

Discussion
Paper Series
2023-01



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

Policy Studies for Political and Administrative Reforms (PSPAR) Series 01-01

Barriers to Filipino Women's Political Participation

Jean Encinas-Franco and Elma Laguna

ISSN 2619-7448 (PRINT)
ISSN 2619-7456 (ONLINE)



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR
INTEGRATIVE AND
DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES

**The UP CIDS DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES
is published by the
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni
Magsaysay Avenue, University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City 1101
Telephone: 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268 / 8426-0955
E-mail: cids@up.edu.ph / cidspublications@up.edu.ph
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/upcids>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/upcids>
Website: cids.up.edu.ph

Copyright 2023 by UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies

The views and opinions expressed in this discussion paper are those of the author/s and neither reflect nor represent those of the University of the Philippines or the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. No copies can be made in part or in whole without prior written permission from the authors/editors and the publisher.

ISSN 2619-7448 (PRINT)
ISSN 2619-7456 (ONLINE)

COVER IMAGE CREDIT

Photo taken from the Philippine Commission on Women's press release on "Agenda ni Juana"
<https://pcw.gov.ph/pcw-launches-agenda-ni-juana-womens-priority-legislative-agenda-for-the-19th-congress/>

**Discussion
Paper Series
2023-XX**



**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
PROGRAM ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE**

Barriers to Filipino Women's Political Participation

Jean Encinas-Franco and Elma Laguna

Overcoming Barriers to Filipino Women's Political Representation¹

Jean Encinas Franco² and Elma Laguna³

Abstract

Local and international mandates have greatly facilitated gender equality legislation and programs, a key reform measure that has been missed is overcoming barriers to women's political participation. A key puzzle is that Filipino women have historically been either at par or have a higher voter turnout than men. However, they have faced obstacles in electoral politics. This policy brief aims to (1) present the situation on women's representation in electoral politics; (2) point out significant barriers to women's entry into electoral politics; and (3) recommend key policy directions and ways forward to address persistent issues.

-
- ¹ This policy brief is part of the study, "Women, Substantive Representation, and Policy Outcomes" under the Policy Studies for Political and Administrative Reforms (PSPAR) project, which is funded by the GAA 2021 FCR Project: January to December 2021. The funding of this project was coursed through, and administered by, the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS). Parts of this policy brief were presented in a forum sponsored by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) held on 5 November 2021, and appeared in Jean Encinas-Franco, "Sexism in the 2022 Philippine Elections: A Problem with No Name," ISEA Yusof Ishak Institute, 9 December 2021, <https://fulcrum.sg/sexism-in-the-2022-philippine-elections-a-problem-with-no-name/>.
- ² Jean Encinas-Franco, PhD (jefranco@up.edu.ph) is Professor at the Department of the Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- ³ Elma Laguna, Dr. rer. pol. (eplaguna@up.edu.ph) is Assistant Professor of Demography at the Population Institute, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Introduction

The Philippines is Asia's first democracy and is a forerunner in promoting women's rights. Global measures on women's empowerment consistently rank the country high in key gender equality indicators. For example, despite falling one notch lower in 2021, the country is still the best among Asian countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (PCW 2021). This high ranking, along with the reputation of having approved key legislative measures promoting women's rights, gives the impression that the middle-income country is making headways in its gender equality goals. However, daunting challenges remain in Filipino women's political representation. The Philippines has not reached the international standard where women can meaningfully make a difference in decision-making institutions.

In understanding women's role in formal politics, the area this paper wishes to explore, scholars distinguish between descriptive representation and substantive representation. Descriptive representation refers to the numerical presence of women in politics, while substantive representation refers to "a process that implies a series of acts and actors: putting women's interests on the political agenda, translating women's interests, concerns and views into legislation" (Lee and Lee 2020, 40). While cognizant that there is no "automatic" correlation between descriptive and substantive representation because context and institutions matter (Joshi 2022, 3), the paper focuses on descriptive representation of Filipino women in formal politics.

Research on women's representation suggests that women in elective positions are important for democracy, development, and its symbolic value to future generations. Women's participation in electoral politics is integral to strengthening democracy since they comprise half of the population and should be properly represented in political processes. If sustainable progress is to be made, it must include women's meaningful participation in political life. Women's meaningful participation in politics results in better social welfare outcomes in terms of an increased budget for social services, among others. Moreover, women in the political sphere create visibility for women leaders, serving as role models for future generations.

Local and international instruments also normatively provide standards for women's political participation. Article II, Section 14 of the 1987 Constitution states, "The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of men and women." Republic Act No. 9710, or the Magna Carta of Women, likewise mandates gender balance in all decision-making spheres. It also asks political parties to create rules for nominating more women in candidate slates. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 instruct states to pursue gender-equal participation in policymaking.

Other national mandates also pursue gender equality. For example, Republic Act No. 7192, or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1992, explicitly seeks full and equal partnership of men and women in development and nation-building. This law set in motion subsequent women's rights laws passed by Congress since the 1990s. Moreover, additional mandates have been introduced that further strengthen these policies, such as the annual gender and development (GAD) budget in the General Appropriations Act or the budget law. Since 1995, a GAD budget provision requires government offices and local government units to allot at least five percent of their budget to GAD activities and projects. Meanwhile, the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025, a thirty-year plan mandating each administration to establish framework plans for women, is still in place.

While such local and international mandates have greatly facilitated gender equality legislation and programs, a key reform measure that has been missed is overcoming barriers to women's political participation. A key puzzle is that Filipino women have historically been either at par or have a higher voter turnout than men. However, they have faced obstacles in electoral politics. Therefore, this policy brief aims to (1) present the situation on women's representation in electoral politics; (2) point out significant barriers to their entry into electoral politics; and (3) recommend key policy directions and ways forward to address persistent issues.

Filipino Women in Electoral Politics

The nature and extent of Filipino women's political participation is a product of the country's colonial history, martial law, and democratization post-1986. Historians argue that Spain's strong Catholic traditions ushered in patriarchal norms and practices that were not present in the pre-Hispanic period. National hero, Jose Rizal, has documented this in his "Letter to the Women of Malolos," praising the women for advocating their right to education. Historians also found proof of women's contribution to the Philippine revolution (Camagay 1998). Decades later, the suffragist movement ushered in one of the first national issues to have brought Filipino women together. It was a hard-fought battle; the movement had to contend with staunch opposition from antisuffragists in the Constitutional Convention that drafted the 1935 Constitution. The reluctance was expected because only 21-year-old Filipino men had been allowed to vote during the time. They framed their opposition based on traditional notions of womanhood and their role in the private sphere, foremost of which is motherhood. Another key argument against female suffrage was the idea that politics is supposed to be "dirty" and that this would taint families if women took part in politics. The assumptions catered to the age-old public-private divide, strongly suggesting that only men are qualified to occupy the former.

Eventually, the 1935 Constitution granted women suffrage on the condition that more than 300,000 women would vote affirmatively in a plebiscite. When signing the law paving the way for the said plebiscite, President Manuel Quezon had this to say to Filipino men: "Are you going to deprive our women of the opportunity to say how their lives are going to be regulated and is it fair for us to presume that men can always speak in this country for women?" (Official Gazette 1936). In April 1937, more than 400,000 women voted in favor of their right to vote and participate in political life. In 1946 and 1947, Filipinos elected the first woman member of the House of Representatives, and senator, respectively. Nonetheless, data from 1946 to 1992 indicate an uphill climb. For instance, in the 1949 and 1953 elections for the House of Representatives, only one woman was elected out of the 100 positions.

The post-World War II period saw women participating in formal politics and even attempting to form a political party and an alliance supporting President Ramon Magsaysay's candidacy for the presidency (He served as president from 1953 to 1957), while the advent of the martial law period in 1972 witnessed feminist movements. Roces (2012, 6) attributes this to the burgeoning student movement and activism, so much so that by the time Marcos declared martial law, women were prepared to take on the resistance. Though inspired by North America's second-wave feminists, Filipino women were also drawn to the era's discourses and contexts, such as the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement.

The women's movement continued to flourish in the Cory Aquino regime (1986–1992). The democratic transition provided political opportunity structures and venues ensuring women's access to the state and nonstate spheres. The drafting of the 1987 Constitution was one such opportunity. The movement managed to advocate for important provisions paving the way for women's rights legislation from the 1980s to the present. The provision in the 1987 Constitution mandates the state to recognize "the role of women in nation building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of men and women" (Article 2, Section 14). This provision is said to be unique and is not even found in other countries' charters (Masilungan n.d.).

The post-Marcos period advanced the participation of women not only in civil society and nongovernment organizations but also in formal politics and bureaucracy. Several women from the movement joined formal politics, while others were invited by the Aquino and Ramos governments (1992–1998) to executive posts. The entry of women activists, NGO leaders, and those from the academe ensured that the new democracy would significantly help push measures promoting women's rights and gender equality. The House of Representative (HOR) and Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)'s "How to Be a Gender-Responsive Legislator" (2021, 52) listed several recent laws responding to women's empowerment and gender equality.

- Republic Act No. 11313: Safe Spaces Act (April 17, 2019)
- Republic Act No. 11210: 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law (March 11, 2019)

- Republic Act No. 10906: Anti-Mail Order Spouse Act (July 21, 2016)
- Republic Act No. 10655: An Act Repealing the Crime of Premature Marriage under the Revised Penal Code (March 13, 2015)
- Republic Act No. 10398: An Act Declaring November Twenty-Five of Every Year as National Consciousness Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children (March 19, 2013)
- Republic Act No. 10361: Domestic Workers Act or Batas Kasambahay (January 18, 2013)
- Republic Act No. 10354: The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (December 21, 2012)
- Republic Act No. 10174: An Act Establishing the People's Survival Fund to Provide Long-Term Finance Streams to Enable the Government to Effectively Address the Problem of Climate Change (August 16, 2012)
- Republic Act No. 10151: An Act Allowing the Employment of Night Workers (repealing the prohibition of night work for women under the Labor Code) (June 21, 2011)
- Republic Act No. 10121: Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (May 27, 2010)
- Republic Act No. 9710: Magna Carta of Women (August 14, 2009)
- Republic Act No. 9995: Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009 (November 17, 2009)
- Republic Act No. 9775: Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 (November 17, 2009)
- Republic Act No. 9729: Climate Change Act of 2009 (October 23, 2009)

- Republic Act No. 9501: Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (May 23, 2008)
- Republic Act No. 9262: Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 (March 8, 2004)
- Republic Act No. 9208 (May 26, 2003), as amended by Republic Act No. 10364 (February 6, 2013): Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003
- Republic Act No. 9178: Barangay Micro Business Enterprises Act of 2002 (November 13, 2002)
- Republic Act No. 8972: Solo Parent's Welfare Act (November 7, 2000)
- Republic Act No. 8505: Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act (February 13, 1998)
- Republic Act No. 8504: Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998 (February 13, 1998)
- Republic Act No. 8353: Anti-Rape Law of 1997 (September 30, 1997)
- Republic Act No. 7877: Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 (February 14, 1995)

During the first Aquino administration (1986–1992), three women sectoral representatives were appointed in Congress. Yet feminist activists such as Teresita Quintos-Deles and Jurgette Honculada's appointments were blocked by the House Committee on Appointments (Abao and Yang 2001, 19).

While reliable electoral data during the Marcos regime is unavailable, it is safe to argue that the repressive regime hampered the participation of women in formal politics given the widespread militarization and electoral fraud characterizing the dictatorship. And even with the legal framework guaranteed by the transition, women found it difficult to enter formal politics, despite women's consistently high voter turnout during elections (Table 1).

Table 1: Percentage of Government Positions Held by Women During the Presidencies of Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos

Government Position	No. of Seats	Aquino Administration (1986–1992)	Ramos Administration (1992–1998)
Senate	24	8.3	16.7
House of Representatives	202	9.4	10.4
Cabinet	20	15.0	5.0
Governor	73	5.4	5.4
Provincial Board Member	626	9.9	10.9
City/Municipal Mayor	1,578	7.4	11.2
City/Municipal Vice Mayor	1,578	6.5	14.9
City Municipal Councilor	12,406	10.5	N/A

Source: Tancangco 1991 as cited in Valte (1992).

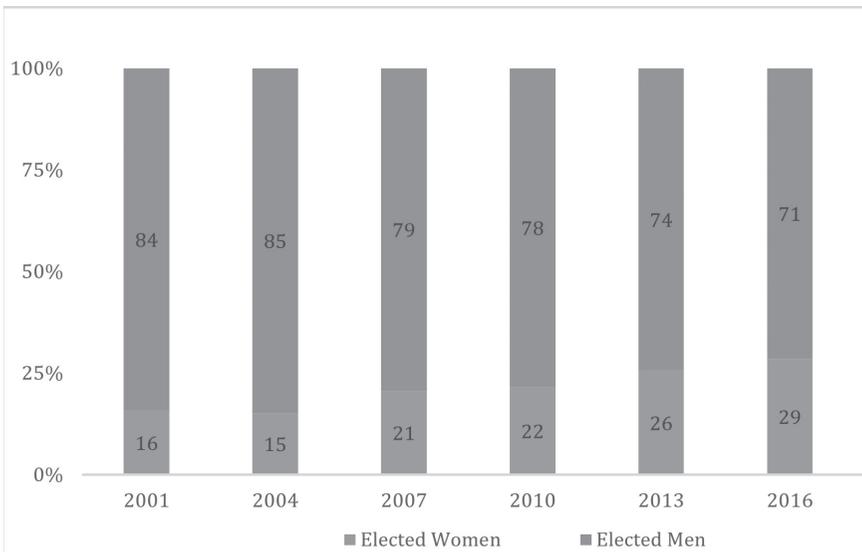
Current Situation: 2001-2019

Filipino women are still very much a minority in the formal political sphere. It can also be observed that in executive positions such as the cabinet, few women are appointed, especially during President Fidel Ramos's time, compared to Cory Aquino's administration (Table 1). As mentioned above, the Philippines has made significant strides in legislating for women's rights. However, 35 years after re-democratization and 84 years after the grant of suffrage, participation of women in politics is still a work in progress, as in most countries.

In 2019, the overall percentage of women in all elective posts in the country was only about 20 percent (PCW 2021), barely reaching the 30 percent international requirement for women's political

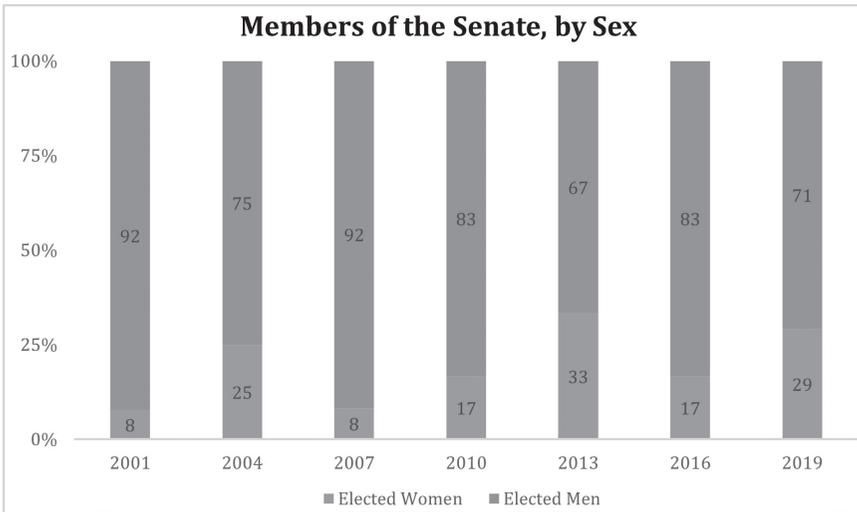
representation.⁴ However, there has been a significant increase in the HOR and the Senate over the past 20 years. Encinas-Franco (2022, 141) notes that “[a]fter the most recent 2019 elections, women now comprise 28 percent of the HOR and 29 percent of the Senate” (Figures 1 and 2). Also, available data from the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) reveal that in 2019, only 20 percent of candidates for all electoral positions were women (COMELEC 2022). Moreover, even though there has been an increase in women politicians in all levels of government, especially in the mayoralty race, a significant percentage come from political families (Labonne, Parsa, and Querubin 2019).

Figure 1: Members of the House of Representatives by Sex (2001-2019)



Source: PSA 2016 and COMELEC 2022.

⁴ The idea is that having at least 30 percent of women in parliaments, for example, will help them attain the critical mass to make a difference in the chamber.

Figure 2: Members of the Senate by Sex (2001-2019)

Source: PSA 2016 and COMELEC 2022.

Political dynasties and the Party-List Law have contributed to the rise of women in political positions. Studies of local politics indicate that women from such dynasties are more likely to run for political office (Labonne, Parsa, and Querubin 2019, 2). Nonetheless, because of this path to power, such women are not incentivized to cater outside their familial interests, thus, confirming the ‘benchwarmer’ idea of females from political families (Labonne, Parsa, and Querubin 2019, 2). However, in interviews of women legislators, some women from dynastic families who have been socialized on women’s rights and their developmental impact, have pushed legislation seeking gender equality and parity (Encinas-Franco 2022, 146). Therefore, more research is needed to confirm whether the descriptive representation of women from political dynasties results in optimal or substantive outcomes for women.

The Party-List Law, which was approved in 1997, allowed Abante Pinay (Advance, Filipino Woman) to emerge as the first party-list espousing women’s issues. It did not survive but GABRIELA, a party list for women allied with the Philippine left, still thrives to this day. Table 2 below shows that from 2007 to 2019, the Party-List Law has paved

the way for women to enter the House of Representatives. In 2019, 20 women from party lists have contributed to the increase in female legislators. However, the Party-List Law's implementation has been controversial owing to the entry of political dynasties and traditional politicians. The ideal that it serve as the gateway to political power of disadvantaged groups has been lost due to vague provisions in the law and subsequent Supreme Court decisions. The party list system has also been "co-opted by the traditional political system or have become the training ground for future influence-peddling traditional politicians" (Tigno 2019). In other words, it has deviated from the idea of proportional representation practiced in other countries. Dynastic families took advantage of the system's flaws and used them to field relatives, including some women, to expand their political power. However, recent interviews with legislators from progressive party lists demonstrate a better understanding of women's issues than some representatives elected from single-member districts (Encinas-Franco 2022, 157).

Table 2. Women-Members of the House of Representatives per Region, 2007-2019

REGIONS	2007-2010	2010-2013	2016-2019
National Capital Region	9	8	5
Cordillera Autonomous Region	1	2	1
I - Ilocos Region	1	5	4
II - Cagayan Valley	1	3	5
III - Central Luzon	8	9	11
IVA - CALABARZON	4	2	11
IVB - MIMAROPA	1	1	1
V - Bicol Region	2	0	4
VI - Western Visayas	2	3	3
VII - Central Visayas	2	2	3
VIII - Eastern Visayas	3	2	3

IX - Zamboanga Peninsula	4	2	4
X - Northern Mindanao	2	2	2
XI - Davao Region	1	3	5
XII - SOCCSKSARGEN	2	2	1
XIII - Caraga	1	3	3
ARMM	1	2	2
Party-List	10	15	20
TOTAL (w/ Party-List)	55	66	88
TOTAL (w/o Party-List)	45	51	68

Source: HOR 2022. Computations made by the authors.

Overall, the abovementioned situation indicates that Filipino women have gradually increased their presence in formal politics. In Asia, the Philippines and Taiwan are the only countries above the global average of 24.5 percent of women in parliament (Liu 2021). However, challenges remain as the increased participation of women comes from dysfunctional features of the country's political system: political dynasties and the Party-List law. Nonetheless, not all women from these groups are necessarily averse to women's issues.

Barriers to Filipino Women's Participation

Previous studies have identified political, economic, and cultural factors that impede women's participation in politics. However, context still matters since the perception of women's role in societies and the evolution of political systems differ. The following section examines some of these barriers.

The Philippine electoral system's "first-past-the-post" electoral type, coupled with the lack of well-developed political parties, inhibits women's entry into politics. Encinas-Franco (2021) argues that "[w]ithout party discipline and institutionalized rules within parties, one

cannot even think about internal party procedures governing women's inclusion in the party slate." Encinas-Franco (2021) cites studies (Norries 2006) indicating that proportional representation (PR) systems tend to do better in electing women candidates than other political set-ups. Such a trend can be attributed to incentives in PR systems compelling parties to represent women and minority groups to broaden their electoral base (Norris 2006, 205–06). Whereas in single-member districts in which the declared winner has the majority of votes, 'winnable' candidates, who are oftentimes male, are selected (Norris 2006, 205–206).

Even though the Philippines has made important strides in promoting women's rights via legislation, programs, and gender and development (GAD) budgeting, gendered norms remain powerful and extend to conceptions about women's role in public life. For instance, most Filipinos still regard men as better politicians than women, according to the seventh round of the World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al. 2022, 132). The same survey also finds that nearly 70 [percent] believe that men deserve to have jobs more than women do. At the same time, more than 80 [percent] agreed that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as any other job.

Research also shows that women's economic empowerment is linked to their political participation because, ideally, it provides them with the necessary network and resources (True et al. 2012) that later on can be used in the political sphere. However, research findings in Asia indicate that even in periods of economic growth, women have not had a corresponding increase in political participation (True et al. 2012). A case in point is the Philippines, where female labor force participation is the lowest in Southeast Asia (Cabegin and Gaddi 2019). Such is the situation despite high levels of college education among women. This suggests other factors preventing women from seeking employment, such as caregiving, which employers and the government rarely provide (e.g. via daycare centers). For example, the recently amended maternity law has expanded maternity benefits, but allowed women to transfer only seven days of their leave to their partners, a move that can hardly encourage shared caring responsibility among couples. As mentioned above, debates surrounding proposals to grant women suffrage in the 1935 Constitutional Convention, Filipino

women's caretaking roles and how these might be affected by their entry into the political fray, were the anti-suffragists' main objections.

Violence against women in politics, arguably more pronounced in the Rodrigo Duterte administration, further discourages women from entering politics; it perpetuates the notion that women are unqualified to lead. However, electoral violence, apart from media stories, is rarely examined due to the lack of a national database (Deinla et al. 2022). Moreover, confusion over its definition and its scope—tied to the 90-day election period defined by law—severely limits accounting for its occurrence (IPER 2011). Also, whenever election violence data are reported in the media, they are not sex-disaggregated according to the target, suggesting that cases are committed regardless of the candidate's sex. Worse, because the Omnibus Election Code's definition privileges physical violence and intimidation, electoral and political violence based on gender, oftentimes hurled against women candidates, are not accounted for and in fact, overlooked. Mona Lena Krook (2020) has coined the term "violence against women in politics" (VAWP) to cover the various harms women in politics experience, even outside election or campaign periods. They range from physical to psychological, sexual, economic, and semiotic violence (Krook 2020). Other countries such as Bolivia and Mexico have documented this trend and gone as far as passing legislation. Among all the forms of VAWP, semiotic violence such as slut-shaming via visuals and language was evident during Duterte's presidency and even in the 2022 elections. Fake sex videos of Senator Leila de Lima and Vice President Leni Robredo's daughter are among its manifestations. Differentiating how men and women in politics experience violence is therefore imperative whether during or outside election periods. Legislation defining VAWP, which must include fake news dissemination and punishing perpetrators should be prioritized.

Media coverage likewise sometimes plays into gender stereotypes of women candidates, confirming studies that find gender bias in media coverage of elections and campaigns. Questions on "balancing work and family life" are typically asked of women candidates, not men. Though social media provide a cost-efficient platform for women candidates, it nevertheless sometimes contains online threats, misogyny, and disinformation, which are also oftentimes anonymized

and free from accountability. Relatedly, women candidates themselves likewise play into gender stereotypes because this caters to how voters might positively perceive them, thereby reifying gender stereotypes of sacrificing mothers instead of, for example, advocating shared caring responsibilities with men.

Electoral polling has been a hallmark of modern democracies. In the Philippines, this has gained ground in the post-Marcos political landscape. While there are controversies over the so-called fake surveys or fly-by-night polling firms, a key issue is the lack of publicly available sex- and age-disaggregated polling results. Such a situation makes it challenging to develop the so-called women's votes, given that politicians hardly have data on women's preferences and voting behavior. Therefore, in candidate recruitment and selection, popularity, tokenism, and dynastic connections reign supreme over other considerations.

Political institutions themselves hardly provide a conducive environment for women politicians to thrive. Emphasis on seniority for committee chairpersonships and gender stereotypes benefit men more than women. Parliamentary rules are seldom gender-sensitive, which often work against women politicians. In the HOR and the Senate, women legislators have reported incidents of sexism, misogyny, and micro-aggression, even if there is strong support for women's rights from male colleagues (Encinas-Franco 2022, 154). However, there are good practices that can step in the right direction. For example, in the HOR, a women's caucus, the Association of Women's Legislators Incorporated, assists in shepherding legislative proposals in the legislative mill. It also serves as a collective where women legislators can strategize and work together. Another good practice is the publication of "How to Be a Gender-Responsive Legislator," a tool developed by the HOR Committee on Women and Gender Equality and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW). It was first published in 2001 and revised in 2021. Among others, it can be used to advocate gender mainstreaming in legislative proposals and make the chamber, its employees, and legislators develop gender-sensitivity skills and behavior. However, its implementation is challenging unless some of the tenets are integrated into the Rules of the HOR.

Key Recommendations and Ways Forward

Anne Phillips (1998), a scholar of women's representation in politics, remarked on the near-monopoly of men in the field. "There is no argument for justice that can defend the current state of affairs" (232). To help address this predicament in the Philippine context, this paper offers the following key recommendations:

1. Political party reforms must be instituted with a mandate that parties allot at least 30 percent of their slate to women. They should be banned from participating in the elections if they fail to do so. Training on women's rights, gender budgeting, and gender development must be integral to political party development. Political parties that can do this can avail of a gender fund to develop women's capacity to run for political office and mobilize women to campaign for gender issues.⁵ Training of indigenous and grassroots women on leadership and resource mobilization would be a step in the right direction. A key justification for this important measure is the Concluding Comments of the UN CEDAW Committee which lauded the Philippines' efforts to enhance women's participation and representation in political life, particularly on the "adoption of the national action plan on women and peace and security, which is aimed at implementing Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), and the active participation of women in peace and transitional justice processes" (UN CEDAW 2016, 8). However, it expressed concern for the "underrepresentation of women from vulnerable groups, such as indigenous and Muslim women, in all areas of political and public life, and about the lack of information on the adoption of a political party development act, which could mandate parties to apply quotas in the selection of candidates." The Concluding Comments of the UN

⁵ There is proposed legislation in the Senate and the HOR that aims to do this. However, the proposal must be incorporated within a larger proposal to enact a political party reform law.

CEDAW Committee recommends that the State continue its efforts to achieve equal representation of women and men in political and public life. It recommends the following:

- Expedite the adoption of statutory quotas for the representation of women on lists of candidates fielded by political parties for congressional elections, with measurable benchmarks;
 - Ensure diversity in the representation of women in legislative, administrative and judicial bodies, including Muslim women, indigenous women and women with disabilities; and
 - Adopt regional and local action plans in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (now BARMM) to implement the national action plan on women and peace and security, and ensure the full participation of Muslim and indigenous women in political and public life at all levels in the Region. (9)
2. As a signatory to the UN CEDAW Treaty, the Philippines periodically reports to the UN CEDAW Committee, which monitors each state's compliance. The Philippine government has legislated some of its recommendations, such as the landmark Magna Carta of Women, which was approved in 2009.

When the Party-List law was approved in 1997, it was touted as a measure meant to alleviate the strong presence of elites in political life, as well as the end for so-called traditional politicians. The promise of fresh faces in the House of Representatives from less traditional political enclaves was considered realizable. However, its subsequent interpretation and judicial intervention have rendered it a space for powerful politicians. For this reason, there are calls to abolish the law. However, as the discussion above demonstrates, the law paved the entry of women, some of whom espouse a progressive women's agenda, thereby suggesting that it need not necessarily be abolished. It can thus be reviewed to make

it inclusive and veer from unsound judicial decisions and interpretations. Amendments may adopt sound proportional representation models from other countries and the zipper style system in which parties are mandated to alternate women and men in their candidate lists.

3. Economic empowerment of women is necessary but not a sufficient condition for increased women's political participation (True et al. 2012). For this reason, norms, attitudes, and traditional beliefs about women's societal roles must be transformed so that women's leadership roles become publicly acceptable. Toward this end, education, popular culture, and the media must take the lead in helping build a culture that normalizes women leaders. Moreover, female labor force participation in the Philippines remains the lowest in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Cabegin and Gaddi 2019). Therefore, efforts to determine its cause and make the necessary interventions are important not only for women themselves but also in normalizing their presence in the public sphere.
4. Since the late 1990s, sex-disaggregated data has been advocated by women's groups. The idea is to normalize women's visibility in government data in compliance with national (i.e., Magna Carta of Women) and international commitments (i.e., Sustainable Development Goals). While the government has made significant headways in accounting for, and processing, sex-disaggregated data, others have not kept up. For instance, electoral and public opinion polls hardly disaggregate the public release of their findings, as discussed earlier. This situation renders the voice of women on current issues and voting preferences invisible. Making them heard can potentially compel politicians to understand women's issues and concerns. It may also lead to the proverbial "women's vote," which has remained elusive despite the higher voter turn-out of women in recent electoral cycles. For this reason, survey companies must be encouraged to present sex-disaggregated data on their results to better appreciate how issues and candidates impact men and women

differently. Women's groups, the PCW, media networks, and the COMELEC may advocate this.

5. As discussed above, media coverage is an important feature of an electoral cycle. However, some coverage is problematic since they unintentionally reify existing norms on women's role. Therefore, media groups, television networks, and advocates may adopt the UN Women and the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance monitoring tool on gender-sensitive elections and political debate coverage. There are many other tools available with this purpose in mind. The COMELEC (The Commission on Elections) may wish to partner with the media on this initiative. COMELEC must also advocate with social media platform partners to encourage netizens to report sexist and misogynist language on social media sites.
6. Legislation on "violence against women in politics" (VAWP), including those committed during campaign period and elections, must be explored. The definition of VAWP and penalties for acts committed must be key provisions of such a proposal. The idea is to distinguish violence against women in politics from other forms of violence and remedy why women politicians are specifically targeted. Fake news dissemination and gendered disinformation must be among the acts constituting VAWP. Bolivia and Mexico's examples may serve as models for this initiative. Other options would be a gender-sensitive code of conduct for candidates during the elections, awareness-raising, and amendments to the Omnibus Election Code.
7. Support for women's caucuses in Congress must be enhanced, along with establishing gender-responsive parliamentary rules and procedures. The recent publication of guidelines on how to be a gender-sensitive legislator in the House of Representatives is a step in the right direction. Nonetheless, in order for the tool's content to be enforced, it has to be incorporated into the Rules of both Houses of Congress. The Rules are approved by each chamber at the beginning of each Congress. Therefore, having gender mainstreaming in its

content would ideally make each member more accountable to the Body.

8. Lastly, while there has been an observed increase in the number of women in legislation, future studies should explore how this descriptive representation of women translates to legislation that advances women's welfare in the country.

Government Documents Cited

The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. 1987. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/1987-constitution/>

Republic Act No. 9710. "An Act Providing for the Magna Carta of Women." 14 August 2009. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2009/08/14/republic-act-no-9710/>

Republic Act No. 7192. "An Act Promoting the Integration of Women as Full and Equal Partners of Men in Development and Nation Building and for Other Purposes." 12 February 1992. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1992/02/12/republic-act-no-7192/>

Works Cited

Abao, Carmel and Elizabeth Yang. 2001. *Women in Politics, Limits, and Possibilities: the Philippine Case*. Manila: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Aquino, Belinda. 1993-1994. "Filipino Women and Political Engagement." *Review of Women's Studies* 4 (1): 32-53.

Cabegin, Emily Christi and Gaddi, Rebecca. 2019. "Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation in the Philippines." Pasig City: National Economic and Development Authority. <https://neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Determinants-of-Female-Labor-Force-Participation-in-the-Philippines.pdf>

- Camagay, Maria Luisa. 1998. "Kababaihan sa Rebolusyon." *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 14 (2): 55–6.
- Commission on Elections (COMELEC). 2022. "Statistics. Number of Candidates per Elective Position by Sex." https://comelec.gov.ph/php-tpls-attachments/2019NLE/Statistics/Num_Candidates_per_Elective_Position_by_Sex.pdf
- Encinas-Franco, Jean. 2021. "Sexism in the 2022 Philippine Elections: A Problem with No Name." ISEA Yusof Ishak Institute, 9 December. <https://fulcrum.sg/sexism-in-the-2022-philippine-elections-a-problem-with-no-name/>
- . 2022. "Filipino Women's Substantive Representation in Electoral Politics." In *Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliaments*, edited by Devin Joshi and Christian Echle, 139–58. Routledge: Oxfordshire and New York.
- Haerpfer, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano J., M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen, eds. 2022. "World Values Survey: Round Seven - Country-Pooled Datafile Version 4.0." Madrid, Spain & Vienna, Austria: JD Systems Institute & WWSA Secretariat. <https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.18>
- Herrnson, Paul, J. Celeste Lay, and Atiya Kai Stokes. 2003. "Women Running 'as Women': Candidate Gender, Campaign Issues, and Voter-Targeting Strategies." *The Journal of Politics* 65 (1): 244–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2508.t01-1-00013>
- HOR (House of Representatives). 2022. "Roster of Philippine Legislators." <https://hrep-website.s3.ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/download/docs/roster-legislators.pdf>.
- HOR and PCW (House of Representatives and Philippine Commission on Women). 2021. "How to Be a Gender-Responsive Legislator." Second Edition. Manila: House of Representatives and Philippine Commission on Women. <https://hrep-website.s3.ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/download/docs/gender-responsive-legislator-062321.pdf>

- Institute for Political and Electoral Reform. 2011. "Understanding Election-Related Violent Incident of 2007." <https://aceproject.org/regions-en/countries-and-territories/PH/case-studies/philippines-understanding-the-election-related>
- Joshi, Devin. 2022. "Substantive Representation of Women by Parliamentarians in Asia: A Comparative Study of Ten Countries." In *Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliaments*, edited by Devin Joshi and Christian Echle, 1–24. Routledge: Oxfordshire and New York.
- Krook, Mona Lena. 2020. *Violence Against Women in Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Labonne, Julien, Sahar Parsa, and Pablo Querubin. 2019. "Political Dynasties, Term Limits and Female Political Empowerment: Evidence from the Philippines." NBER Working Papers 26431. National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc.
- Lee, Aie-Rie and Hyun-chool Lee. 2020. "Women Representing Women: The Case of South Korea." *Korea Observer* 51 (3): 437–62.
- Liu, Shan-Jan Sarah, 2021. "Where Do Women Stand in Politics? A Case Study of East and Southeast Asia." <https://www.psa.ac.uk/psa/news/where-do-women-stand-politics-case-study-east-and-southeast-asia>
- Masilungan, Elena. n.d. "Women's Gender and Development Constitutional Reform Agenda." PILIPINA documents.
- Norris, Pippa. 2006. "The Impact of Electoral Reform on Women's Representation." *Acta Politica* 41: 197–213. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500151.pdf>
- Official Gazette. 1936. "Speech of President Quezon on Woman Suffrage, September 30, 1936." Presidential Museum and Library. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1936/09/30/speech-of-president-quezon-on-woman-suffrage-september-30-1936/>

- Phillips, Anne. 1998. "Democracy and Representation: Or, Why Should It Matter Who Our Representatives Are?" In *Feminism and Politics*, edited by Anne Phillips, 224–40. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- PCW (Philippine Commission on Women). 2019. "Enacting a Women's Political Participation and Representation Law." Women's Priority Legislative Agenda for the 18th Congress, Policy Brief. <https://pcw.gov.ph/assets/files/2019/10/PCW-WPLA-PB-07-Womens-Political-Participation-and-Representation.pdf>
- . 2021. "Philippines Still Best Performing Country in Asia Despite Slip by One Notch in Global Gender Gap Ranking." Philippine Commission on Women. <https://pcw.gov.ph/philippines-still-best-performing-country-in-asia-despite-slip-by-one-notch-in-global-gender-gap-ranking/>
- PSA (Philippine Statistics Authority). 2016. "Women and Men Factsheet 2016." <https://psa.gov.ph/gender-stat/wmf>
- Raquiza, Antoinette. 1997. "Philippine Feminist Politics." In *Philippine Democracy Agenda Volume 3: Civil Society Making Civil Society*, edited by Miriam Coronel Ferrer, 171–86. Quezon City: The Third World Studies Center.
- Reyes, Joseph Anthony L., and Tom Smith. 2021. "Understanding Election Violence in the Philippines: Beware the Unknown Assassins of May." *Pacific Affairs* 94 (3). <https://doi.org/10.5509/2021943491>
- Roces, Mina. 2012. *Women's Movements and the Filipina*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Tancangco, Luzviminda G. 1991. "Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines." *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 34 (4): 323–64.
- Tigno, Jorge V. 2019. "The Party-List System in the Philippines: Is it Better or Worse for the Democracy?" *The Asia Dialogue*, 4 July. <https://theasiadialogue.com/2019/07/04/the-party-list-system-in-the-philippines-is-it-better-or-worse-for-democracy/>

- True, Jacqui, Sara Niner, Swari Parashar, and Nicole George. 2012. "Women's Political Participation in Asia and the Pacific." SSRC Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum. <https://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/undpa-womens-political-participation-in-asia-and-the-pacific.pdf>
- UN CEDAW (United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women). 2016. "Concluding Observations on the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of the Philippines." New York: UN CEDAW. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/841795>
- Valte, Christina. 1992. "The Philippine Women's Movement: In Search of a Feminist Identity." Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/fulltext/iez/00060006.htm#E9E7>

THE UP CIDS DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES

Discussion Papers feature preliminary researches that may be subject to further revisions and are circulated to elicit comments and suggestions for enrichment and refinement. They contain findings on issues that are aligned with the core agenda of the research programs under the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS).

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Established in 1985 by University of the Philippines (UP) President Edgardo J. Angara, the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) is the policy research unit of the University that connects disciplines and scholars across the several units of the UP System. It is mandated to encourage collaborative and rigorous research addressing issues of national significance by supporting scholars and securing funding, enabling them to produce outputs and recommendations for public policy.

The UP CIDS currently has twelve research programs that are clustered under the areas of education and capacity building, development, and social, political, and cultural studies. It publishes policy briefs, monographs, webinar/conference/forum proceedings, and the *Philippine Journal for Public Policy*, all of which can be downloaded free from the UP CIDS website.

THE PROGRAM

The Program on Social and Political Change (PSPC) provides a platform for understanding the varied social and political challenges facing modern Philippine society and polity from a multidisciplinary perspective. In relation to this, the Program also designs empirical studies using a variety of methods and approaches which form the basis for policy inputs and discussions at the local, national, and international levels

Editorial Board

Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Janus Isaac V. Nolasco
DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Program Editors

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING CLUSTER

Dina S. Ocampo
Lorina Y. Calingasan
Education Research Program

Fernando dIC. Paragas
*Program on Higher Education
Research and Policy Reform*

Marie Therese Angeline P. Bustos
Kevin Carl P. Santos
*Assessment, Curriculum, and
Technology Research Program*

Jalton G. Taguibao
*Program on Data Science for
Public Policy*

DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER

Annette O. Balaoing-Pelkmans
*Program on Escaping the
Middle-Income Trap: Chains for
Change*

Antoinette R. Raquiza
Political Economy Program

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL STUDIES CLUSTER

Maria Ela L. Atienza
Jorge V. Tigno
*Program on Social and Political
Change*

Darwin J. Absari
Islamic Studies Program

Herman Joseph S. Kraft
Maria Thaemar C. Tana
Strategic Studies Program

Marie Aubrey J. Villaceran
Frances Antoinette C. Cruz
Decolonial Studies Program

Eduardo C. Tadem
Benjamin V. Velasco
Program on Alternative Development

Antonio Miguel L. Dans
Jose Rafael A. Marfori
*Program on Health Systems
Development*

Editorial Staff

Virna Liza O. Guaño
Angeli P. Lacson
SENIOR EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES

Jheimeel P. Valencia
COPYEDITOR

Mika Andrea O. Ramirez
JUNIOR EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE

Zylyka F. Gendraule
LAYOUT ARTIST

GET YOUR POLICY PAPERS PUBLISHED • DOWNLOAD OPEN-ACCESS ARTICLES

The *Philippine Journal of Public Policy: Interdisciplinary Development Perspectives* (PJPP), the annual peer-reviewed journal of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS), welcomes submissions in the form of full-length policy-oriented manuscripts, book reviews, essays, and commentaries. The PJPP provides a multidisciplinary forum for examining contemporary social, cultural, economic, and political issues in the Philippines and elsewhere. Submissions are welcome year-around.

For more information, visit cids.up.edu.ph. All issues/articles of the PJPP can be downloaded for free.

GET NEWS and the LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Joining our mailing list: bit.ly/signup_cids to get our publications delivered straight to your inbox! Also, you'll receive news of upcoming webinars and other updates.



University of the Philippines
Center for Integrative and Development Studies