

God, Family, and Country: The Philippine Debate on the Legalization of Divorce

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46 ATENEO L.J. 227 (2001)

SUBJECT(S): FAMILY LAW, DIVORCE

KEYWORD(S): CHURCH, DIVORCE

As time continually changes and social values move in and out of flux, the divorce debate has lingered in the halls of Congress administration after administration. The Author employs a comparative and historical approach in his treatment of the divorce debate.

With much influence of divorce coming from the West, the Author traces the divorce debate to its historical and religious context. The divorce experience in the United States, France, Spain, and Ireland reveal that there was no consensus on divorce. Some treated it as an expression of liberty, while others consider the economic and social impact to the family. The nuanced debates even focus on the grounds for divorce as fault-based and no-fault or mutual consent based. Social changes throughout the years, such as industrialization, contribute to people's attitude towards divorce.

In the Philippines, the divorce debate is inextricably linked to the sectarian entwinement of Church and State throughout the Spanish era. This remnant of the colonial period continues to this day as Church involvement in political affairs remains strong. It is this facet of Philippine political culture which traps the Philippines between modernity and traditional values. That law is perceived to be an enforced morality to protect certain sets of values explains why the divorce debate never materializes to a definite conclusion.