with their husbands.

Association between family planning and work status and women's social autonomy

In both Jakarta and Ujung Pandang, women who used family planning were significantly more likely than women who did not use family planning to have asked their husbands how they felt about family planning (table 9). In addition, in Ujung Pandang only, women who used family planning were significantly more likely than non-users to have asked their husbands to use family planning.

Table 9. Relationship between Indonesian women's work and family planning status and aspects of women's social autonomy in the household

(per cent)

Social autonomy item	Currently using family planning						Currently working					
	Jakarta			Ujung Pandang			Jakarta			Ujung Pandang		
	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$	Yes	No	$\chi^2/(p)$
Woman has asked husband how he feels about family planning	69.1	51.6	11.14 (.001)	79.8	52.7	28.1 (.000)	68.0	62.4	1.02 (.312)	74.2	65.3	3.28 (.070)
Woman has asked husband to use family planning	21.9	17.2	1.16 (.281)	20.2	7.0	10.92 (.001)	22.7	19.8	.374 (.541)	20.0	10.7	6.16 (.013)
Spouses agree on number of children	75.2	78.7	.576 (.448)	78.0	78.6	.016 (.900)	74.2	76.9	.289 (.590)	80.1	77.8	.285 (.594)
Respondent participates in community activity	68.8	73.3	.489 (.484)	63.7	54.2	1.59 (.207)	22.6	33.3	3.17 (.075)	43.7	25.0	6.43 (.011)
Woman's wishes prevail in decisions on:												
Taking child with fever to the doctor	22.7	30.4	2.63 (.105)	24.7	29.9	1.17 (.280)	18.9	26.8	2.40 (.121)	29.7	24.3	1.40 (.237)
Having another child	29.5	24.6	1.01 (.314)	9.1	11.4	.510 (.475)	27.8	28.1	.001 (.967)	7.4	11.8	2.03 (.154)
Sending children to school	54.0	54.8	.022 (.881)	14.1	21.4	3.19 (.074)	42.1	58.1	7.38 (.007)	15.9	16.4	.013 (.906)
Her own travel outside community	59.7	55.7	.551 (.458)	12.6	16.9	1.32 (.250)	50.5	61.1	3.36 (.067)	18.5	9.9	6.07 (.014)

Current work status was positively associated with four aspects of women's social autonomy (one in Jakarta and three in Ujung Pandang). Unexpectedly, in Jakarta only, women who worked said that they had less direct say in sending their children to school than did women who did not work. In Ujung Pandang only, working women were more likely to say that they had asked their husbands to use family planning, had participated in community activities and that their wishes prevailed regarding their own travel outside their communities.

Women's and men's views on women's social autonomy from the in-depth interviews

While the survey findings indicated that women play a major role in family decision-making, many women in Jakarta who participated in the in-depth interviews indicated that they had little or no influence in social decision-making. Both wives and husbands agreed that husbands dominated decision-making on a variety of social issues. Women seemed to have independent opinions, but they did not act independently. This tended to be true regardless of women's family planning or work status, suggesting that many women have little bargaining power in the household. Women in Ujung Pandang tended to report more joint decision-making with their husbands than women in Jakarta.

Women who never worked outside the home and never used contraception seemed to have the least ability to make independent decisions. In Jakarta, the husband of a non-working family planning user said: "She is not free to decide anything by herself. She has to ask my permission". A non-user, who was an unpaid family worker, added: "No, no everything I want to do I have to ask his permission. I cannot decide everything for myself.... He will be angry".

In Ujung Pandang, the statements of women who worked or used family planning (or both) indicated that they had a significant role in social decision-making. A family planning user who was not working said: "He never forbids me to participate in activities". A non-user who was working stated: "In household life, I can choose whatever I like, whatever I want to do. However, I have to ask my husband first what his opinion is because I want to have communication with him. I have a husband, and I appreciate his opinion. He usually says it's up to me. If we make ends meet, he feels content. That is an honest family". According to the husband of a woman who used to use contraception and who was not working, "I never limit her from doing anything. If she thinks it is good for her, it's okay with me". A non-user who was not working said simply: "I think I do not have any freedom to do everything". A husband of a non-user who was not working said: "The husband's decision-making is very important. The wife cannot make any decision".

Perceived benefits and negative aspects of family planning

In addition to the effects of family planning on women's economic and social autonomy described above, in the survey, women specified a number of ways in which family planning had benefited their lives (table 10). Women first mentioned the ability to space births (37 per cent of women in Jakarta and 28 per cent in Ujung Pandang). Second, women mentioned the ability to earn money (for children's education and for the household).

Most women who had used family planning could not think of any negative effects on their lives (68 per cent in Jakarta and 71 per cent in Ujung Pandang). The most significant negative effect noted was the experience of side-effects from contraceptives, noted by 30 per cent of women in Jakarta and 27 per cent of women in Ujung Pandang.

Table 10. Perceived benefits of family planning reported by women in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang, Indonesia, 1996

(per cent)

Benefit	Jakarta	Ujung Pandang
Ability to space births	37.3	27.6
Ability to earn money	15.6	20.3
Having more time	14.5	16.5
Other (various)	16.3	15.5
None	16.5	20.3
Number of cases	(346)	(261)

Discussion and policy recommendations

Given the pervasiveness of Indonesia's family planning programme and the high rates of contraceptive use in these two study areas of Jakarta and Ujung Pandang in 1996 when the study was conducted, it is not surprising that no statistically significant associations were found between family planning use and work status. Nor was family planning use a determinant of many aspects of women's economic and social autonomy measured in this study. This study suggests that family planning, while perceived as beneficial by women, has not made gender roles among the sample of women in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang more equitable. These findings support those from other research on gender relations in Indonesia. Most women and their husbands in this study reportedly adhered strongly to gender divisions of labour, regardless of the women's family planning or work status. Even with the opportunity to work, which women defined as "helping" their husbands to support the family, the women in both Jakarta and Ujung Pandang were faced with domestic duties at home, with only a little "help" from their husbands.

Still, work was positively associated with six of 14 aspects of women's economic and social autonomy and negatively associated with two aspects of women's autonomy. Women in Ujung Pandang seemed to have derived more autonomy from working than had women in Jakarta. This was probably because the women in Ujung Pandang were of a higher socio-economic status than were the women of Jakarta in this study. It is also important to remember that this study was conducted among women who were 30 to 45 years of age. It is possible — indeed likely — that gender relations among younger women and their husbands are more egalitarian.

It is interesting to note the differences between the findings of the survey and the in-depth interviews. On the questionnaire, women said that they communicated well with their spouses on a variety of issues and that their wishes prevailed, or that they made joint decisions with their husbands on a number of economic and social issues. On the other hand, in the more informal setting of the in-depth interviews, gender relations tended to be portrayed by both women and men as more rigidly conveying both economic and social power to husbands.

Based on this study, it is not possible to conclude whether the survey or in-depth interview findings more accurately

depict familial gender relations. It is possible that women and men in the in-depth interviews were actually giving answers based on social norms of gender roles rather than purely on their own experiences. Since the in-depth interviews did not always take place in private, women and men might have been hesitant to indicate that their relationships with their spouses were more egalitarian than socially constructed gender norms would dictate. Whatever the explanation, this study highlights the difficulties of uncovering "personal" or "individually" held beliefs in a society which is highly group-oriented in its norms and organization.

Although family planning use was not significantly associated with work and was associated with only a few aspects of women's economic and social autonomy, women did perceive that they gained benefits from practising family planning.

Work is clearly seen as the factor that provides women with more autonomy rather than use of family planning per se. If they could, more women would be working than were doing so at the time of the study. Younger women who are somewhat more likely to be using family planning are the ones who would like to work if they could. The burden of caring for young children, in addition to lack of appropriate employment opportunities, probably made it more difficult for these women to engage in income-generating activities.

This study was conducted prior to the economic crisis in Indonesia, and thus women's economic and family lives, in addition to family planning use, were far more stable than they have been since the crisis that began in 1997. Still, the results of this study will be valuable to advocates and policy makers trying to increase further gender equity in Indonesian families. The family planning programme should address women's multiple responsibilities and promote services and programmes to cater to the time constraints women currently face, while simultaneously working to reduce the double burden caused by the inequitable division of domestic responsibilities. Women in this study — even before the economic crisis — were very concerned about making financial ends meet in the household, and particularly about the cost of educating their children. Women are expected to manage the daily expenses for the family and be responsible for using family planning, and yet must defer to their husbands' wishes regarding family size. Therefore, the family planning programme should strengthen its efforts to encourage husbands to support women's economic and social autonomy. The programme should also continue its efforts to support women's reproductive rights, including the woman's right to decide how many children she wants to have and can support.

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Endnotes

1. Indonesia's economic crisis occurred early in the second half of 1997; thus, the study was undertaken at a time when the economy was relatively buoyant.

2. Only the wife could be interviewed for one couple and only the husband for another couple. Four other couples could not be interviewed for various reasons, and the timing of the fieldwork did not permit the researchers to identify other couples to participate in the in-depth interviews.

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