



HER SEAT AT THE TABLE

A Research Compilation
on Women's Electoral
Participation in the
Philippines



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Foreword



Article II, Section 14 of the Constitution of Republic of the Philippines provides that the State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure fundamental equality before the law of women and men. This constitutional provision is at the core of the Commission on Elections' (COMELEC) efforts in ensuring that women are enabled to participate, govern and lead the nation. COMELEC has remained active in incorporating gender-sensitivity in its programs staying true to the ideals of equality and inclusivity.

To further harness the power of women and safeguard their right to participate in democratic processes, COMELEC has partnered with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) to build COMELEC's digitalization capacity to promote women's political participation. COMELEC, through this partnership, will strengthen its capability to perform gender-disaggregated data analysis, develop evidence-based policies, advocate for women empowerment, and train women of different backgrounds and sectors for leadership roles.

Also resulting from this partnership are the research papers in this compilation which identifies the hindrances to women's active participation in governance and provide analyses on the different reasons that influence the candidacy of women, their registration and actual choice of candidate and the barriers they face on overseas voting. I thank the researchers who excellently tackled the said themes namely, former COMELEC Commissioner Luie Tito Guia and Mr. Telibert Laoc of the Democratic Insights Group, COMELEC Director Sonia Bea L. Wee-Lozada of the Office for Overseas Voting, UNDP Economist Dr. Arlan Brucal, and gender expert Dr. Jean Franco. My deepest and sincerest gratitude also goes to the UNDP and AECID for supporting the COMELEC with this impactful project to truly elevate the level of participation of women in elections.

I hope that the insights in these research papers will be used by not only the COMELEC leadership but also our national officials in crafting truly inclusive policies, rules, and regulations which champion inclusivity by taking into account the specific experiences of women and other vulnerable sectors. I further hope that aspiring women leaders everywhere and advocates will be inspired by these research papers and continue to demand what is due women in the sphere of politics and meaningful political participation.

Hon. George Erwin M. Garcia
Chairperson
Commission on Elections

Foreword



The Philippines is hailed as a leader in promoting gender equality and empowering women leaders in the Asia-Pacific region and even globally. It has been consistently ranking high and above the global average in terms of gender equality based on the Gender Development Index (GDI) since 1990 (at 0.931 vis-a-vis the global GDI of 0.899) to most recently in 2021 (at 0.99 vis-a-vis the global GDI at 0.958). In the past decades, prominent women have also led in the political arena in the Philippines, including two Presidents, several legislators, and local chief executives, among others. Within families and communities, women are also looked up to as resilient leaders, effective communicators, and empathetic relationship-builders.

Beyond such advances, there is potential for greater women's political participation and contribution in the Philippines. This compilation of research papers, prepared in partnership with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and with funding support from the Government of Spain, presents analyses on these issues regarding women's political participation. The paper by the Democratic Insights Group, led by Atty. Luie Tito Guia and Mr. Telibert Laoc, takes an up-close look at barriers which women face in deciding to run for elective positions using focus group discussions and key informant interviews among men and women leaders from the youth, government, academe, civil society, media, and the private sector. The research by several authors led by Director Sonia Bea Wee-Lozada and Dr. Arlan Brucal employs quantitative methods on examining the factors which influence women's candidacy in the Philippine Elections by using cross-country and within-country regression analyses. Lastly, the research paper by Dr. Jean Franco focuses on analyzing a sample of 1,200 Overseas Filipinos in terms of their registration and voting, specifically their profile, the factors which influence their decisions, and their views regarding overseas voting.

We hope that these pieces of research enable you to reflect about what may convince and empower women to lead and effectively contribute to politics and governance in the country. For young women planning to lead, may you be inspired to fulfill your potential to become a successful leader and have a better understanding of the arena you will be mastering. For policymakers and advocates, may this compendium support your efforts to design and roll-out of electoral reforms.

Dr. Selva Ramachandran
Resident Representative
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
EDA	exploratory data analysis
FGDs	focus group discussions
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, And Social Inclusion
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
HDI	Human Development Index
iOS	iPhone Operating System
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
NLE	National and Local Elections
OFs	Overseas Filipinos
PCI	Provincial Competitiveness Index
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PR	Proportional Representation
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSRTI	Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWS	Social Weather Stations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WBLI	Women Business and Law Index
WPE	Women Political Empowerment
WVS	World Values Survey

Executive Summary

Gender equality is one of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) that is not on-track globally. Furthermore, improving women's representation in Parliament and other spheres of leadership has been essential to gender equality. However, despite women being seen as effective leaders in various sectors of society, including Filipino families and communities, more commitment and bold efforts are needed towards gender-equal leadership, especially in the political arena. To achieve these, the Philippine government has been working consistently to improve gender equality and is further committed to promoting women's representation and political inclusiveness.

To enable evidence-based policy making, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Philippines have conducted research with the following objectives:

1. To examine sex-disaggregated overseas voting and registration behavior and satisfaction among Overseas Filipinos (OFs).
2. To identify gender-responsive and intersectional strategies to improve overseas registration and voting turnout.
3. To examine and identify factors influencing women's participation and candidacy in electoral politics.
4. To identify strategies COMELEC can adopt to improve women's representation in political elections.

The research papers show that the Philippines have a good overall progress in gender equality. However, women's political participation has been limited among certain groups and is dependent on certain occasions. Despite existing gender equality initiatives such as those implemented by the Philippine Commission on Women, the COMELEC Gender and Development (GAD) programme, and other actors and advocates, women are still systematically discriminated against in the electoral arena. The barriers to women's electoral participation range from social and cultural norms, institutional discrimination, resource limits, and the lack of technical skills.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are important components of inclusive growth as supported by the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 and as part of the country's commitments to SDGs. The COMELEC, as the Philippines' constitutionally created election management body, bears the primary duty to improve the political participation of women. To close the gender gaps in voting turnout and electoral candidacy, the COMELEC should enhance its digital capacity to facilitate evidence-based policymaking and overseas electoral participation; and launch advocacy campaigns for wider awareness and buy-in of key electoral stakeholders. Achieving gender-equal elections would require not only support from the political parties and voters, but also collaboration among a wider set of stakeholders such as other government agencies, civil society organizations, and academia.

Box 1. The Research Studies

Improving the Political Participation of Women. In the Philippines: Proposed Interventions for the Commission on Elections (Luie Tito Guia and Telibert Laoc). This in-depth investigation is motivated by the fact that women comprise only about a fifth of candidates in national and local elections. Through interviews and focused group discussions with key stakeholders, the research outlined socio-cultural, institutional, and personal barriers, and including the high financial cost, the baggage of patronage politics, and differences in risk appetite.

Advancing Transformative Leaders: A Quantitative Examination of the Factors Influencing Women's Candidacy in the Philippines (Sonia Bea Wee-Lozada, Arlan Brucal, John Carlo Daquis, Riza Halili, Sheena Kristine Cases and William Aguilar). Complementing the qualitative approach of the previous research, this paper uses quantitative methods to analyze available data to identify key trends, patterns, and relationships among variables on women's electoral participation. It found that disaster risk exposure and political dynasty presence most explain the proportion of women-candidates in provinces.

Explaining Sex-Disaggregated Overseas Voting Behavior and Satisfaction Among Overseas Filipinos (Jean Franco). This paper employs a survey of 1,200 Overseas Filipinos (OFs) to determine and analyze their registration and voting behavior, including low voter turnout of women OFs in the Middle East and Africa. Apart from confirming common knowledge that low voter turnout is due to access and mobility issues, the study also highlighted nuances in how different demographic profiles and contexts affect OF registration and voting behavior.

Women's Political Participation in the Philippines

The voter turnout among women registered voters in the Philippine elections (Figure 1) have consistently been higher compared to those of males since 2010 to 2022, with the highest registering at 82.43 percent (compared to 81.43 among males) in 2016.

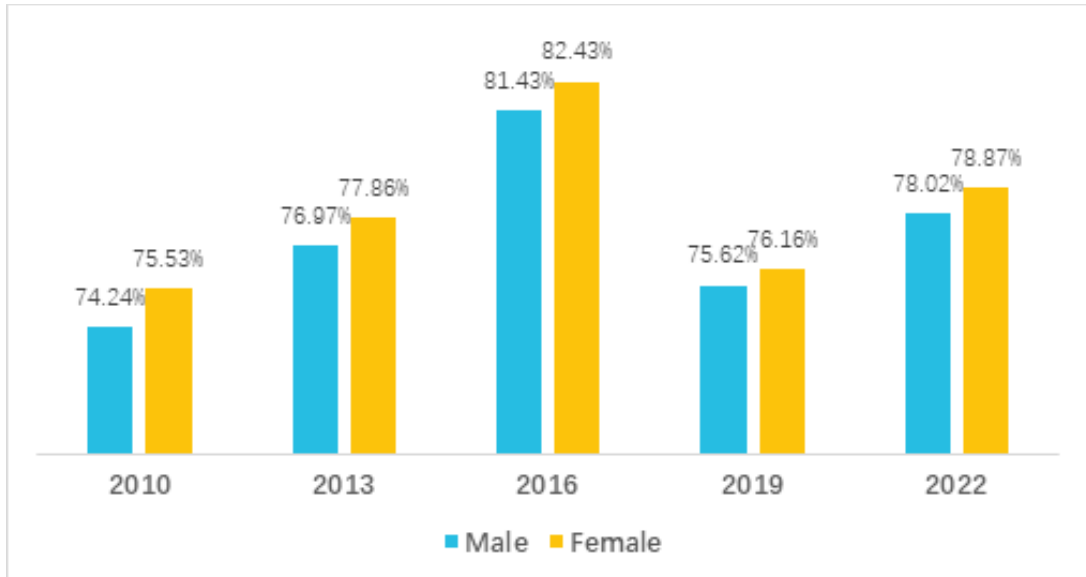


Figure 1. Voter Turnout in Philippine National and Local Elections, 2010 to 2022

Meanwhile, the percentage of women among candidates for elective positions (Figure 2) have remained around 20 percent from 2013 to 2022, except among national posts in 2013 which registered at 24.24 percent.

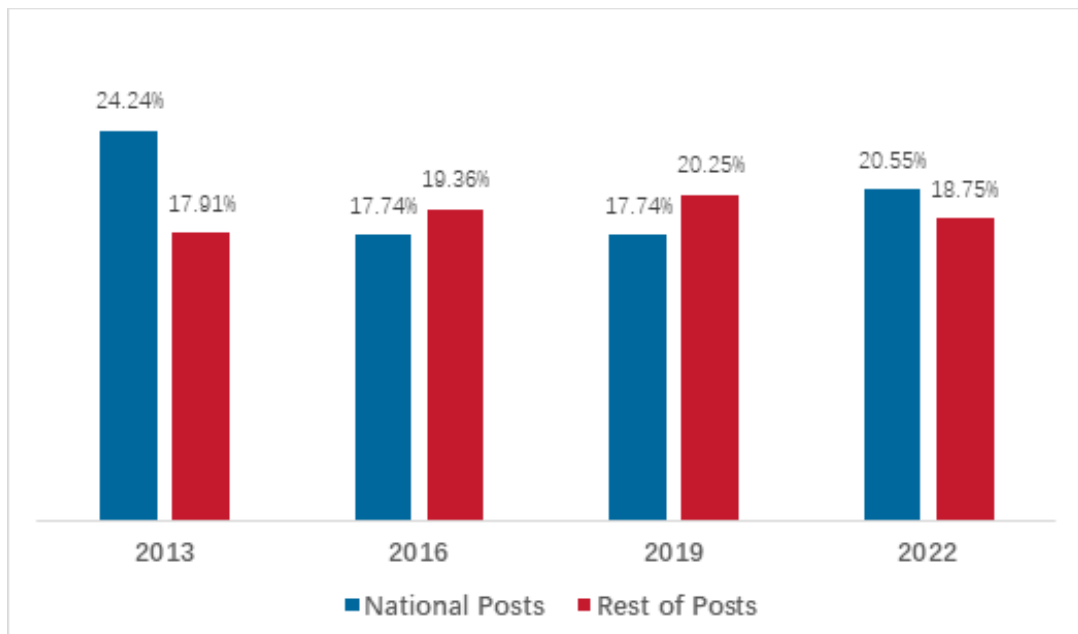


Figure 2. Percentage of Women Candidates in the Philippine National and Local Elections, 2013 to 2022

Meanwhile, in terms of overseas voting, the number of registered overseas voters (Figure 3) and the voter turnout (Figure 4) among females have been consistently higher compared to that of males. Furthermore, Gender gap in voter turnout percentage tends to favor males in the Middle East and Africa (blue) and females in Asia and Latin America (red) (Figure 5).

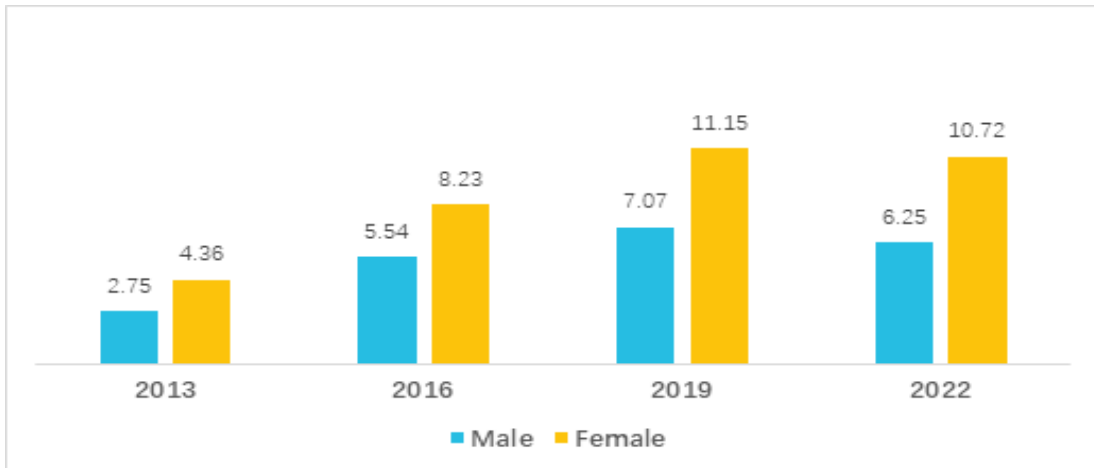


Figure 3. Number of Registered Overseas Voters (in hundred thousands), 2013 to 2022

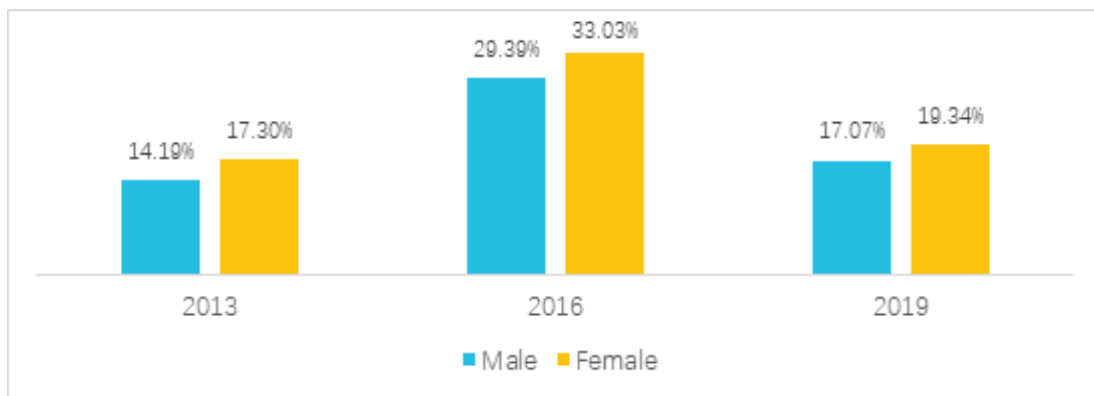


Figure 4. Overseas Voter Turnout (in percentage), 2013 to 2019

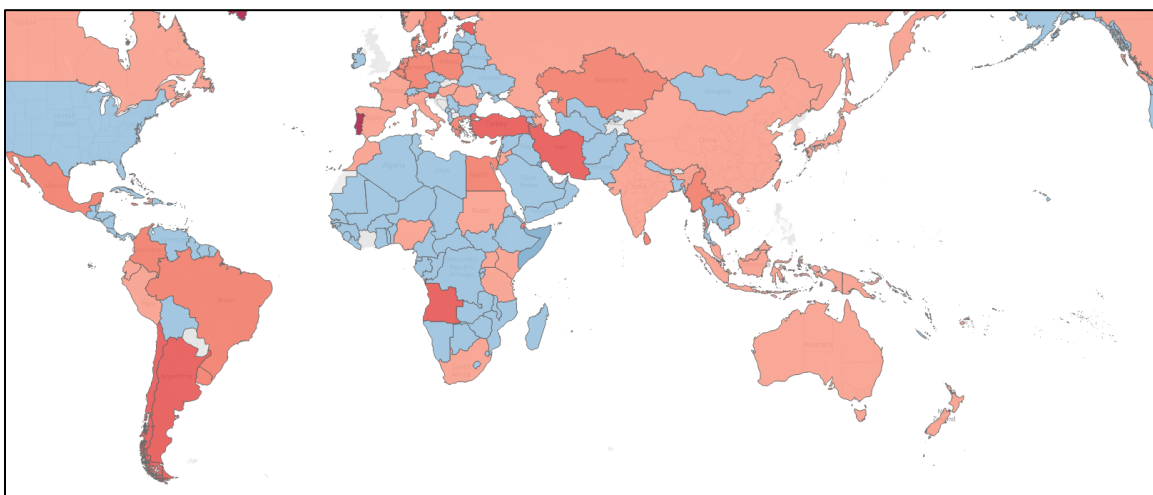


Figure 5. Gender Gap in Overseas Voter Turnout, 2019

Key findings and insights from the three (3) research papers include:

- Social and cultural norms, such as women being more confined to domestic affairs, prevent or delay their decision to choose a political career. More people still believe that men make better political leaders than women.
- Women have more difficulties in accessing or raising campaign funds. The high financial cost of elections is a significant roadblock to women's participation. It is therefore essential to make electoral participation more affordable.
- Women were described as more risk-averse than men and less tolerant of corruption, electoral violence and fraud exacerbated by the current zero-sum electoral system. This gives merit to more inclusive options such as the design of proportional representation (PR) electoral systems and ranked-choice voting.
- Most women run with a political party, though men are prioritized over women when deciding who will be fielded in elections.
- More than half of the variations in women's political participation are caused by unobserved factors, which require more research to identify behavior nudges that effectively improve women's political participation.
- Natural disasters and political dynasties are the main driving factors for women's participation in politics, further research is needed to understand the local context.
- Regardless of sex, OFs with older age, higher educational attainment, and longer stay abroad tended to register and vote. However, female OFs at a younger age or in Middle Eastern countries tended to be disadvantaged.
- OFs failed to register mostly because they were unaware of the registration procedure.
- The main problems experienced by OFs in registration and voting were transportation and time costs. OFs strongly supported an online voting system to improve voting convenience and efficiency.

Given these, the following are given as recommendations to COMELEC:

- **INVEST** in digital and data solutions to improve the general public's access to information about the democratic rights and political processes in the Philippines.
- **CRAFT** a comprehensive agenda for increasing women's participation in elections and attain a voluntary quota of the percentage of women candidates in all contests among political parties.
- **IMPLEMENT** gender awareness advocacy programs that draw attention to women's leadership and positive contributions to the quality of governance and well-being of Filipinos.
- **INSTITUTE** capacity-building programs and other mechanisms that nurture and support women political leaders in various stages of their career—from deciding to run to leaving a legacy—to counteract patronage politics and other barriers.
- **PARTNER** with universities, research institutions, or communications firms in conducting implementation research to understand the local context and find effective behavioral nudges that can be used for campaign or advocacy efforts.
- **EXPLORE** online registration and voting with consultation from migrant groups and key stakeholders to ensure security and transparency.
- **STRENGTHEN** education awareness and access interventions for overseas voters by considering approaches which consider the diverse backgrounds and needs of OFs and their particular country contexts.

IMPROVING THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINES: PROPOSED INTERVENTION BY THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Luie Tito F. Guia and Telibert C. Laoc

The 2020 Philippine census reports that women make up 49.4 percent of the 109.0 million Filipinos in the country. Women comprised 51.2 percent (33,644,237) of registered voters in the 2022 elections, outnumbering men by 1.5 million. Both women and men recorded the same turnout, 84.1 percent, of those who actually voted in 2022.

However, women’s representation in elective positions is disproportional (Table 1.1). Data from the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) show that, on average, women made up only 21 percent of all candidates for elective positions in 2022 (Figure 1.1).

Table 1.1. Women vs. Men Candidates per Elective Position, 2022 Elections

Elective Positions	No. of Elective positions	Men for every woman candidate	Percentage of women candidates	Seats won by women
President	1	9	10%	0%
Vice-President	1	8	11%	100%
Senators	12	4	19%	17%
Member, House of Representatives	253	4	22%	27%
Governor	81	5	18%	21%
Vice-Governor	81	5	18%	21%
Member, Sangguniang Panlalawigan ¹	782	4	19%	24%
City Mayor	146	6	14%	24%
Municipal Mayor	1,488	4	21%	23%
City Vice-Mayor	146	4	21%	24%
Municipal Vice-Mayor	1,488	4	21%	23%
Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod	1,650	4	20%	26%
Member, Sangguniang Bayan	11,908	4	21%	23%
Party-list Nominees ²	63	3	28%	26%

While higher than the 17 percent of women candidates in the 2010 elections, 21 percent represents a very sluggish rise in the number of women contesting elections. This is

¹ *Sanggunian* (councils) have between 8 to 12 members.

² Data from the COMELEC show that 28 percent of the nominees from the 177 organizations that participated in the party-list elections were women. The COMELEC required each of the party-list organizations to submit five nominees. Depending on the votes received, an organization may have between one and three members in the House of Representatives, and the order of the nominees would be based their sequence number in the nominee list. Of the organizations that competed, 54 were successful in getting a total of 61 members into the House of Representatives, 16 or 26 percent of whom are women. The reason for the relatively high percentage of women elected is because 14 of the winning organizations had listed women as first nominees, and at three organizations with more than one representative listed a woman as their second nominee.

notwithstanding COMELEC’s Gender and Development (GAD) program and activities³ starting 2015 to encourage more women to run for elections.

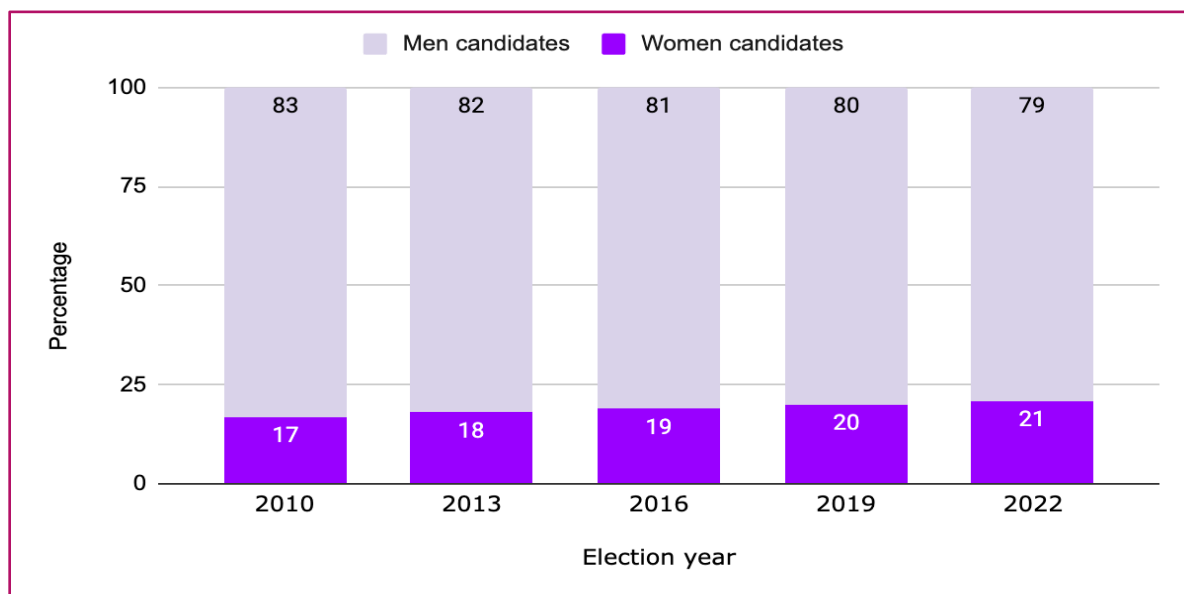


Figure 1.1. Women Candidates vs. Men Candidates by Election Year

If the situation does not change, the Philippines will continue to be deprived of the complementary perspectives that women bring into politics, leadership, and governance. Studies show that women are more likely to pursue inclusive policies, respond to constituent concerns, strive to reach a consensus on policies, and push for positive change around health, community well-being, poverty reduction, and family welfare (Di Lanzo, 2019).

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH PAPER

In this research paper, we examine why only a minority of women run as candidates for elections. By analyzing institutional, socio-cultural, and personal barriers, we explore the avenues by which they could be encouraged to get involved in electoral politics. Our main inquiries relate to the questions: 1) Why do women comprise only about 20 percent of candidates in the national and local elections? What are the barriers and challenges? and 2) What can COMELEC do to increase the number of women candidates?

This research paper offers recommendations on administrative, regulatory, and other measures that COMELEC can adopt to help create a political and electoral environment conducive to women’s participation. Our observations, analyses, and recommendations are drawn from key informant interviews (KIIs)⁴ and focus group discussions (FGDs)⁵ with women who won in elections, or are elected incumbents, or were candidates in past elections.⁶ Other participants in the KIIs and

³ Please see page 13 for discussion on GAD programs and activities.

⁴ Eight were interviewed between April and June 2023. They included a female presidential candidate, incumbent and past elected officials or government officials, and representatives from business, a women’s group, and an international development organization. There were also two group interviews in February and March with senior COMELEC officials from the main and field offices. *(Please see Annex for complete details)*

⁵ For a Report on the Series of FGD Series on Woman Political Participation in Elections, see the Appendix 1.

⁶ For the list of Respondents/Interviewees in the Qualitative Data Gathering Processes, see the Appendix 2.

FGDs represent civil society organizations, the academia, media, the private sector, and business organizations; they also include college students and young professionals. All, except two, of the informants and FGD participants are female. Published studies and materials also helped inform this research paper. Moreover, we provide insights from decades of our own field experience in election management and administration, election observation, and development work in elections and democracy promotion in the Philippines and other countries.

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

Why do women comprise only about 20 percent of candidates in the national and local elections? What are the barriers and challenges?

1.1. Socio-cultural Barriers

Traditional societies generally confine women to family responsibilities, such household management, children rearing, and primary caregiving. Studies in patriarchal societies show that women weighed down by these commitments consider a career in politics as an additional burden, and therefore tend to decide against political life. If they start their political careers at all, they tend to do so later in life (Lawless and Fox, 2008; Jalalzai, 2020; Kumar, 2017; Koch-Mehrin, 2018).

Sexism promotes the perception of women as the weaker sex. It feeds the narrative that women are unfit or undeserving of leadership responsibilities and unable to meet their demands. Stereotypically masculine traits, such as strength and quick decision-making, are often prized over stereotypically feminine traits like deliberation and compromise (Jalalzai, 2020). Women's capabilities to take on leadership positions are often doubted. Unfortunately, some women also subscribe to this view and underestimate their own capabilities and chances of succeeding in political office, even when they have equal or even better credentials than their male counterparts (Lawless and Fox, 2008). Women must work doubly hard than men to prove that they are capable or up to the job as politicians.

The [UNDP 2023 Gender Social Norms Index](#) notes that gender bias is a pervasive problem worldwide. The Index, which draws data from 91 countries covering 85 percent of the global population, shows that 90 percent of the men and women surveyed hold fundamental biases against women; nearly half believe that men make better political leaders.

The ingrained bias against women consequently reduces their ability to draw support for getting nominated or fielded and accessing campaign funds from within the political party and from other sources. All these make it even more difficult for women to compete during elections (Lawless and Fox, 2008; Koch-Merlin, 2018).

The pervasiveness of gender bias against women applies to the Philippines as well. A recent study reveals that gendered norms remain powerful and extend to concepts about women's role in public life. For instance, most Filipinos still regard men as better politicians than women (Franco, 2023).

The responses gathered from our key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) confirm these accounts. Our respondents cited the Filipinos' belief in gender stereotypes of an ideal leader who is male or possessing male characteristics, such as being tough-talking and macho. In contrast, women are perceived as weak, indecisive, and lacking in qualities

of a good leader, and therefore subordinate to men when it comes to holding public office. When women consider running for a leadership position, they are at best discouraged (“*Kababae mong tao!*”) or disparaged as good only for domestic chores. Even female respondents who won in elections claim they were viewed, and their performance in office evaluated, based on stereotypical male leadership characteristic. Although some respondents believe gender stereotyping can be offset by skillful networking and promotional activities, in general they agreed it is a major barrier to women joining elections.

1.2. Institutional barriers

Respondents to our KIIs and FGDs also identified the high cost of getting elected, vote buying, and the pervasive view of politics as corrupt and even violent, as among the reasons why women are dissuaded from running in elections. Elections and political campaigns require an enormous amount of funds. Women have less access to resources and earn less than men, and thus are sidelined from competing in elections.⁷ Even those who may be politically inclined are ultimately reluctant to get involved because they find the current state of politics as dirty and repugnant. The fact that these issues are not addressed adequately under the current regulatory environment is an institutional barrier to women competing in elections.

The way women candidates are portrayed in the media is another barrier to political participation. One study describes how female candidates in the 2022 elections were subjected to sexism, misogyny, disinformation, and abuse in social media (Franco, 2023). Women were at the receiving end of semiotic violence that included online bullying, charges of promiscuity, using language or visuals to shame and ridicule, mansplaining women politicians, and even fake sex videos. Our KII and FGD participants confirmed even traditional media played into traditional gender stereotypes, enumerating instances when women politicians were repeatedly scrutinized on how they dressed and challenged on how they might balance family and political careers – something their male counterparts were not quizzed on. In contrast, media coverage of male candidates focused on their professional or academic accomplishments.

This situation is not exclusive to the Philippines. In general, media coverage and content during electoral campaigns portray women and men differently. Men are given higher visibility and portrayed more positively, with less focus on their personal lives (Vande Pas and Aaldering, 2020). In contrast, women in public leadership roles are consistently attacked and portrayed in the media as incapable and devious sexual beings (Lau, 2021).

The patronage system that characterizes Philippine politics also presents a significant barrier to women running for elections. Majority of the key elective positions at various levels of government are held by members of political clans and dynasties. It is difficult for women to consider being candidates unless they are backed by political dynasties. While it is true that many women were fielded in place of their husbands or fathers who had reached their term limits, all things being equal, the men in political dynasties are always prioritized over women when deciding who would be fielded in elections. Women are viewed as the temporary substitute or back-up, not the main actor. This has been the experience of our FGD participants who observed patronage politics first-hand, particularly those from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

⁷ In its 2023 report, the UNDP pointed out that in the 59 countries where adult women are more educated than men, women still earn 39 percent less. (Gender Social Norms Index, 2023)

Yet another barrier to women entering electoral politics is the electoral systems design itself. The first pass-the-post plurality system adopts a zero-sum perspective on electoral success, where the candidate who obtains one more vote gets the prize, while the defeated candidate loses everything. This system incentivizes massive electoral spending, increases the likelihood of electoral violence, and creates an environment for pervasive electoral fraud. Women tend to shun from getting involved in these issues.

This provides merit to the proposal that a proportional representation (PR) electoral systems design provides better incentives for women to run for elections. The PR system allocates elective seats according to the number of votes obtained. It is less confrontational and focuses on candidates' platforms and programs rather than their personal attributes. Another option would be to use ranked choice voting which shares the same attributes as PR, like encouraging more civil discourse (or discouraging personal attacks) in the campaign and has a more representative outcome.

1.3. Personal Barriers

As a result of the previously described barriers, it is perhaps not surprising that many women are averse to the idea of running for elections, even when their professional achievements are equal to or even more impressive than those of their male counterparts. Women give more weight to factors such as family, loss of privacy, gender discrimination, perception of lower chances of winning, and difficulty of fundraising (Koch-Merin, 2018). Across generations, men expressed more comfort and felt greater freedom than women when thinking about seeking office (Lawless & Fox, 2008).

The gender gap has been attributed to women's aversion to campaigning, lack of confidence and encouragement to become a candidate, traditional family dynamics, difficulty in fund-raising, and perception of their "winnability" as well as of the fairness of the political environment.

In the Philippines, some FGD participants who's professional or family background prepares or qualifies them for leadership roles in public life expressed outright aversion or, at best, a wary interest in joining politics in the future. They cite the high cost of a campaign and "dirty politics", expressing preference for a quieter and more productive private life.

Considering the barriers identified above, what environment would then make women consider running for elections?

Proceeding from a discussion of the barriers to women running for elections, this research paper then identifies the ideal environment that would address said barriers. Political parties play a crucial role in creating such an environment that will nurture women's participation in elections and politics.

Majority of women run with a political party rather than as independent candidates. In the 2022 elections, 12 national parties were responsible for fielding at least 64 percent (6,029 candidates) of the total female candidates (9,484). Political parties can be encouraged to field more women candidates. With women in their ranks, these parties provide value for voters and establish a competitive advantage. This also paves the way for more women to take on leadership positions, thus helping shape the party's character, inform its strategy and agenda, and move

towards a more inclusive and collaborative engagement between women and men. Women at the helm of political parties introduce their brand of leadership and meld this into the current paradigms for a more holistic definition and understanding of leadership.

This research paper also views this as an area where civil society organizations and similar minded groups can advocate or amplify the call to ensure women's perspectives in elective and government posts. By addressing this call to the COMELEC and to political parties, they generate public pressure and raise awareness among voters and support organizations on the imperative for more women in politics and governance.

An environment where elections are less violent and fraudulent is definitely conducive to increasing women's participation in elections. Women are concerned that they will be unable to tolerate election violence and fraud, which is viewed as a given. This is also true for corruption in public office, which women candidates are less likely to tolerate than their male counterparts.

Our interviewees and FGD participants consistently describe women as more risk averse than men. Thus, women zealously scrutinize their planned electoral participation, assess the chances of success, and the consequences of failure. It is harder for them to save face or bounce back, should they lose an election. Perhaps this is borne out of the social stigma of going against the norm by running in an election, only to face the embarrassment of losing.

Earlier, we cited the high financial cost of getting elected and holding an elective position as a significant roadblock to women's participation. It is therefore essential to make electoral participation more affordable. Our study participants who joined elections either as candidates or campaigners affirm that barring support from entrenched political dynasties, the high cost of elections makes it extremely difficult for women to compete in elections. Women have more difficulty than men in accessing or raising campaign funds (Lawless and Fox, 2008; Kumar, 2017). To increase their participation, women would have to be convinced that being in politics and participating in elections need not cripple them financially. However, there is very little instructive study on these costs. Some studies say that at least 60 percent of a candidate's budget goes into publicity and propaganda. Operational costs, legal fees, deployment of campaigners and watchers, et al. are costs which up to now have not been fully studied and understood.

This research paper proposes that women's participation in elections should be positioned as beneficial to the community, and that the benefits should not be exclusively for women.

The illustrations that follow (Figures 1.2 to 1.5) summarize how our study participants see the current condition, the existing challenges, practical strategies to address the challenges, and future actions. From their insights, we drew recommendations complemented by our own experiences. (Access the online copies of the illustrations using this link <https://bit.ly/WPPBoards>)



Figure 1.2. Current Political Practices Observed in the Philippines

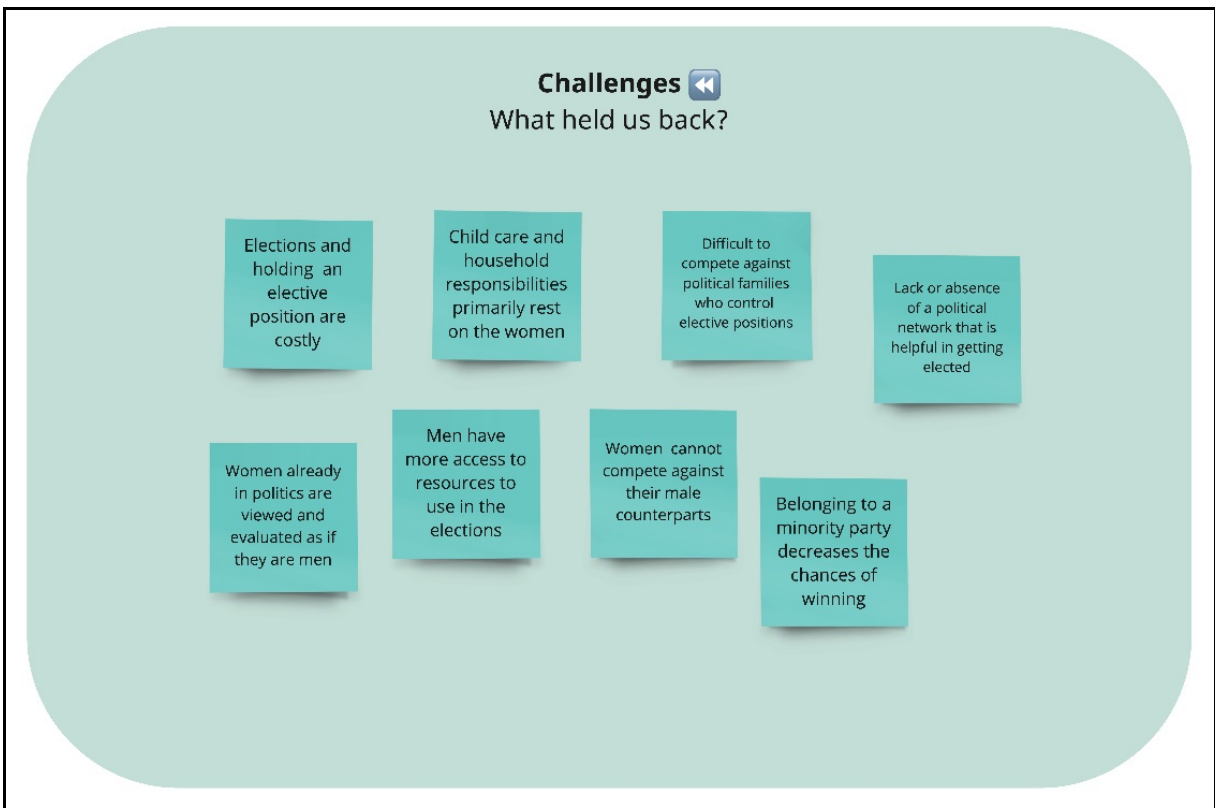


Figure 1.3. Challenges for Women's Political Participation in the Philippines



Figure 1.4. Strategies for Improving Women’s Political Participation in the Philippines

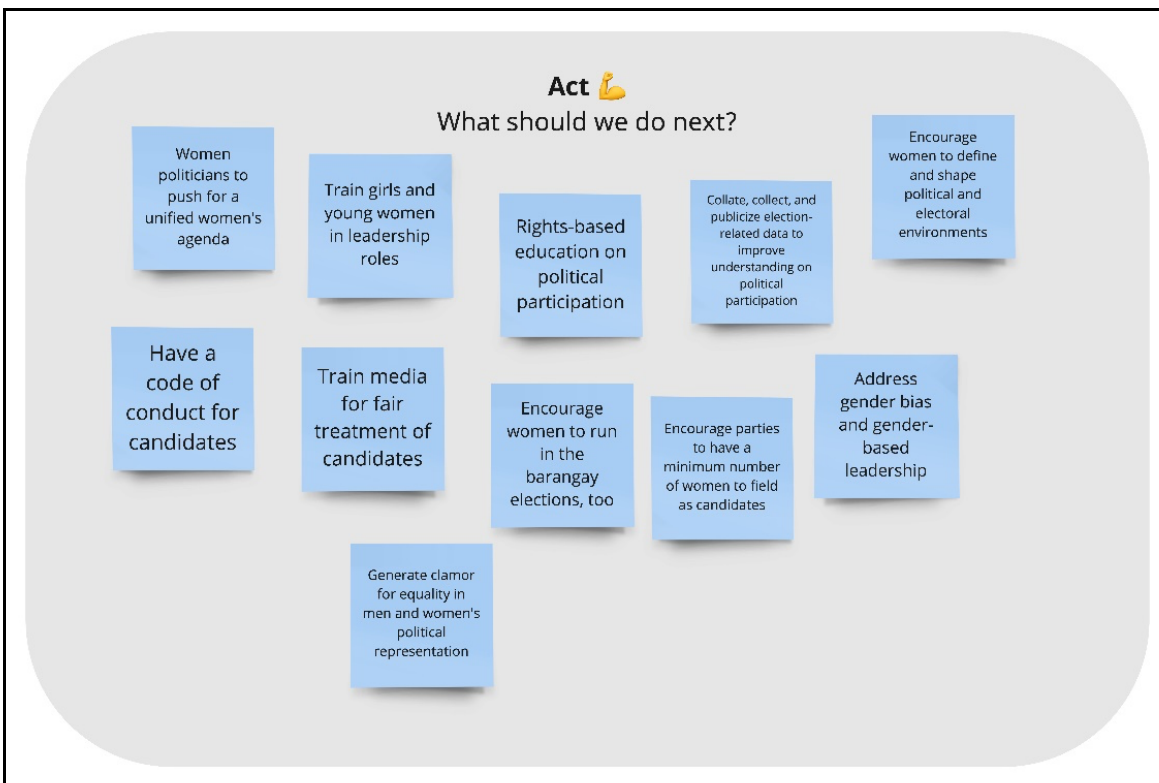


Figure 1.5. Suggested Actions to Increase Women’s Political Participation in the Philippines

How can COMELEC improve the political participation of women?

COMELEC is the Philippines' constitutionally created election management body mandated to "enforce and administer all laws relative to elections"⁸ as well as "decide, excepting those involving the right to vote, all questions affecting elections."⁹ Its powers cannot be derogated even by the legislature, as these were granted by the Constitution. Corollary to its power is its duty to ensure that elections are free and fair, which includes ensuring "the fundamental equality before the law of men and women,"¹⁰ particularly in electoral participation.

It is on this premise that our research paper considers the COMELEC as the primary duty bearer for improving the political participation of women. To achieve this objective, the COMELEC needs to formulate strategies that are informed by data, and thereafter use its rule-making power to execute these. The strategies will require aligning its gender and development program and obtaining the buy-in of key electoral stakeholders, especially political parties, and voters, as well as collaborating with other government agencies, civil society organizations, and the academia.

STRATEGIC FORMULATION

We urge the COMELEC and political parties to work together in drafting a comprehensive agenda for increasing women's participation in elections.

We propose a clear target: By 2031, or within three election cycles, women candidates in all elective positions should have increased to 30-50 percent. The benchmark is the 20 percent women's candidacy rate in the 2022 elections.

This target is realistic. The Philippines has consistently ranked among the highest in the World Economic Forum's [Global Gender Gap Report](#). In 2022, it ranked 19th globally and second after New Zealand in Asia and the Pacific. In the Political Empowerment sub-index, the country ranks 35 globally. From the country's relative success in improving women's well-being, there are lessons to be learned for bolstering women's participation in politics.

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) is a logical partner for COMELEC in formulating the plan. The COMELEC can engage other government institutions for monitoring and evaluating its progress; these include agencies like the Philippine Statistics Authority, the academia, as well as think tanks that can assist in data collection, interpretation, visualization, and analyses. Executing the plan will be facilitated by collaboration with the political science, development studies, and gender development departments of universities across the country. The COMELEC can work alongside civil society organizations for outreach and advocacy to political parties and groups. It will also need to develop a communication strategy design to secure public support.

⁸ The 1987 Constitution of The Republic of The Philippines – Article IX-C, Sec. 2(1) (February 2, 1987).

⁹ The 1987 Constitution of The Republic of The Philippines – Article IX-C, Sec. 2(3) (February 2, 1987).

¹⁰ The 1987 Constitution of The Republic of The Philippines – Article II, Sec. 14 (February 2, 1987).

1.4. Data-informed Strategy and Implementation

The COMELEC will need to develop an analytical framework and adopt a standard and comprehensive procedure to collect, analyze, and publicize data. The data should be granular to understand the nuances and conditions surrounding the enablers and constraints related to improving the rate of candidacy of women in all elective positions throughout the country. The data principles promoted by the [Open Election Data Initiative](#) can serve as a guide.

The COMELEC might want to also consider commissioning data scientists from academic institutions and government agencies in order to acquire the skills and expertise needed to use available data as well as generate new data through research. Data management will involve data processing, storage, governance, security, and data engineering. The COMELEC could seek support from professional organizations or survey firms to better understand the conditions around its set targets.

Better still, the COMELEC could fast track its *digital transformation program*, particularly in areas where it can make granular election data publicly and readily accessible to researchers who can undertake independent research to inform policies, actions, and advocacies. This is particularly helpful in advocacy for improving women's participation, as the same will become more data-driven.

Buy-in from the political parties and groups would entail working closely with them through focus group discussions and similar activities to collect quantitative and qualitative data on policies and incentives for increasing women's candidacy rate. Civil society organizations could play a key role, not only in working with the parties – the supply-side – but most especially with organized groups and the media to generate and measure demand for increased political participation of women.

1.5. Use of Rule-making Power

The COMELEC may work together with political parties and civil society organizations to attain a voluntary quota of at least 30 percent women candidates in all contests.

In the 2022 elections, the COMELEC provided incentives to political parties that fielded women candidates. This was consistent with the [Magna Carta for Women \(2009\)](#)¹¹ which mandates the State to give incentives to political parties with a women's agenda.¹² In determining the dominant majority and dominant minority parties, one of the criteria where parties could earn points is from the percentage of women candidates that they had fielded.¹³ [Through COMELEC Resolution No. 10787](#) the National Unity Party was awarded the most points under Criterion No. 5: "(e) The number of women candidates fielded by political parties from the municipal level to the President of the Republic of the Philippines" for having fielded 1,605 women candidates out of a total of 7,349 candidates that ran under its banner.¹⁴

¹¹ The Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) (14 August 2009)

¹² The Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) - Sec. 11(e) (14 August 2009) .

¹³ Republic of the Philippines, COMELEC (05 May 2022), [Resolution No. 10787](https://comelec.gov.ph/?r=2022NLE/Resolutions/res10787). Available at: <https://comelec.gov.ph/?r=2022NLE/Resolutions/res10787>.

¹⁴ The 12 national political parties that filed a petition for accreditation as the dominant majority party, dominant minority party, or major national party in 2022 had a total of 6,029 women candidates.

The COMELEC's rule-making power extends beyond providing rules for election statutes. It should enforce laws and institute election-related guidelines consistent with these laws. For example, the Magna Carta for Women also "encourages the integration of women in the leadership hierarchy, internal policy making structures, appointive and electoral nominating processes" within political parties.¹⁵ A more recent law, the [Safe Spaces Act \(2019\)](#),¹⁶ prohibits gender-based online bullying. The COMELEC can enforce this law to prevent online misogyny. Furthermore, the [UN Convention on the Eradication of Discrimination Against Women \(1979\)](#), of which the Philippines is a signatory, and is therefore part of the law of the land, provides bases for COMELEC to enact appropriate rules.

The COMELEC's criteria for determining the dominant majority and minority party can include not just the percentage of women candidates, but also women in the party's key leadership positions. It can require political parties and party-list organizations to draft programs for women or those related to women, and to publish these in their respective websites. These programs should not just be on paper; the political parties and party-list groups should also report on implementation.

Gender-based violence during elections can be addressed in numerous ways. For the entire election period, the COMELEC can facilitate candidates' adoption of a code of conduct to stop violence against women, accompanied with sanctions for violations. It can direct law enforcement agencies to protect women candidates from violence, threat, and intimidation. During the campaign period, it can even use its supervisory and regulatory powers over media franchises, including social media,¹⁷ to prevent online abuse and semiotic violence in social media against female candidates and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. The Cyber Libel Law and Safe Spaces Act may be used as supporting authorities for this action. The interpretation of misogyny could include acts of verbal abuse and violence banned from being broadcast, with the inclusion of similar acts as grounds for disqualification of candidates under Section 68 of the Omnibus Election Code.

Earlier, this research paper underscored how the high cost of getting elected deterred women from running for office and reduced their chances of winning. This is an issue that the COMELEC might want to put serious efforts in appreciating, as it will inform the State's interventions in rationalizing the cost of getting elected. One such way is to introduce subsidies as was the case prior to the passage of [Republic Act 9006 or Fair Election Act \(2001\)](#). Prior to 2001, the COMELEC procured advertising space from various media to allocate equally and impartially and free of charge among all candidates, thereby significantly reducing costs for all candidates. This is primarily due to Rep. Act No. 6646 (1987) or the Electoral Reform Law of 1987 that prohibited candidates and political parties from procuring airtime and print space for their political advertisement, and mandated COMELEC to procure the same and allocate them equally and impartially to all candidate and parties. COMELEC may then consider the possibility of recommending that reintroduction of the old law, or it may request for more funds to subsidize the campaigns of less resourced candidates, which is still allowed under the Fair Election Act.¹⁸

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Republic of the Philippines, Congress of the Philippines, Rep. Act No. 11313

¹⁷ The 1987 Constitution of The Republic of The Philippines – Article IX-C, Sec. 4 (February 2, 1987).

¹⁸ Fair Election Act (Republic Act 9006) Sec. 7 (12 February 2001)

1.6. **Aligning the Gender and Development Program**

In 2012, the COMELEC established the gender and development (GAD) focal system to institutionalize gender mainstreaming in the agency. In the last ten years (2012-2022), it conducted gender sensitivity training across its various offices; set a GAD office to oversee programs and projects; increased the number of women in senior executive positions; instituted gender balance in accessing professional development opportunities; established a mechanism to handle sexual harassment complaints and cases and set up an in-house day care for with young children. COMELEC's Gender mainstreaming activities, however, were primarily focused on internal strengthening of its employees' awareness of GAD.

For the 2016 elections, the COMELEC held roundtable discussions, nationwide seminars, and lectures entitled "Women in Elections" to encourage more women candidates. The campaign against election violence led to the signing of a peace covenant among candidates and election stakeholders. The COMELEC also organized satellite registration for women in commemoration of International Women's Day and provided express lanes for pregnant and indigenous women on Election Day.

The GAD program has provided COMELEC the institutional experience and credentials to advocate for gender mainstreaming. It can further increase its capacity to drive the campaign for a greater number of women candidates in elections.

1.7. **Advocacy**

Integrating awareness-raising advocacy towards gender-parity in political participation will allow the COMELEC to help address the deep-seated socio-cultural biases against women. It also has the potential to galvanize society to help the COMELEC achieve its targets.

We urge the COMELEC to design and implement a gender awareness advocacy program that draws attention to women's leadership and positive contributions to the quality of governance and wellbeing of Filipinos. The program can have several components, including: 1) Integration of gender awareness into voters' education, 2) Training and capacity-building of prospective women candidates on technical requirements for candidacy, with Provincial Election Supervisors and City and Municipal Election Officers as the primary officials tasked to execute this program, and 3) Advocacy of legislation and implementing guidelines to facilitate equal representation of women and men in all elections. The latter is consistent with the COMELEC's mandate of ensuring fundamental equality before the law of men and women.

This research paper covers only a few of multiple actions that the COMELEC can undertake in pursuit of equal representation of women in elective positions and governance institutions. Our objective has been to highlight not just the many options but also the need to address simultaneously the overlapping factors that constrain women's participation. As the constitutionally mandated organization to manage elections, the COMELEC bears responsibility for establishing the groundwork for gender parity in elections. This requires creative collaboration with political parties, related government agencies, the public, and other stakeholders. The potential gains are enormous: a greater number of women in elective positions and governance institutions will surely contribute to a more nuanced practice of democracy in the Philippines.

ADVANCING TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS: A QUANTITATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CANDIDACY IN THE PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS

Sonia Bea Wee- Lozada, Arlan Brucal, Ph.D., John Carlo Daquis, Riza Teresita Halili, Sheena Kristine Cases, and William Aguilar

KEY POINTS

- The Philippines performs better in terms of key gender parity and gender equality indices relative to Global averages. Notwithstanding, political participation of women as leaders remains low and political bias favoring men continue to persist.
- Previous studies reveal that factors such as, among others, access to information, education expenditure, and enabling policies and regulations empowering women are related to greater participation of women in politics.
- Results of data analysis indicate potential fundamental relationships between natural disasters, political dynasties, and women participation in politics. Given its importance not only to women political participation but, more generally to human development, further analysis and data on local-level politics are needed to have a better understanding of underlying dynamics and their respective implications.
- Addressing these challenges and opportunities, the COMELEC may consider the following recommendations for the short term: 1) Explore implementing research with an experimental design to determine effective behavioral nudges which could encourage more women to participate in the political arena as elective candidates or break the mindsets of voters regarding biases against women, 2) Support further data analyses or studies to understand the local context which cannot be fully explained yet by the models used for this research paper.
- In the long term, the COMELEC may consider the following recommendations: 1) Steer policy dialogue and advocacy with legislature regarding the effects of having fixed terms for elected officials (i.e., women being used as “benchwarmers” or placeholders for relatives and having political dynasties) and having a quota system to encourage participation of women, 2) Enhance and sustain digitalization efforts of the government to improve data and access to data relevant to sustaining a healthy democracy, and 3) Initiate capacity-building activities for COMELEC personnel, focusing on enhancing the proficiency in the collection, organization, and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data.

INTRODUCTION

Filipino women prove to have potential to be great leaders in the political arena. However, they seem to be chained to barriers which persistently hinder them from doing so. Despite these, prospective women elective candidates may be supported and empowered so the country can maximize opportunities that are already present for advancing transformative leadership in the country.

The attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 relies significantly on ensuring women's equitable involvement and leadership in political and public spheres. Nevertheless, global data reveals that women remain inadequately represented across all tiers of decision-making, and the realization of gender balance in political participation remains a distant goal.

Women's political empowerment in the Philippines has made significant strides, with the Magna Carta of Women playing a pivotal role. Enacted in 2009, this landmark legislation aims to eliminate discrimination against women and promote their participation in various sectors, including politics. The Magna Carta of Women has contributed to greater gender equality in political representation, encouraging increased involvement of women in decision-making processes at all levels of government. As a result, more women have been able to assert their rights and contribute to shaping the nation's policies and future. Other key legislations that ensure the protection of women's rights and gender equality in the country include the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (R.A. 10354), the 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law (2019) (R.A. 11210), and the Safe Spaces Act (2019) (R.A. 11313)¹⁹. Gender-centered development measures, such as the Gender Development Index (GDI), for the Philippines have been steadily increasing above the global average since 1990, indicating a high level of equality in Human Development Index (HDI) achievements between women and men in the country. Furthermore, the Philippines has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education from 2014 to 2021²⁰, have experienced improvements in women's literacy^{21,22} and maternal mortality ratio²³, and have experienced a decrease in the rate of adolescent fertility²⁴. In terms of taking leadership positions, the percentage of women in managerial positions have increased from 46.6 percent in 2016 to 53.0 percent in 2020²⁵.

Despite the above remarkable gains, the growing recognition of women's rights and their roles as leaders, and the push for gender equality, recent trends highlight persistent barriers impeding women's political participation. In the Philippines, women have good participation rate as voter registrants and as actual voters, but not as candidates for elective positions. In the past five automated elections in the country, although the percentage of women candidates have steadily increased (from 16.7 percent in 2010 to

¹⁹ Encinas-Franco, J. and Laguna, E. (2023). Barriers to Filipino Women's Political Participation. University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies. Discussion Paper Series 2023-1. Available at: <https://cids.up.edu.ph/download/barriers-filipino-womens-political-participation/>.

²⁰ The World Bank DataBank (24 October 2022). School Enrollment, primary and secondary (gross), gender parity index (GPI) - Philippines. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ENR.PRSC.FM.ZS?locations=PH>.

²¹ The World Bank DataBank (24 October 2022). Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above)- Philippines. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.FE.ZS?locations=PH>.

²² The World Bank DataBank (24 October 2022). Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24) – Philippines. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.FE.ZS?locations=PH>.

²³ The World Bank. Gender Data Portal – Philippines. Available at: <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/philippines/>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Philippine Statistics Authority (04 April 2022). Available at: https://sdg.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Goal-5_0.pdf.

20.6 percent in 2022), it remains a small percentage of the total pool of elective candidates. This still translates to having only one for every five candidates being a woman.²⁶

This research paper analyzes female involvement in political leadership, focusing on trends in key indices and variables related to their candidacy for elective roles. It examines participation factors and informs government initiatives, particularly in enhancing gender equality, along with disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI). The goals of this research paper are to:

1. Map the barriers and drivers of women’s political participation;
2. Identify key trends and insights from existing data; and
3. Propose actionable recommendations.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Philippines and the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) are co-implementing this initiative with funding support from the Government of Spain.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

The complexity of the issues, coupled with data limitations, necessitates the employment of several methods at different unit of analysis. First, to deal with institutions, regulations and policies in different areas, we estimate a cross-country regression model that examine factors such as investments in education, institutions and policies on women economic empowerment as they influence women’s political participation. Second, to examine factors relating to political dynasty, disaster risk exposure and cultural norms in the Philippines, we estimate a cross-province regression model, thus focusing on variations in women's political participation within the Philippines over time and across regions. In all of these models, we test the statistical significance of including area- and time-specific unobserved factors in explaining the variations of our dependent variables. (see Annex B for details).

To provide richer analysis, we examine the relative contribution of each variable to the model’s coefficient of determination of R-squared using the Shapley-Owen Decomposition.²⁷ Looking at the relative contribution to R-squared over regression betas or point estimates offers several advantages in our context. First, analyzing the relative contributions of different independent variables to R-squared provides insights into their individual importance in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. This helps us understand which variables have a substantial explanatory power behind changes in women’s political participation and which might be less influential. Second, when choosing different models and specifications, knowing the marginal contributions of each added variable in the model is very important in our analysis, particularly in assessing how much

²⁶ Ramachandran, S. and Garcia, G. (06 March 2023). Beyond a Glance: Digitalization and Enhanced Data Governance for Women’s Political Participation in the Philippines. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/philippines/blog/beyond-glance-digitalization-and-enhanced-data-governance-womens-political-participation-philippines>.

²⁷ Wendelspiess Chávez Juárez, F. SHAPLEY2: Stata Module to Compute Additive Decomposition of Estimation Statistics by Regressors or Groups of Regressors; Boston College Department of Economics: Boston, MA, USA, 2015. Available at: <http://fmwww.bc.edu/repec/bocode/s/shapley2.ado>. Accessed on 08 May 2020.

unknowns are there to be explored for further research. Third, in cases of multicollinearity, which is presumably high in our context, where independent variables are correlated with each other, examining the relative contributions to R-squared can help tease out the individual effects of correlated variables. This is especially useful when interpreting results in situations where interpreting individual coefficient estimates might be challenging due to collinearity.

1.2. DATA

For the cross-country study, variables sourced from the World Bank's World Development Indicators are utilized, encompassing data from 218 countries spanning the period from 2000 to 2022. The models developed from this dataset yielded significant insights into the relationships between the indicators under study with participation of women in the legislative assembly. To have richer analysis, a set of indicators has been carefully selected to elucidate the multifaceted nature of the factors influencing women representation in the parliament. These indicators are as follows: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita provides an insight into the economic landscape, percentage of internet users offers a perspective on access to technology and connectivity, female labor force participation rate delves into the gender dynamics in the workforce, the political stability and absence of violence/terrorism score, Women Business and Law Index (WBLI) gauges gender inclusivity in legal and business frameworks, and percentage of government expenditure on education (see Annex B for a details).

Moreover, by applying a similar methodology on consolidated data specific to the Philippines, which includes data from over 80 provinces over the time span from 2013 to 2022, empirical findings have surfaced that relates different indicators to the participation of women as candidates in the election. This localized analysis further shed light on the interplay of other variables namely, percentage of elected officials who has a relative also currently in office offers insight into potential political dynasties, Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) explores into economic and development factors that might impact political engagement, disaster incidence, annual average family income, average years education of women, percentage of Islamic population that reflects cultural and religious contexts, and finally the percentage of women who think wife-beating is justified imparts awareness of gender norms and violence against women (see Annex B for details). The integration of these indicators within the context of the Philippines contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping the participation of women as political candidates within the nation's provinces.

For contextual relevance of the analysis, the application of selected indicators in the models is guided by detailed literature review yielding a causal mapping workshop that identified the barriers and drivers to women's candidacy.

MAPPING BARRIERS AND DRIVERS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Current obstacles to women's candidacy in politics demand attention. Encinas-Franco and Laguna (2023), for example, analyzed barriers to female political participation in the Philippines, unveiling challenges from political, economic, cultural, and institutional factors. Building upon this work, a causal mapping exercise was carried out and four

dimensions were identified²⁸: *personal, social and cultural norms, institutional, and technical dimensions* (see Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1).

The **personal dimension** includes characteristics attributed to individuals as well as their personal experiences, including having self-efficacy, having higher education and income, being empowered, or having to do care work, among others. **social and cultural norms dimension** includes both explicit and implicit “rules or expectations of behavior and thoughts based on shared beliefs within a specific cultural or social group”.²⁹ These often include social and familial rules or expectations which influence relational dynamics within and among communities or networks of women and various treatments given to them due to perceptions or biases. **institutional dimension** includes laws, policies, guidelines, or procedures created by institutions which may either discriminate or empower women. Lastly, the **technical dimension** is regarding the presence or absence of technical knowledge and skills that may be used to strengthen the capacity of a woman to lead. Positive or negative connections influence women's political candidacy decisions, with potential relationships highlighted as broken lines, subject to further confirmation.

²⁸ The authors have conducted a causal mapping exercise using insights from a review of literature and a workshop conducted with UNDP PH Lead Consultants, a COMELEC representative, and UNDP PH staff in the UNDP Philippines Country Office in Metro Manila (see Annex A).

²⁹ World Health Organization (2009). Changing cultural and social norms supportive of violent behaviour. Series of briefings on violence prevention: The evidence. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization. Available at: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44147/9789241598330_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Table 2.1 Highlights on Barriers and Drivers of Political Participation of Women as Elective Candidates

PERSONAL	INSTITUTIONAL	LEGEND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + High education level is crucial yet not sole for effective leadership. It facilitates comprehension of intricate politics, adept communication, and stakeholder engagement essential for candidacy (Schweisfurth, M., Davies, L., Pe Symacoc, L., Valiente, O., 2018). + Self-efficacy is necessary for effective leadership. Greater self-efficacy on assertiveness significantly predicts developmental leadership while having a high level of self-control (i.e., remaining calm during crises) does not (Bergman D., Gustafsson-Sendén, M., and Berntson E., August 2021). - It was raised in the workshop in UNDP PH that having financial limitations is a major challenge faced by persons who would want to run for office due to the high cost of running a campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In First-Past-the-Post systems, parties choose 'winnable' candidates, often male, reducing women's access to party resources (Encinas-Franco, J. and Laguna, E., 2023, pp.16-17; Firmase, J. and Prieto-Carolino, A., 2021). - Given the term-limit for elective positions in the Philippines, women who are part of political dynasties often become "benchwarmers". (Labonne, J., Parsa, S., and Querubin, P., 2019). + Gender quotas (minimum women candidates) incentivize women's political participation by rewarding parties that meet the quota (Philippine Commission on Women. n.d.). 	<p>LEGEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Social and Cultural Norms Institutional Technical <p> Positive (+) Negative (-) unconfirmed in available literature </p>
<p>SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most Filipinos still regard men as better politicians than women (Encinas-Franco, J. and Laguna, E., 2023, p.17; World Values Survey). - There is a more pronounced violence against women in politics in the recent years (Encinas-Franco, J. and Laguna, E., 2023, p.18). + Women in political dynasties are more likely to run for political office (Labonne, J., Parsa, S., and Querubin, P., 2019). - There are gender stereotypes of women candidates shown in media coverage (Encinas-Franco, J. and Laguna, E., 2023, p.18). - Women have conflicting responsibilities due to social and familial expectations which make them less likely to run for office. These include care work, work, community responsibilities, or fulfilling other responsibilities and activities (Firmase, J. and Prieto-Carolino, A., 2021; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2019; Salvador, C.G., 2017). 	<p>TECHNICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Having more opportunities for women to build Developmental Leadership skills and other technical political skills enables them to navigate through the political arena more effectively (Schweisfurth, M., Davies, L., Pe Symacoc, L., Valiente, O., 2018). This has also been raised in the workshop in UNDP PH by representatives from the Democratic Insights Group. 	<p>Legend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Driver - Barrier

Notes:

See list of literature reviewed in Annex A. Also, in the Institutional Barriers and Drivers box the second bullet define "benchwarmers" as individuals

who assume a political position as a placeholder or substitute to a relative who were unavailable to run for political office due to term limits.

KEY TRENDS AND INSIGHTS FROM EXISTING QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: GLOBAL GENDER INDICES AND WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

To explore quantitative evidence on the patterns and trends of potential drivers in relation to women’s political participation, an exploratory data analysis (EDA) was conducted using data from existing quantitative research on the same topic. The following findings from the EDA highlight key insights from trends and patterns on gender indices and women’s political participation in the Philippines:

According to the trends in the Women’s Political Empowerment (WPE) subindex of the World Economic Forum, among ASEAN countries for the years 2006 to 2023, the level of women empowerment in the Philippines has constantly remained above the Global average with a generally increasing trend (see Figure 2.2). However, a large decline from 42 percent to 35 percent was observed from 2018 to 2020, indicating a reversal of eight years of progress. The index remained stagnant until 2022 then it increased to 40.9 percent in 2023, near the peak values of the index in 2017 and 2018 at 41.6 percent.

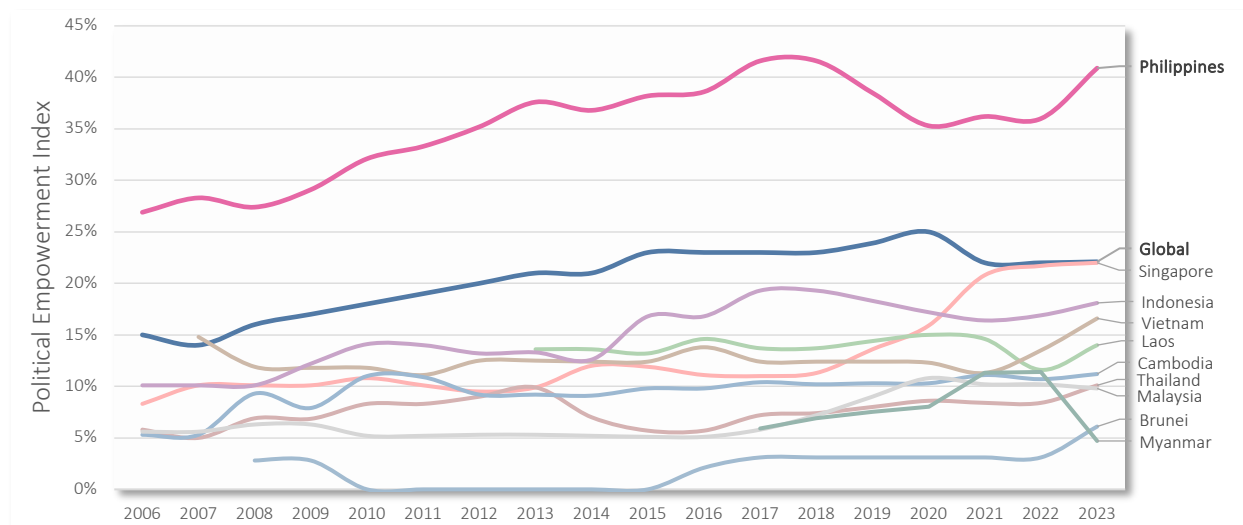


Figure 2.2. Women’s Political Empowerment Index of ASEAN Countries, 2006-2023

Source World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Index Reports, 2006-2023

Notes The women’s political empowerment index quantifies gender disparities in representation of women in ministerial and parliamentary positions.³⁰ It also includes the ratio of women to men who have held executive roles as prime minister or president over the past 50 years. ASEAN means Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Missing index values for 2019 are imputed using simple averages of adjacent time points.

³⁰ World Economic Forum (2022). Global Gender Gap Report 2023. Geneva, Switzerland. Available at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf.

Although the Philippines has a good level of political empowerment compared to the global average based on the WPE subindex, negative social norms which influence people to have bias against women remain persistent (see Figure 2.3.). According to the Waves 3, 4, 6, and 7 of the World Values Survey covering the years 1996 to 2019, the overall percentage of respondents agreeing that men make better political leaders than women have consistently remained greater than those who disagree. Nonetheless, there has been a shift in perception among female respondents from 2001 to 2019, where the percentage who disagreed increased from 29 percent to 43 percent. Similarly, there had been an increasing percentage of males who disagree with the statement with an increase from 26 percent in 2001 to 36 percent in 2019.

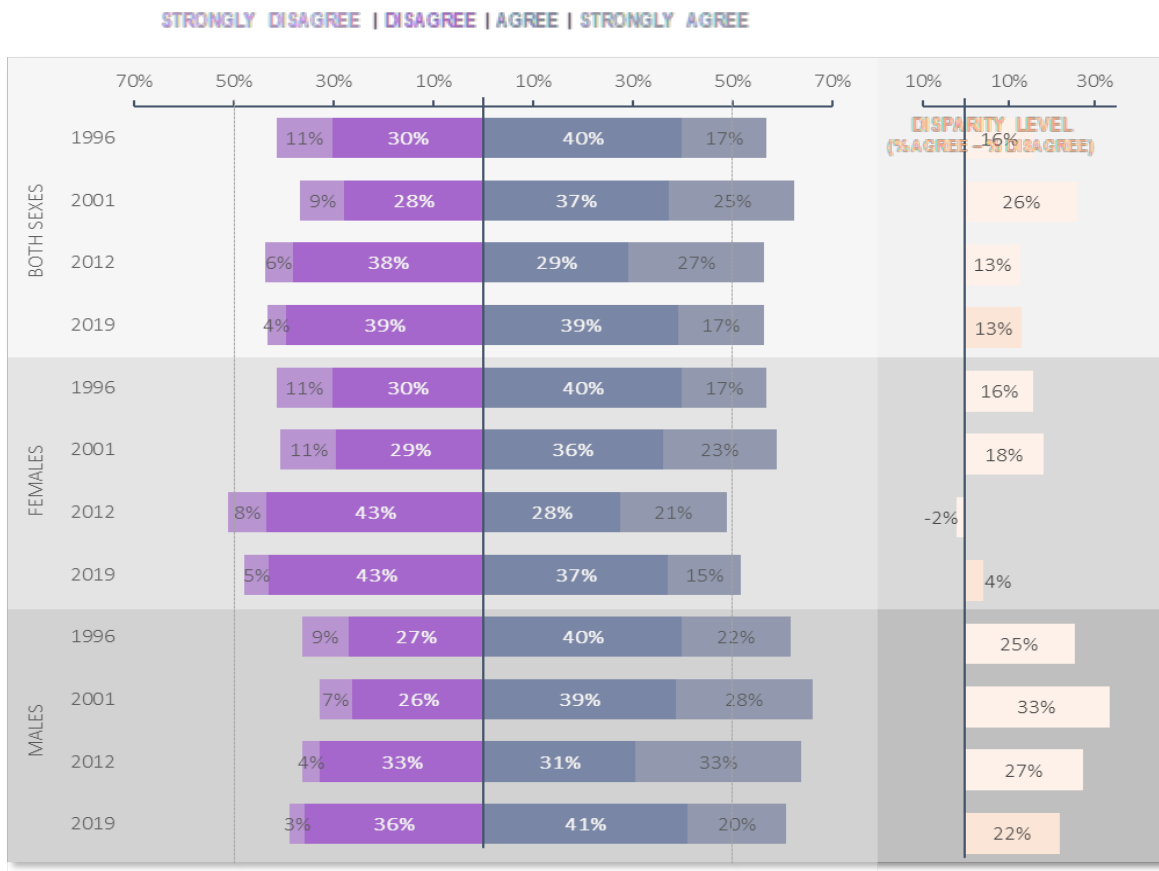


Figure 2.3. Distribution of Survey Responses to the question “On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do”, 1996-2019

Source: World Values Survey (WVS), Waves 3, 4, 6, and 7

Notes: The principal investigator for the WVS-3 is Dr. Mahar Mangahas, Philippine Social Science Center, with data collection organization, Social Weather Stations (SWS). The principal investigator for the WVS Waves 4, 6, and 7 is Linda Luz Guerrero of SWS, with data collection organization, SWS. The co-principal investigator for WVS-7 is Jorge Villamor Tigno of the University of the Philippines, Department of Political Science.

By plotting the 2019 COMELEC dataset with the Ateneo Policy Center dataset on political dynasties³¹, we find an indication of positive albeit weak relationship between women’s share in total electoral candidates and officials with relatives in office (Figure 2.4.). This can imply that provinces with a presence of political dynasties have higher participation of women as candidates for elective positions.

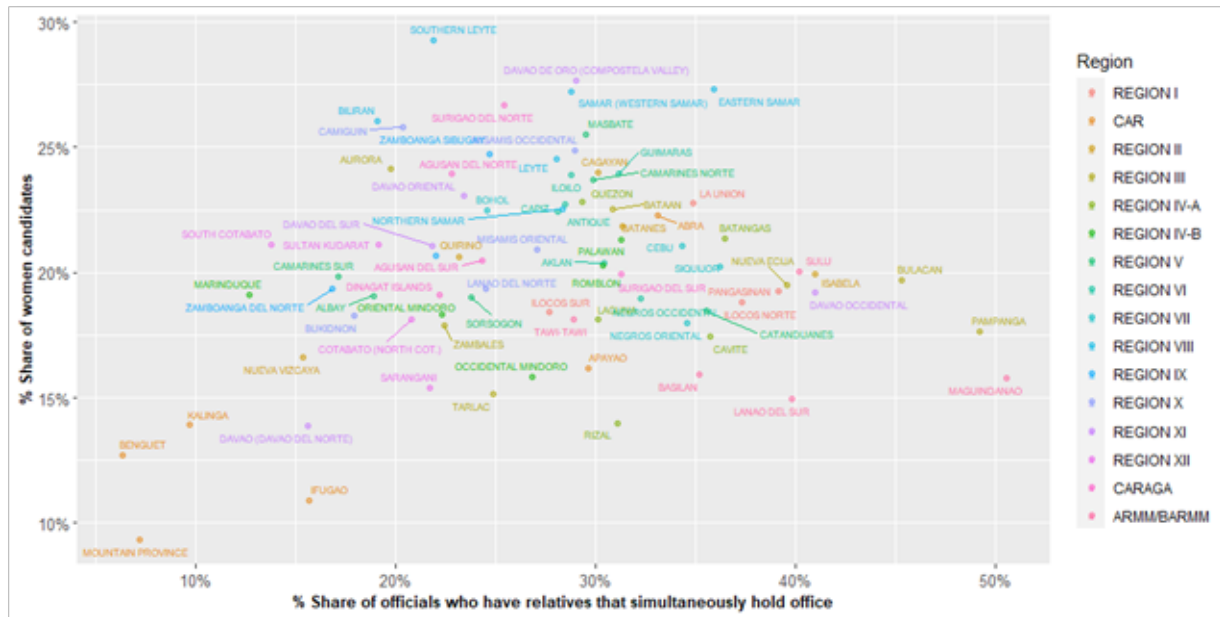


Figure 2.4. Scatterplot of Percentage of Women Candidates and Share of Officials with at Least One Relative Currently in Office by Province, 2019

Sources: The percent share of officials who have relatives that simultaneously hold office is based on the 2019 Political Dynasties Dataset of the Ateneo Policy Center, as seen in Mendoza et al. (2019). The percent share of women candidates is based on the 2019 COMELEC candidates dataset.

In the Philippines, remarkable gains have been achieved in in gender equality indicators.³² Analyzing data from the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) for the election years 2010, 2016, and 2022, we observe an increasing share of women’s participation as candidates at the province level (Figure 2.5).

Notably, there is significant variation in the pace of this increase, with more pronounced growth observed in provinces along the Eastern seaboard, characterized by lower income and frequent exposure to natural hazards like typhoons and earthquakes.

While an increasing level of women’s participation is observed, COMELEC local election candidacy data for 2022 reveals that while 24.3 percent of the House of Representatives candidates were women, they were relatively underrepresented in lead roles at 20.4 percent (governor, mayor). This percentage is higher (27.2 percent) for

³¹ A political dynasty is defined in this context as the presence of officials who have at least a relative that simultaneously holds an electorate office.

³² Gender-centered development measures, such as the UNDP’s Gender Development Index, for the Philippines have been steadily increasing above the global average since 1990, indicating a high level of equality in Human Development Index achievements between women and men in the country.

women candidates for support positions (vice-governor, vice-mayor, provincial board, councilor).

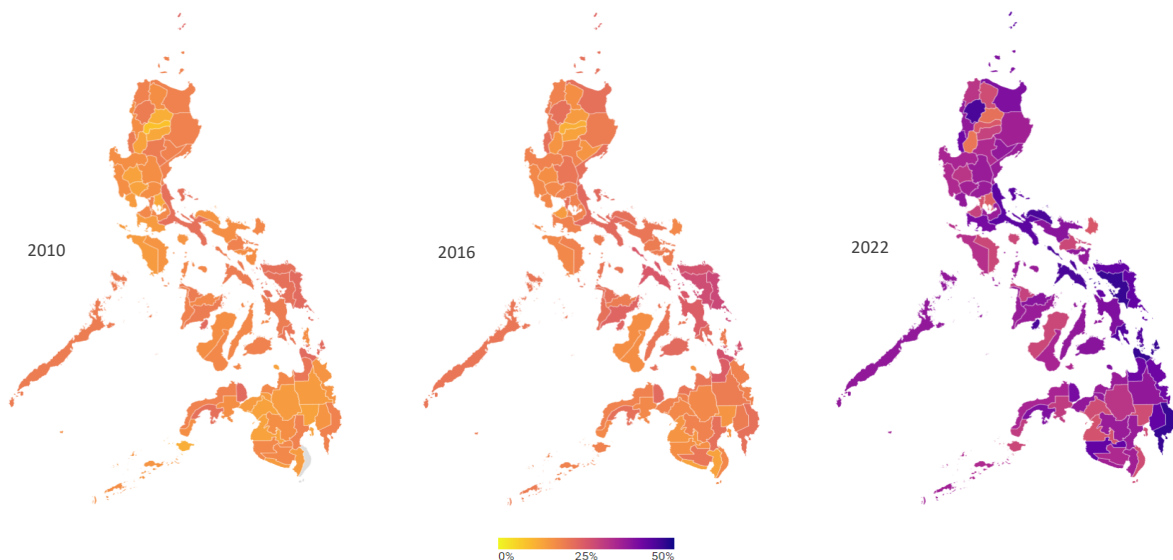


Figure 2.5. Percentage of Female Candidates by Province Across Election Years

Source: Commission on Elections National and Local Elections (NLE) Candidate Datasets for 2010, 2016, and 2022

Notes The proportions only include candidates for local elections. Davao Occidental was created through Republic Act 10360, enacted on July 23, 2013.

RESULTS

1.3. CROSS-COUNTRY REGRESSION

Based on the models estimated by the authors using standardized regressors from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators across 218 countries from 2000 to 2022 and employing the Shapley-Owen decomposition to determine the relative importance of each variable in explaining variation in the women’s political participation, we have the following results:

1. **Our selected variables only explain about a third of the changes in women’s political participation;** more than half is accounted for by factors that are unobserved (i.e., we do not have sufficient data to include them in the analysis) but are likely to be country-specific. These factors can include social norms, policy variations across countries, and the level of development of institutions, among others, and they do not have change significantly over a short period of time (i.e., period coverage of our analysis).

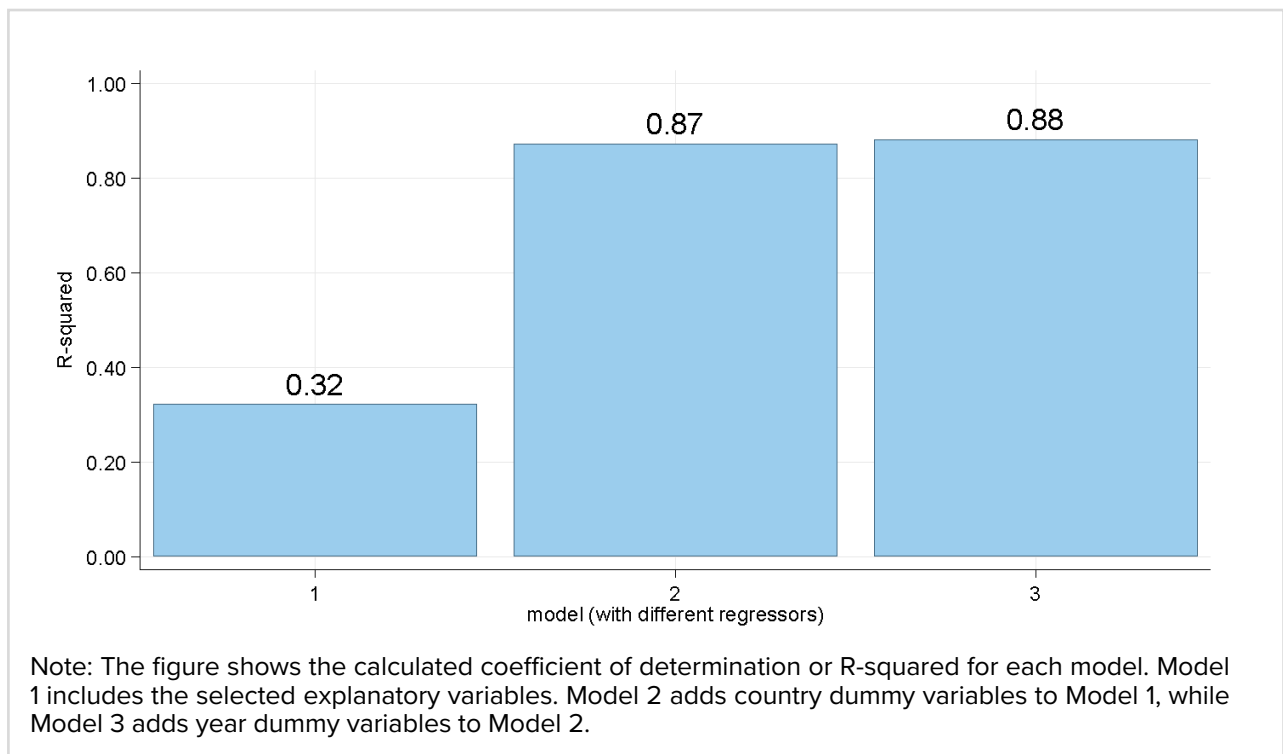


Figure 2.6. Coefficients of Determination for Cross-country Regression Models

- 2. Amongst our selected variables, access to internet (as measured by the proportion of internet users in the population) and business laws and policies to promote women’s economic empowerment seem to explain majority of the changes in our dependent variable.** Access to the internet can empower individuals with information and communication tools. For women, this could mean increased access to educational resources, job opportunities, and networking platforms. Improved communication can also facilitate business interactions and economic activities. Meanwhile, business laws and policies targeted at women's economic empowerment can provide legal safeguards, access to financial resources, and support structures that encourage women to engage more actively in economic activities. In addition, progressive business policies can challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes, encouraging a more inclusive business environment that values women's participation and leadership.

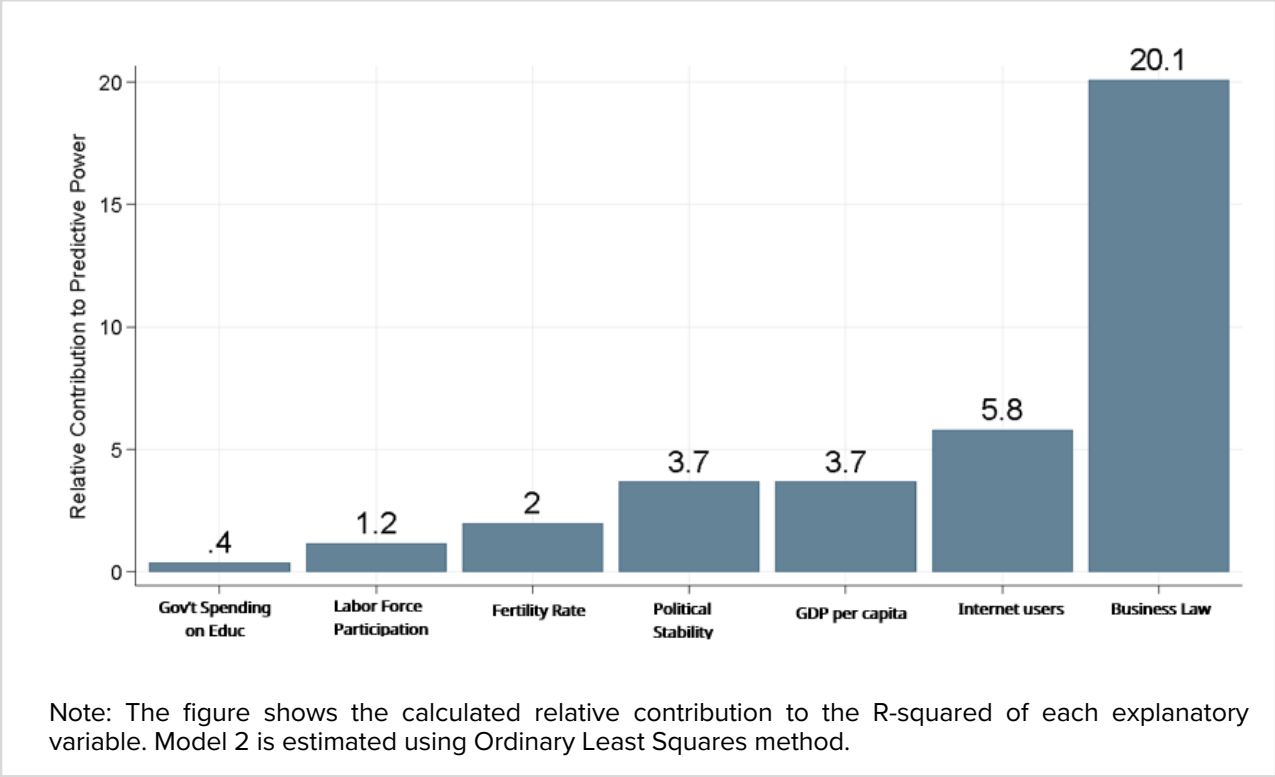


Figure 2.7. Relative Contribution to Predictive Power of Explanatory Variables in Cross-country Regression Model 2

1.4. WITHIN-COUNTRY REGRESSION

Drawing from the models estimated with standardized regressors from the consolidated Philippine data across over 80 provinces from 2013 to 2022, the following findings emerge:

- 1. Our selected variables only explain about a little over 45 percent of the changes in women’s political participation;** about half is accounted for by factors that are unobserved (i.e., we do not have sufficient data to include them in the analysis) but are likely to be province-specific. These factors can include social norms, policy variations across provinces, and the level of development of institutions at the local level, among others, and they do not have change significantly over a short period of time (i.e., period coverage of our analysis).

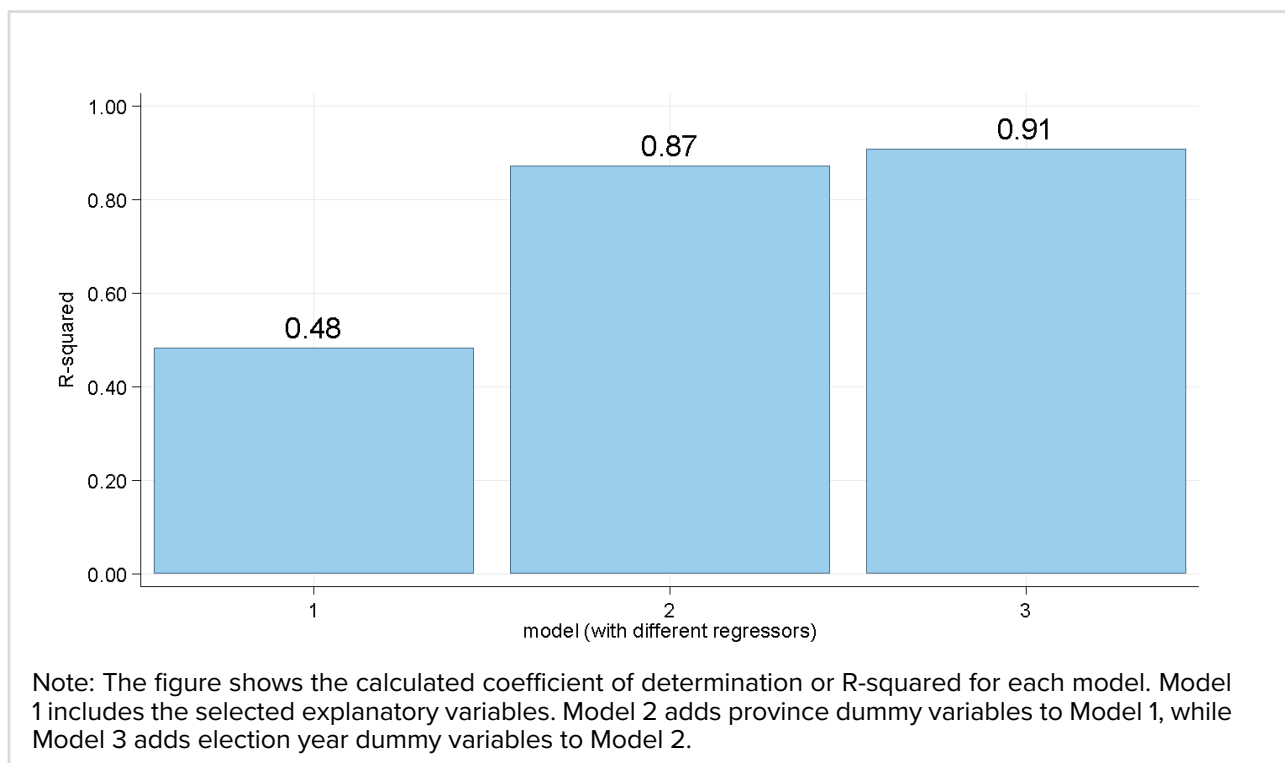


Figure 2.8. Coefficients of Determination for Within-country Regression Models

2. Amongst our selected variables, disaster risk exposure and political dynasty seem to explain majority of the changes in our dependent variable. This finding can have different implications. On the one hand, it is probable that women’s political participation is driven by recent appreciation of women as more caring and nurturing leaders, thus likely to address issues relating to inadequate access to social protection (in this case, recovery programs from disaster occurrences).³³ On the other hand, the observed increase in women’s participation can be superficial. How? Studies have shown that political dynasties are associated with low public service delivery and social protection, on top of inadequate investments in crucial infrastructure such as health and disaster reduction facilities. Such can further promote patron-client relationships at the local political environment, which then can further strengthen the existence and longevity of political dynasties. Now, the observed increase in women participation can be a manifestation of the absence of quota system and term-limits, making women as “benchwarmers” to maintain the political dynasties.

³³ Cvetković, VM, and others (2018). The Role of Gender in Preparedness and Response Behaviors towards Flood Risk in Serbia. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.*, vol. 15, No. 12, p.2761. doi: 10.3390/ijerph15122761. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6313390/>.

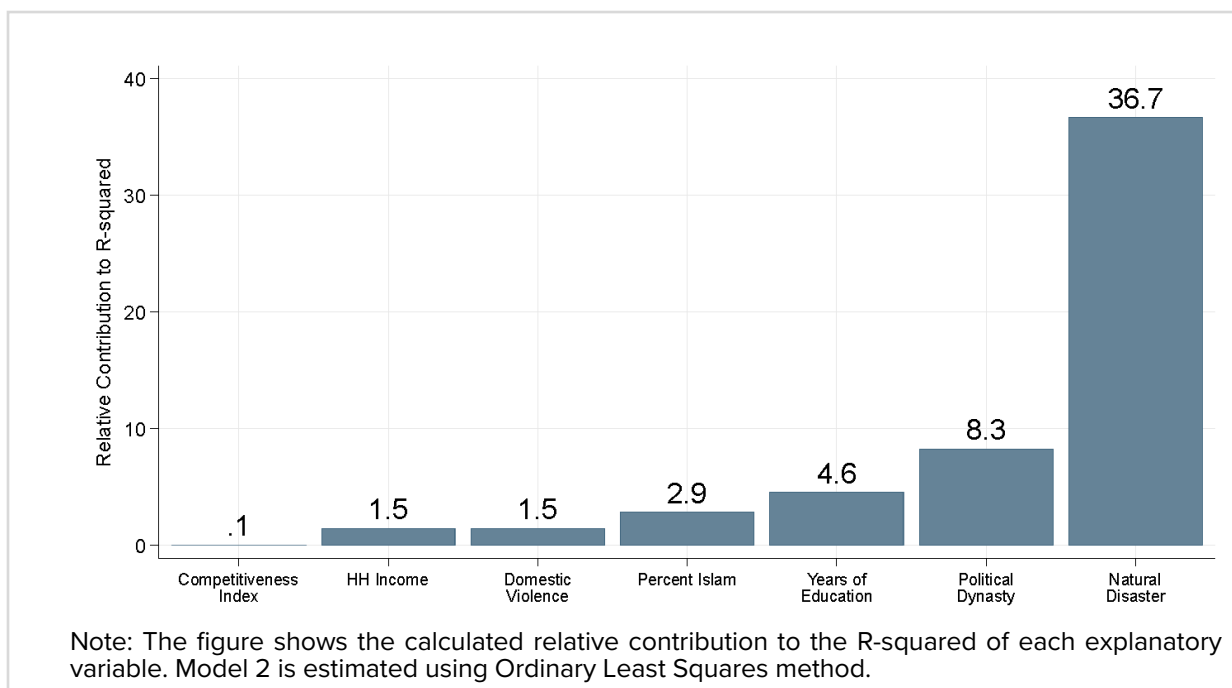


Figure 2.9. Relative Contribution to Predictive Power of Explanatory Variables in Within-country Regression Model 2

ANALYSIS

Based on key trends and surveys, the Philippines seems to be doing well in terms of women’s political participation as candidates but given the results of the cross-country and within-country regressions, we observe that this progress may only be at the surface. A closer look at the data demonstrates that natural disasters and political dynasties are the main driving factors for women’s participation in politics.

Disasters can exacerbate existing gender inequalities as seen in the immediate negative impact between disaster incidence and women’s participation as candidates in local elections. This may be caused by a myriad of factors such as women facing specific vulnerabilities and burdens in disaster-affected areas or that during disaster aftermaths political engagement and participation might take a backseat as the focus shifts towards addressing the urgent needs of the affected population. This could result in fewer opportunities and resources for women to actively participate as political candidates during these critical times.

However, the review of related literature also shows that in the long term, a positive association between disaster incidence and women’s participation as candidates may emerge (see Figure 2.5). Perhaps over time, post-disaster resilience in communities tend to rebuild and recover from the impacts of disasters. As stability returns, there could be a renewed sense of civic engagement and empowerment among women, motivating them to actively participate in political processes and decision-making. Another factor could be that when infrastructure and public services are poor, as it is when there are natural disasters, political dynasties can potentially be strengthened through the strengthening as

well of patron-client relationships. As the data has shown, political dynasties have a positive effect on the participation of women in elections. More research needs to be done to understand the exact causal impact natural disasters have on women's political participation as leaders.

Furthermore, more data and research are needed to fully understand the impact of dynasties on elections and women's participation. If it is true that the driving factor for the recent increase in women's participation is primarily political dynasties, then there are deeper and bigger issues that need to be studied and addressed, especially in understanding the local context, before the Philippines achieves meaningful and inclusive political empowerment of women.

Overall, it has been salient that the Philippines is not lagging in terms of key gender parity and equality indices, yet social bias against women remain due to harmful social norms and conflicting responsibilities held by women. Furthermore, through exploratory data analyses, we have found significant variation in the rate of participation among women as elective candidates across provinces in the Philippines. Based on the same analyses, there are indications of high association of female participation in provinces with lower income and high exposure to climate-related disaster risks. Deeper quantitative analyses employed using within-country datasets broadly support the findings in the exploratory data analyses, particularly that the incidence of natural disasters and the presence of political dynasties are factors which best explain the variance in women's participation as elective candidates among the variables observed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the insights and analyses in this paper, the following are recommended:

Short term (3 months to 2 years):

- **Explore implementing research with an experimental design to determine effective behavioral nudges which could encourage more women to participate in the political arena as elective candidates or break the mindsets of voters regarding biases against women.** Various messages, communication approach, or media may be tested regarding how the audiences may respond to them or make decisions that are relevant to their political participation (i.e., participating as elective candidates or as voters). The COMELEC may partner with universities, research institutions, or communications firms in conducting this research and in evaluating the effectiveness of the actual behavioral nudges used for campaign or advocacy efforts by the COMELEC. The COMELEC may also work with academic institutes promoting women and gender studies in ensuring that messages are framed properly and are gender-sensitive. Moreover, candidates at the grassroots level who resonate with citizens' aspirations can be considered as the face and voice of this advocacy.

- **Support further data analyses or studies to understand the local context which cannot be fully explained yet by the models used for this paper.** Partnership with the Philippine Institute on Development Studies and other institutions may be explored to (i) collect more quantitative and qualitative data at the local level, which may include probing of the nuanced experiences among women and men as leaders in the political arena, as prospective candidates, as individuals actively involved in civic duties, or as voters, and (ii) identify the dimensions related to these experiences such as governance, economic indicators, and education variables (e.g. studies to further understand and define “bench warming” or identify pathways to political participation). This can also be a take-off point in determining the social and economic benefit to the country of having an inclusive and transformative political environment and culture, especially when gender-sensitive, safe, and secure political spaces, facilitative policies, and clear and efficient accountability mechanisms have been further established and improved.

Medium to Long term (2 years and beyond):

- **Steer policy advocacy dialogue with legislature regarding addressing the effects of having fixed terms for elected officials (i.e., women being used as “benchwarmers” or placeholders for relatives in elective positions and having political dynasties) and having a quota system to encourage participation of women.** Influencing work to advance these advocacies would require deeper work on changing mindsets and perceptions regarding women in the political arena, especially among those who already serve as political leaders who have the power to decide on which policies get supported or approved. To make this effective, the COMELEC should lead policy work and advocacy at the Senate and the House of Representative to influence a gender-sensitive approach to legislation regarding political participation, considering that gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) are important values to be upheld to attain an inclusive growth as supported by the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 and as part of the country’s commitments in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (i.e., SDG 5.5. Ensure women’s participation and leadership in decision-making) by 2030.
- **Enhance and sustain digitalization efforts of the government to improve data and access to data relevant to sustaining a healthy democracy.** The COMELEC should consider further investing on digital and data solutions to improve and increase the general public’s access to relevant information related to the practice of democratic rights and implementation of political processes in the Philippines. Knowledge Hubs and specialized platforms and dashboards may be built to aid the Commission’s information dissemination initiatives, which may include those that promote inclusion, civic responsibility, and social accountability. The COMELEC may also partner with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in working with the private sector and other development partners in establishing strong internet connections in hard-to-reach areas where COMELEC offices and Knowledge Hubs may be found. The greater availability of data solutions

will also be a key component in making sure further research can be done to ascertain causal factors that drive women's political participation. As this will require substantial resources, partnerships with the private sector and development partners should be explored to align private sector capital and development finance and leverage public funds.

- **Initiate capacity-building activities for COMELEC personnel, focusing on enhancing the proficiency in the collection, organization, and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data.** To achieve this, targeted training activities could be established in collaboration with institutions such as the Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute (PSRTI) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). These training efforts would not only empower COMELEC personnel to effectively handle gender-related data but also contribute to strengthening the quality and accessibility of such data for informed decision-making processes. Other potential partners include academic institutions and centers of excellence, but this will require designing modalities and arrangements that will incentivize collaboration, of which COMELEC can take the lead role.

EXPLAINING SEX-DISAGGREGATED OVERSEAS VOTING BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION AMONG OVERSEAS FILIPINOS

Jean Encinas-Franco, Ph.D.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines has one of the world's most active emigrant flows. Currently, estimates indicate that there are 10.2 million Filipinos³⁴ in more than 200 countries³⁵ and territories around the world as permanent migrants, temporary or contract-based migrants, and undocumented individuals. Though out-migration forms part of the country's colonial history, contemporary emigration was institutionalized in 1974 through the Labor Code. State-sponsored overseas employment has been a key feature of Philippine emigration, in which a large bureaucracy, laws, rules, and procedures are in place to assist Filipinos in every stage of the migration process. Remittances contribute to as much as 12 percent of economic output in 2004 to 2006³⁶ and continue to be a significant source of welfare to families of migrants who remain in the Philippines.

Recognizing overseas Filipinos' (OFs) vital role in development, the government has made important strides in bringing them back into the nation's fold, labelling them as "migrant heroes" or *bagong bayani*. The government has designed transnational activities in the political, social, and economic arenas to encourage OFs' participation in nation-building. A case in point is the Overseas Voting Law, which Congress approved in 2003 and was implemented the year after. The law enabled overseas Filipinos holding Filipino citizenship to vote for candidates vying for national level positions. However, despite the amendments, and the subsequent adjustments in implementation, overseas voting turnout has not been matched by the normally huge voter turnout in domestic voting. While there are slightly more women than men voting in both domestic and overseas voting, data indicate that in countries where Filipino migrant women's mobility is compromised, large number of women are unable to vote compared to men³⁷.

This situation is unfortunate given that Filipino women gained the right to vote in 1937, way ahead of France, Japan, Italy, and many others. Moreover since 1987, the country has made significant strides in legislating for women's rights, with policies such as the anti-rape law, anti-sexual harassment, the recently passed Safe Spaces Act and the Expanded Maternity Law are some examples of these. In 2023, the Global Gender Gap Report, the

³⁴ This figure maybe be underreported due to the lack of a more systematic database of Filipinos overseas.

³⁵ Commission on Filipinos Overseas (2023). Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas. Available at: <https://cfo.gov.ph/statistics-2/>. Accessed on 29 July 2023.

³⁶ The World Bank (2022). Personal Remittances Received (% of GDP)-Philippines. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=PH>.

³⁷ UNDP Pintig Lab (2023). Initial Insights on Women's Political Participation in the Philippines from COMELEC Data.

country scored the highest in Asia in terms of gender parity³⁸. The approval of the Magna Carta of Women in 2009 which punishes discrimination against women in all its forms was pivotal as it contextualizes the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in the national context. The implementation of the Gender and Development (GAD) budget, though far from perfect, also has far-reaching consequences in mainstreaming gender issues and concerns in the budget process of government agencies. The extent to which it has led to yearly GAD budget planning in both national and subnational levels, including government-owned and controlled corporations, has been cited by international financial institutions.³⁹

However, representation and meaningful participation of women in politics is arguably still a work in progress.⁴⁰ Relevant to this research paper is the participation of women as voters. From 2004 to 2019, data indicate that registration and voter turn-out for women have been slightly consistently higher than men's by an average of about percent from 2004 to 2019 elections⁴¹. In the 2022, elections, there are 1.5 million more women voters than men.⁴² The same is observed in overseas voting, which will be explained in detail below. Notably a significant percentage of Filipino women migrant workers in some countries, particularly in the Middle East, are unable to vote.⁴³ This is aside from the huge gap in overall domestic voter turnout rate compared to overseas, which has been the case since the overseas voting law was first implemented in 2004. While, among others, mechanisms for overseas voting are still works in progress, factors hindering OFs' right to suffrage need to be known and whether there are differences according to sex, status, age, and number of years abroad. Such information will help guide the COMELEC and electoral reform advocates to design policies, programs, and enhance their data systems, to improve overseas voting implementation. With digital transformation as one of COMELEC's current flagship programs. It can help design research and program interventions in making overseas registration and voting much more accessible to Filipinos abroad. It can also help in targeting specific groups (i.e., age, status, education, job category) of migrant men and women to promote overseas registration and voting. Therefore, the survey and its findings will help in realizing the country's commitment to overseas Filipinos, their families, and to migrant Filipino women, specifically.

³⁸ World Economic Forum (2023). "Global Gender Gap Index Report". Available at https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf, p.11.

³⁹ Chakraborty, L. (2016). "Asia: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts". International Monetary Fund Working Paper. Available at <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2016/wp16150.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Encinas-Franco, J. (2022). "Filipino Women's Substantive Representation in Electoral Politics". Available at <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/57617/9781000626766.pdf?sequence=1#page=160>. p.141.

⁴¹ B. Jimenez, J. and L. Cadiben-Villena, T (2022). "Preserving Honest, Orderly, and Safe Election System in the Philippines: A Trend Analysis of Selected Election Statistics". https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/ncs/paper-presentations-manuscripts/Preserving%20Honest%2C%20Orderly%2C%20and%20Safe%20Election%20System_.pdf The average percentage is based on the author's computation from the data provided in the article.

⁴² UNDP Pintig Lab (2023). Figure is based on an exploratory data analysis using COMELEC data conducted by the Pintig Lab team, a multistakeholder network of data practitioners and experts launched by the UNDP Philippines.

⁴³ UNDP Pintig Lab (2023). Insight is based on an exploratory data analysis using COMELEC data conducted by the Pintig Lab team.

1.1. Objectives of the Survey Research

Given this background, the research paper aims to analyze the results of a survey implemented by the UNDP and the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) from May to July 2023. The online survey collected the following data: demographic profile of respondents, motivations for registering as voters, challenges encountered during registration, motivations for voting, challenges encountered when voting, and factors affecting the respondents' voting experience. An integral component of the research is to highlight sex-disaggregated data on overseas voting behavior so that recommendations can emphasize gender-responsive and intersectional strategies to improve overseas registration and voting turnout. Privacy and anonymity was observed along with the respondent's request to consent to answering the survey.

1.2. Scope of the Survey and Respondents' Criteria

The online survey was conducted via a free online survey platform KoBo Toolbox which overseas Filipinos (OFs) can access via their smart and iPhone Operating System (iOS) phones. A total of 1,200 individuals responded to the survey (see Annex 1 for the survey questionnaire). The questions were developed based on the literature on overseas voting and revised based on consultations with UNDP, COMELEC and migrant stakeholders. The criteria for respondents are as follows: 18 years old and above, Filipino citizen, including those with dual citizenship status, and contract-based or temporary Filipino migrants. The scope is global so that everyone that qualifies will have the chance to respond to the survey.

1.3. Sampling Technique and Limitations

Because of the nature of the respondents—migrant Filipinos scattered around the world (see Annex 2 for the total number of respondents per world region and the list of countries with respondents), the sampling design for the survey is a non-probability sampling design. Migrant Filipinos are considered hard-to-reach populations which lends itself to non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling does not provide equal chances to the respondents in the selection process. This means respondents were chosen based on non-random criteria such as access to overseas Filipino association social media pages and Filipino embassy networks abroad. The results are biased towards those who have access or been non-randomly distributed with a copy of the survey. For this reason, the findings are not generalizable to the entire population of OFs. Nevertheless, non-probability sampling lends itself to exploratory research to understand whether a problem is indeed a problem. If the survey confirms an issue, then this can be further explored in future research. Moreover, while non-random non-probability sampling may have biases and limitations, it can still provide valuable insights and descriptive information about the surveyed group.

1.4. Organization of the Paper

This research paper is divided into three sections. The first section discusses overseas voting in more detail, in the context of Philippine emigration. This is followed by the presentation of results detailing the study's key findings and the analysis of their implications. Recommendations on how to move forward and proposals for interventions are provided in the concluding section.

2. BACKGROUND OF OVERSEAS VOTING

External voting or extra-territorial voting refers to “procedures which enable some or all electors of a country who are temporarily or permanently abroad to exercise their voting rights from outside the national territory.”⁴⁴ Others refer to this as absentee voting or overseas voting. In this paper overseas voting is used to refer to this voting type. As of May 2007, 115 countries and territories implement overseas voting via personal voting, postal voting, proxy vote, and electronic means.⁴⁵ These countries allow qualified overseas voters to vote in the legislative, presidential, referendums, and sub-national elections.⁴⁶ Voting modes also vary, ranging from via mail, on-site in embassies, online, and a combination of the three. Various reasons are presented as to why countries adopt such an electoral design. Some consider it a form of extending the state’s reach to its citizens abroad, others particularly those with large numbers of diaspora populations, as a means allowing migrants to participate in the nation’s future given the large remittances they send to their families.

The Philippines first approved a law allowing Filipinos abroad to vote in 2003 via Republic Act 9189. It provides two types of voting, namely personal and via postal service. According to a report, out of the 359, 297 registered voters, only 65 percent turned out to vote in 2004, when overseas voting was first implemented.⁴⁷ Administrative issues and data glitches affected the implementation. The requirement of affidavit of return for dual citizens discouraged many from voting. A clause in the law penalizing those who will not return within the three years was daunting for those whose return may not be a sure thing. Republic Act 10590 was amended to lift this legal requirement. However, overseas voting rate, as stated above, is still way below the high turnout rate in domestic voting. Notably, this trend is the same for other countries implementing overseas voting. For example, in the United Kingdom’s 2019 elections, less than 20 percent of British citizens abroad voted.⁴⁸ The United States’ overseas voting turnout rate is even lower (just seven percent) in the 2016 elections.

⁴⁴ Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (2007). “*Voting from Abroad: The International IDEA Handbook*”. Available at: <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/voting-from-abroad-the-international-idea-handbook.pdf>. p.8.

⁴⁵ IDEA Handbook, p.11.

⁴⁶ IDEA Handbook, p.16.

⁴⁷ IDEA Handbook, p.196.

⁴⁸ Germann, M. (2021). Internet voting increases expatriate voter turnout. *Government Information Quarterly*, vol. 38, No.2, p.101560. doi:10.1016/j.giq.2020.101560.

This trend is also observed in the Philippines since it implemented overseas voting in 2004. Despite having a reportedly large diaspora population as stated above, only a small percentage register, and an even smaller rate for those who vote. In the 2019 elections for example, only 1.83 million registered from 200 countries and territories around the world where Filipinos can be found. Of this, 60 percent are women.⁴⁹ Of those who registered, only 31 percent or 434,000 eventually voted. Women comprise 63 percent of these voters. Voter turn-out among women is at 33 percent, while that of men's is at 29 percent.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the turnout rate for countries varies. In the Middle East and Africa, voter turnout is higher for men than women. Such is especially the case in Kuwait, where male turnout has doubled that of women since the 2013 elections. According to data from UNDP Pintig Lab, closing the gender gap in Kuwait will translate into more than 9,500 additional Filipino migrant women voters in that country. Closing the gender gap in the region is also significant given that the Middle East since the region is home to the largest concentration of Filipinos overseas, specifically domestic workers, whose job is characterized by mobility restrictions. A big majority of them are women. In 2021 alone, Saudi Arabia has 24.4 percent OFWs, while United Arab Emirates has 14.4 percent, Kuwait has 5.9 percent.⁵¹ Notably, on the part of a predominantly male migrant job category, it is also difficult for seafarers to vote given their variable geographical locations.

3. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

3.1. Respondents' Profile

A total of 1200 respondents answered the survey. Of this, 66.2 percent referred to their sex as female while 32.4 percent are male⁵².

Twenty (20) percent of all the respondents are from the 35-39 age group, followed by those who are 30-34 years old (14.9 percent), and those within the 45-49 age range (14 percent). For female respondents, the biggest number come from the 35-39 age range (21.8 percent), followed by those who are 40-44 years old. Meanwhile, males who are 40-44 years old comprise 19.5 percent of the respondents, followed by 35-39 years old.

Nearly half are (49.4 percent) are college graduates while 15.9 percent reached college-level education. About 13.8 percent have a post-graduate education, 11.4 percent finished high school while almost six percent took vocational training.

The top answers (choice of multiple responses) for status abroad land-based contract workers (50 percent) land-based contract workers, permanent residents (14.9 percent), and diplomats (9.8) percent are diplomats, dual citizens (7 percent), and spouses

⁴⁹ UNDP Pintig Lab. 2023. Figure is based on an exploratory data analysis using COMELEC data conducted by the Pintig Lab team.

⁵⁰ UNDP Pintig Lab. 2023.

⁵¹ Philippine Statistics Authority (2022). "2021 Overseas Filipino Workers (Final Results)". Available at: <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-and-employment/survey-overseas-filipinos>.

⁵² The percentages on sex do not tally to 100 percent, presumably because in the gender identity question, some respondents indicated that they are transgender, non-binary, bisexual, and none. Others did not want to answer the question.

(6.1 percent). The rest are students, tourists, and seafarers. When asked about the sector to which they belong among the responses that have the highest responses (choice of multiple answers) are: professional worker has 50.4 percent of the responses, while the domestic work sector has 19.0 percent, followed by spouse of a foreign national (9 percent). Some responses are healthcare professional, student, caregiver, elderly, informal workers, seafarer, person with disabilities, religious worker, au pair, farmer, fisherfolks. The respondents' average years of living abroad is ten years.

3.2. Registration and Voting Behavior

3.2.1. Profile of Registrants

A majority (62.9 percent) of the respondents registered for overseas voting, while 33 percent did not. Of this, (Figure 3.1) 59 percent are female while 73 percent are male.

In both sexes (Figure 3.1), the 55-59 age group had the highest percentage of registered overseas voters. Males (88.6 percent) have higher registered overseas voters compared to females (75 percent). The lowest number of registered overseas voters also come from the same age group, which is the 18-29 age range. However, male registrants (57.1 percent) more than double the females (26 percent).

In terms of educational attainment (Figure 3.2), those that have the highest number of registrants come from those with post-graduate education in both sexes. There are more males (84 percent) than females (77 percent) under this group. Those that attained vocational education had the lowest number of registrants among females (46 percent), while male high school level/graduates had the lowest registrants (47 percent).

In terms of the number of years abroad (Figure 3.3), the highest number of male registrants (94.7 percent) are those who have been abroad for 15 to 16 years, while females who have been abroad for 17-22 have the highest number of registrants (75.4 percent). In both sexes, the lowest number of registrants come from those who were abroad from 0 to 1 year. More males (38.1 percent) under this age group registered compared to females (25.5 percent).

In terms of status abroad (Figure 3.4), diplomats have the highest number of registrants in both sexes (92.2 percent for females, and 93.8 percent for males). The second highest for females are dual citizens (69.2 percent), while for males, permanent residents (75.5 percent) ranked next to diplomats.

In terms of sector (Figure 3.5), among females, 80 percent of the responses under the religious sector and 66.9 percent of responses under the professional and skilled sectors fell under those who registered. Meanwhile, the lowest rate of response that fell under those who registered are those which chose 'au pair' as one of their sectors (multiple response). This is the same case with males, where the religious (80 percent) and professionals (78.7 percent) got the highest response rate.

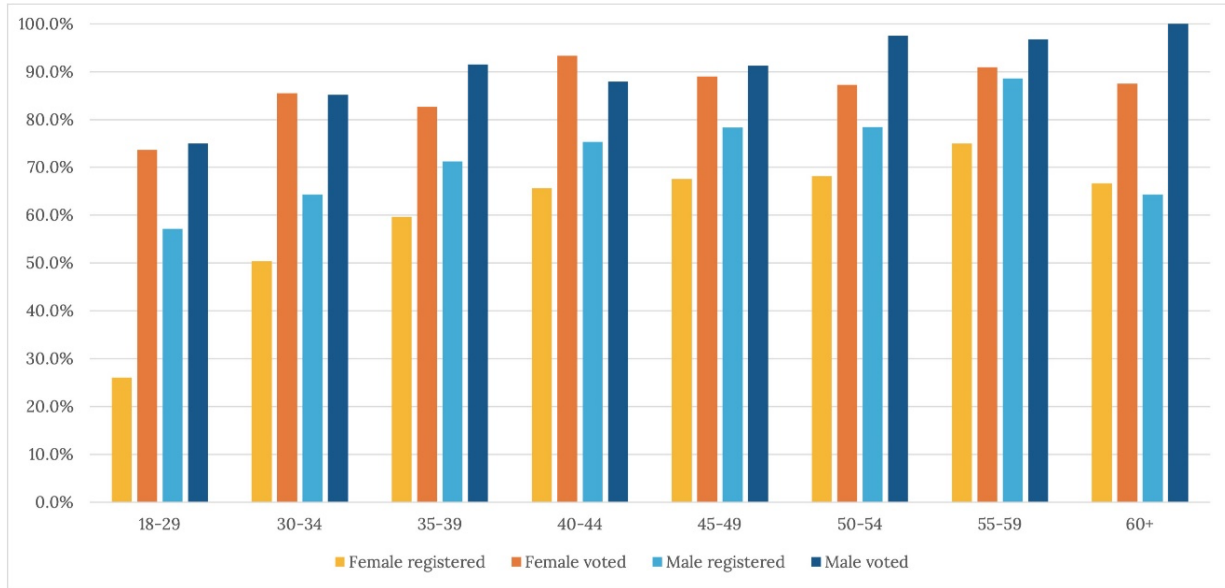


Figure 3.1. Registered Voters and Actual Voters Among Overseas Filipino Respondents by Sex and Age Group

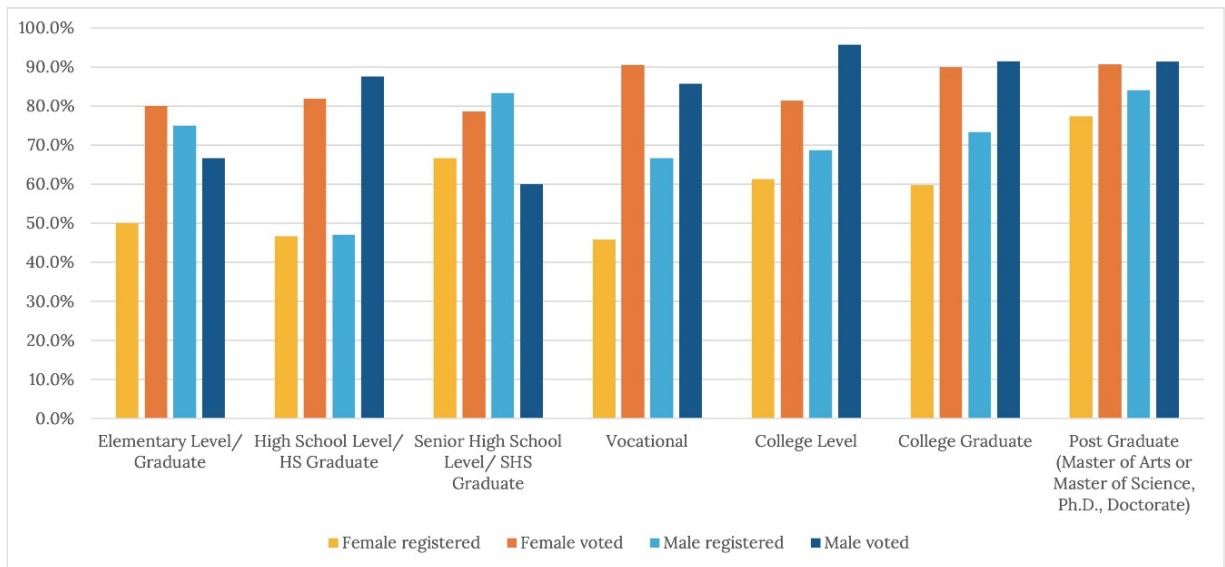


Figure 3.2. Registered Voters and Actual Voters Among Overseas Filipino Respondents by Sex and Educational Attainment

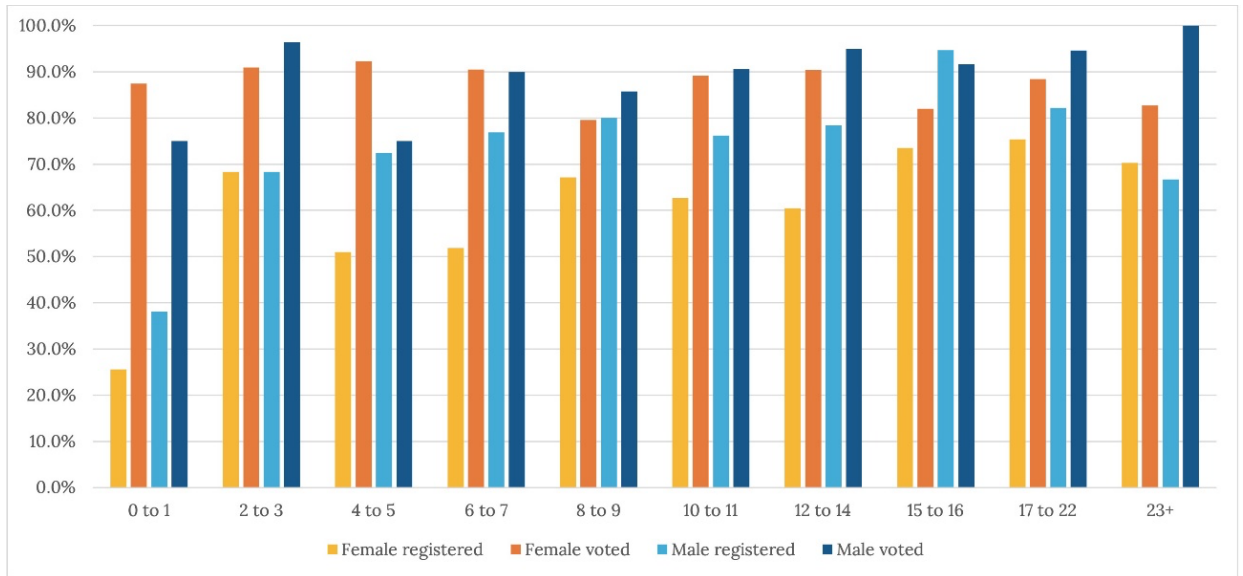


Figure 3.3. Registered Voters and Actual Voters Among Overseas Filipino Respondents by Sex and Number of Years Abroad

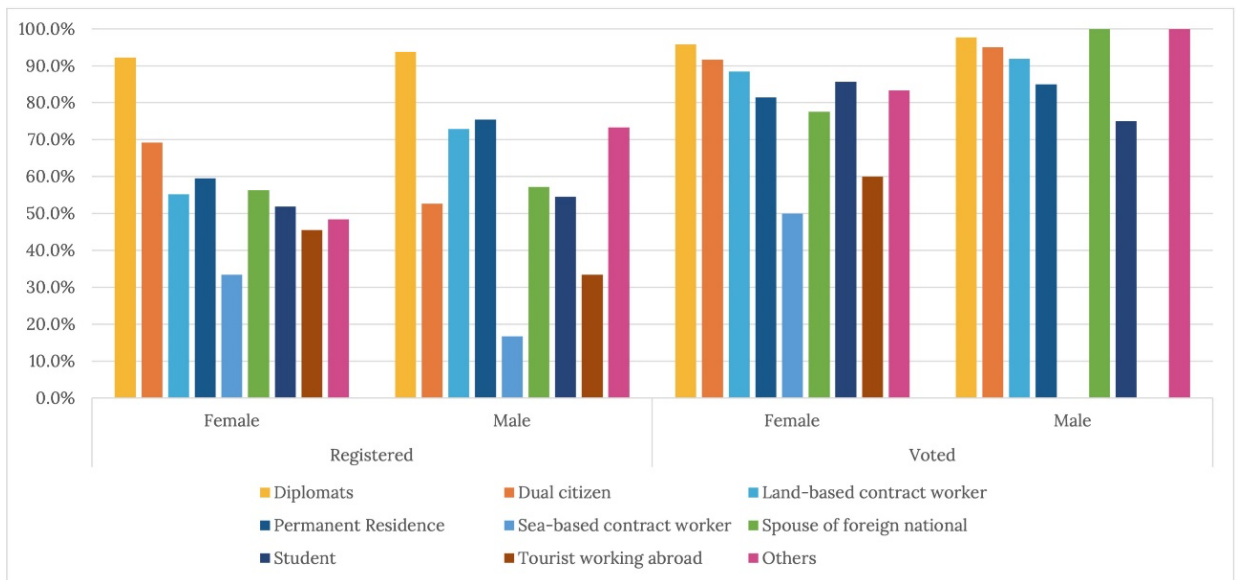


Figure 3.4. Registered Overseas Filipino Voters and Actual Voters Per Sex and Status Abroad

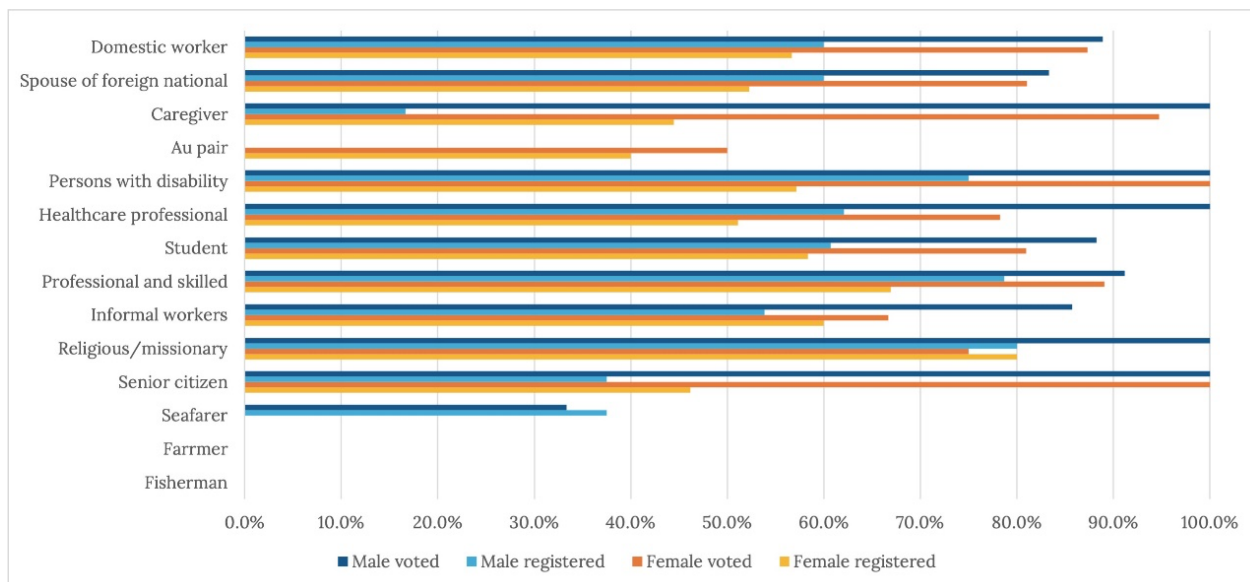


Figure 3.5. Registered Voters and Actual Voters Among Overseas Filipino Respondents by Sector

3.2.2. Reasons for Non-Registration

The top answers for those who did not register (Figure 3.6) is that they were (i) unaware of any registration procedure (25 percent), (ii) while others found the embassy too far (17 percent) and, (iii) some (16 percent) lacked the time. In response to open-ended questions on the other reasons why they could not register, they stated problems with long queues, confusion about procedures, lack of access to embassy due to lack of funds, etc. There were more females (27 percent) who are unaware of registration happening compared to males (20 percent), while there are more males who responded that the embassy is too far (20 percent), compared to females (16 percent). Males are slightly higher (17 percent) than females for those who answered that they lacked the time to register.

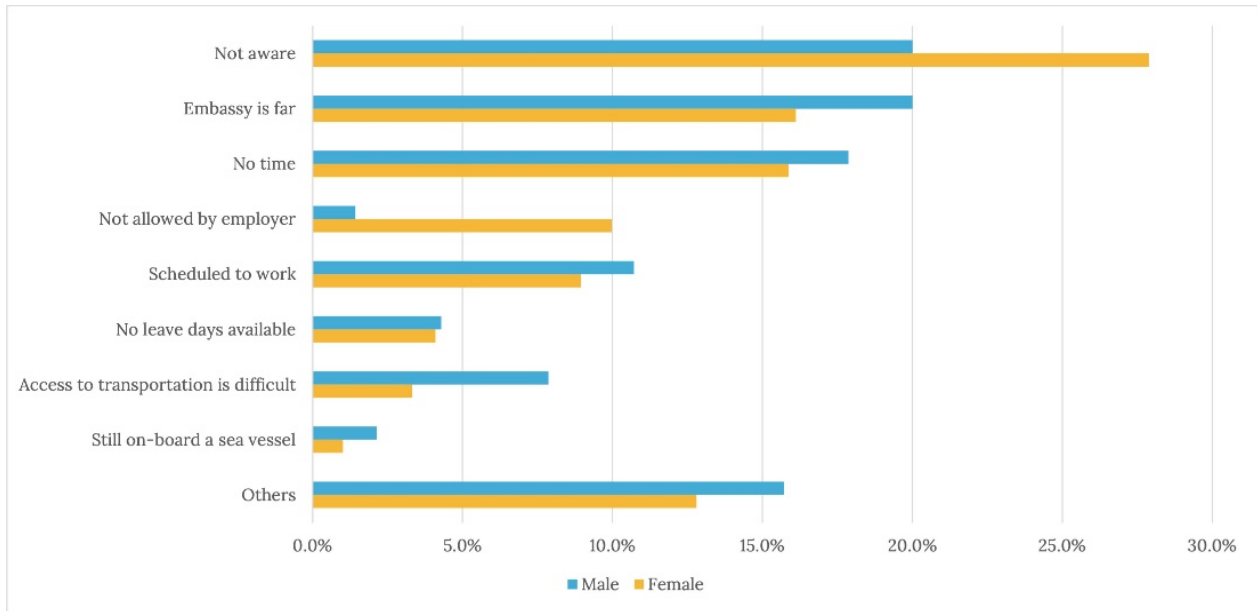


Figure 3.6. Top Reasons of Overseas Filipino Respondents for Not Getting Registered

3.2.3. Experiences in the Registration Process

In terms of experience during the registration process (Figure 3.7) among both sexes, the answer that garnered the highest response (44 percent) is the one that said “The process was smooth. I did not encounter any problem.” More females (48.1 percent) than males (38.9 percent) chose this answer. Meanwhile, the response that said “The embassy is too far and entailed long and costly travel,” is a far second, at 16 percent. More males (18.4 percent) chose this response compared to females (16.3 percent).

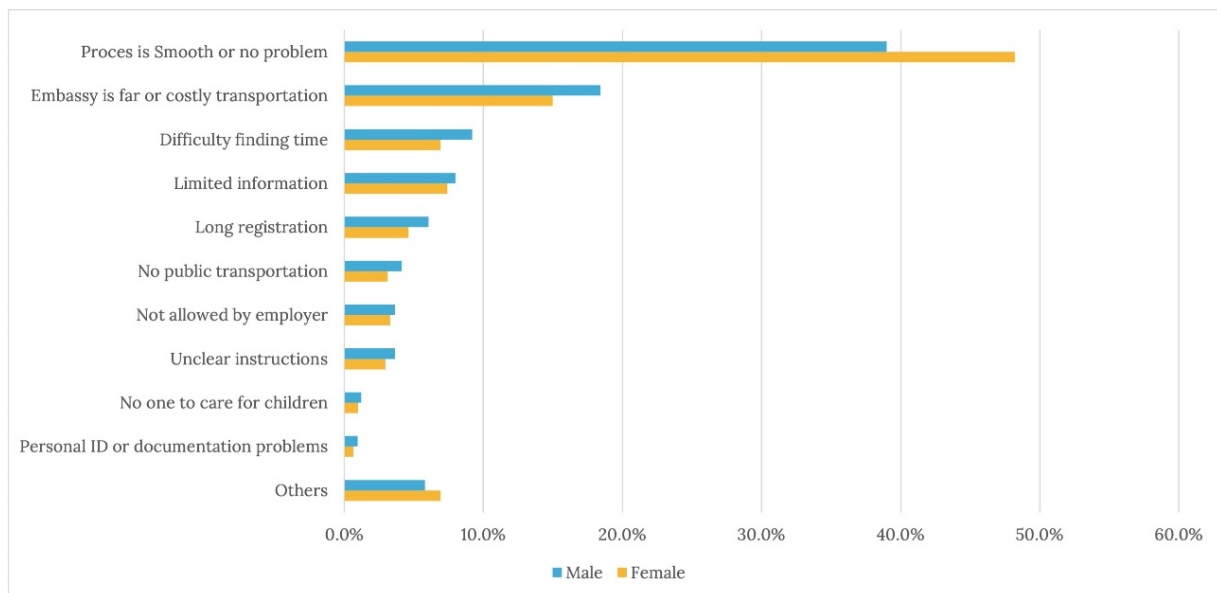


Figure 3.7. Top Experiences of Overseas Filipino Respondents During Registration

3.3.1. Profile of Voters

Among those who registered 87.7 percent were able to vote. Of this, 86.7 percent are females, and 91 percent are males (Figure 3.1). The highest number of voters for males are those above 60 years old, while for females, these are 40-44 years old. The youngest or those in the 18-29 age range has the lowest number of voters, 73.7 percent for females, and 68.8 percent for males.

In terms of educational attainment (Figure 3.2), the highest number of voters are those that finished post-graduate (91 percent) courses among females, while for males, these are those that reached college level. For females, the lowest number of voters are those that reached or graduated elementary education, while for males, these are those that reached or graduated senior high school.

Meanwhile Figure 3.3 indicates that all males (100 percent) that stayed the longest abroad (more than 23 years) answered that they voted while this is only 82.7 percent for females who stayed the same number of years abroad. For females, 92.3 percent of those who stayed abroad for 4 to five years voted. The lowest number of voters among females (79 percent) are those who have been staying abroad for 8 to 9 years, but for males the lowest number of voters are those in the 0 to 1 (75 percent) or 4 to 5 (75 percent) years abroad.

In terms of status (Figure 3.4), those who identified as diplomats (95.8 percent) and dual citizens (91.7 percent) among females responded that they voted. Among males, those that said that their status belong to 'others' (100 percent) and spouses of foreign nationals (100 percent) are among the top voters. They are followed by diplomats (97.7 percent) and dual citizens (91.7 percent).

In terms of sector (Figure 3.5), those who identified as senior citizens (100 percent) and PWDs (100 percent) topped those who voted, followed by diplomats (97.7 percent).

3.3.2. Reasons for Non-Voting

For both sexes, the top response for non-voting (Figure 3.8), are as follows: (i) busy (16 percent) (ii) embassy is too far (14 percent) and (iii) did not get the ballot (13) percent. More females expressed that they are busy (19 percent) compared to males (13 percent). The same is also the case for those who said that the embassy is too far.

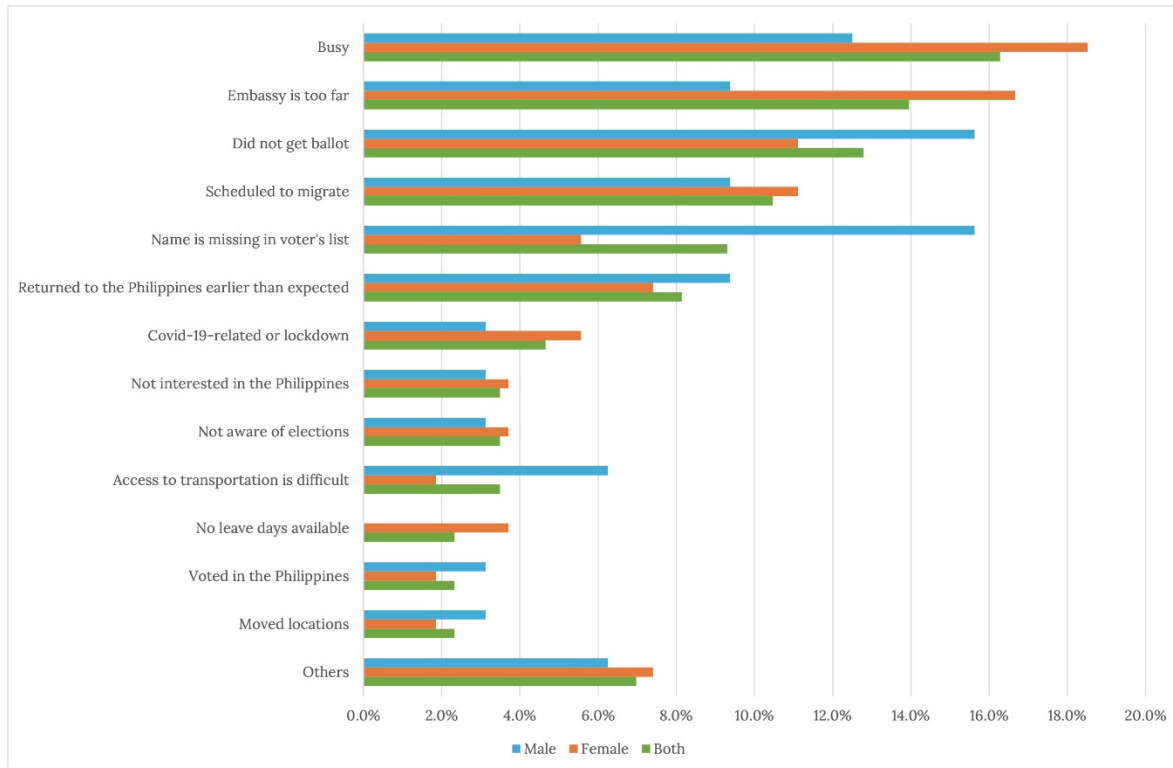


Figure 3.8. Top Reasons for Overseas Filipino Respondents for Not Voting

When asked about their experience during the voting process (Figure 3.9), “The process was smooth. I did not encounter any problem” garnered the greatest number of responses (45 percent). This is seconded by the response indicating that “The embassy or consulate is far and entailed long and costly travel.” Meanwhile, the “concerns of privacy and security of the ballot” had eight (8) percent response. There is not much of a big difference between the sexes in the responses voting experience, except of the response on the distance of the embassy/consulate, in which 16 percent of the respondents are male compared to only 11 percent for females.

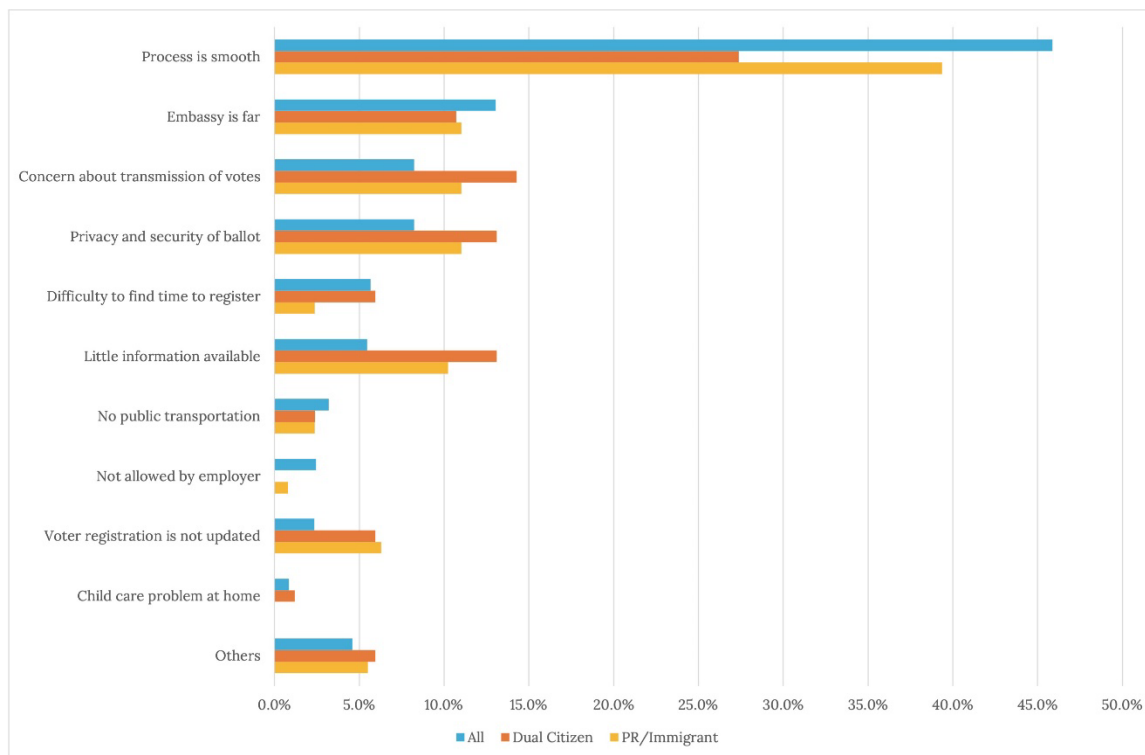


Figure 3.9. Top Experiences of Overseas Filipino Respondents During Voting

3.3.3. Respondents' Recommendations

Finally, when asked for recommendations on how to improve the process of overseas voting, online registration (37.2 percent) and the implementation of online voting (29.5 percent), education and awareness (20.2 percent) rank high among the responses. In terms of status, land-based workers (48.9 percent; 31.8 percent of whom are females, and 17 percent are males) topped the list of those who want online registration and online voting (47.7 percent, 30.1 percent are females, 17.5 percent are males), and more educational programs (52.6 percent; 36 percent are females, and 16.5 percent are males). Per sector, professional/skilled and domestic workers topped the list of those who responded to these top recommendations.

4. ANALYSIS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the findings suggest that non-registration and non-voting among OFs happen due to problems relating to the registration and voting procedures (long queues, lack of awareness), mobility issues, and working conditions. These are already reasons long identified in media reports and previous assessments of overseas voting. Nonetheless, the survey scientifically and methodically confirmed these issues compared to anecdotal accounts. Another value of the survey is the analysis that it can generate findings according to OFs' demographic profile covered in the survey.

These are as follows:

- Older OFs tend to register and vote compared to younger ones, regardless of sex. However, among the youngest age group with the lowest number of voters, male registrants are more than double the size of female registrants. There are also considerably more females in this age range who did not vote. Voters among males are older compared to females.
- Respondents with higher educational attainment tend to vote and register for both sexes.
- OFs who have stayed the longest abroad tend to vote and register, regardless of sex. However, the number of years varies between sexes. Female registrants tend to have stayed longer abroad compared to males. Slightly more female voters, on the other hand, are those who stayed abroad for 4 to 5 years.
- Diplomats, permanent residents, and dual citizens tend to register and vote. There is not much of a significant difference between the sexes.

These findings indicate that interventions for education awareness and access must be implemented by considering not only OFs' sex but also age, status, sector, education, and number of years abroad. However, it is critical that the government collects this data to have evidence-based and targeted programs. When these data are collected, sectors, age group and other migrant categories that lack access to registration and voting are identified and for which specific programs can be designed.

Given the data above on Middle East countries in which female OFs tend to be disadvantaged in overseas voting, overall efforts to alleviate mobility restrictions, specifically among domestic workers, (e.g., mobile phone and passport confiscation) must be scaled up. Country context and gender norms must also be considered given that Saudi Arabia, for example, has just given its women the right to vote and run for municipal council elections. Kuwait has just only given women the right of suffrage in 2005 but in the 2020 elections, not a single woman won a parliamentary seat.

Finally, there is strong support for online registration and voting among the respondents, even if there were concerns about ballot security in their open-ended responses. This finding indicates the respondents' aspiration to make voting and registration more efficient and less time-consuming. It is also a direct response to some of their experiences (e.g., long queues, late receipt of ballots by post). It can also have positive consequences in terms of efficiency given that COMELEC manages a nationwide synchronized election system, along with overseas voting implemented among several countries in the world. Foreign posts are also perennially challenged in terms of staff support, especially in countries with huge OF population.

Finally, the survey suggests that OFs' personal background and individual circumstances abroad matter in their registration and voting behavior. It seems that those who are more stable abroad, educated, older, in professional and skilled jobs, are more likely to register and vote. Presumably, they are also better informed, already adjusted to their countries of destination, and have more social capital.

Overall, while the results of the survey provide a preliminary explanation of OFs voting behavior and their assessment of overseas voting implementation using sex disaggregated data, the following recommendations may be pursued by COMELEC:

- Online registration and voting should be seriously explored by the COMELEC in future elections. With the 10-year validity of passports, fewer OFs might not find the need to frequent Philippine embassies, thus warranting online means to make them informed about the elections. However, the bid to move to online registration and voting should be done with utmost consultation from migrant groups, and key stakeholders such as legislators particularly the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Overseas Voting, political parties, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Department of Migrant Workers, as well as information technology experts. An important element of this consultation is the assurance of ballot secrecy and security and their compliance to internationally accepted standards, so that fears of electoral fraud are minimized. Moreover, transparency and access to information are important components of online registration and voting to avoid suspicions from some sectors and generate mutual trust.
- In aiming to implement online registration and voting, the COMELEC may need to review Republic Act 10590 (Overseas Voting Act of 2013), to align it to the requirements needed in online voting.
- Digital transformation and systematic data collection and processing within a specific unit in the COMELEC, would be a step in the right direction. COMELEC must partner with the Department of Migrant Workers, Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Department of Foreign Affairs to have accurate database of overseas Filipinos. This is important if data collection and processing have to incorporate basic demographic details of OFs, that are needed for targeted programs.
- Existing bilateral agreements with Middle East countries, particularly on domestic workers must be reviewed to monitor if mobility restrictions in the workplace are still in place even if these are already prohibited in these agreements.

The COMELEC must employ massive information and communication campaigns to encourage more OFs to register and vote, using creative strategies via social media and other means. This campaign can be done in cooperation with migrant groups, faith-based organizations (e.g. Catholic Church, Iglesia ni Cristo), Filipino associations, and private industries such as banks, telecommunication companies (text blasts), Filipino enterprises

(restaurants, stores, subway stations, LED announcements) and money transfer agencies, which are already part of OFs daily life abroad. While only a small percentage of survey respondents are part of Filipino associations, they can still be potential links in helping convince destination countries and employers in disseminating registration and voting information. Destination country-specific and job category campaigns may have to be done given that some countries have very low turn-out for women, while seafarers have very different circumstances. Filipino OF families based in the Philippines can also be tapped in terms of messaging in information campaigns. Social media influencers can be targeted to capture young OFs who, in this survey, finds are not registering and voting. Briefer kits during pre-employment orientations can also be developed and disseminated. Onsite mobile registrations can also be undertaken. On-site registration on Filipino special days (independence day celebration, etc.) and day-offs can also be scaled up.

- The right type of messaging is also important in communicating registration and voting awareness, given the discussion above. Expertise in effective communication may have to be consulted to test materials and media content so that messaging is effective.
- Though there is no assurance that online registration and voting will dramatically improve registration and voter turnout, continuing capability-building of COMELEC is needed given the skills-set and human resource requisites of digital transformation. A COMELEC Division that can devote time and resources for data analysis and research would be a step in the right direction. Commissioned research grants in cooperation with universities, using COMELEC data can also be explored. The idea is to have evidence-based analysis for future programs and policies.
- The government must also sustainably advocate better conditions for our OFs abroad via bilateral agreements and international fora, given the findings of the survey.
- Country-specific and migrant status, job category-specific research (both qualitative and quantitative) may have to be conducted in the future to further probe some of the findings in the survey. This will assist the COMELEC in designing specific messages in convincing key OF sectors to register and vote in future elections.

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ANNEXES

Research Paper 1:

Improving the Political Participation of Women in the Philippines: Proposed Intervention by the Commission on Elections

ANNEX A. Philippines: Improving Women's Political Participation at the Level of COMELEC

ANNEX A.1. LIST OF RESPONDENTS IN THE QUALITATIVE DATA GATHERING

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWEE	Date Interviewed
LENI G. ROBREDO, Former Vice President of the Philippines (2016-2022) and Presidential Candidate, Philippine Presidential Elections (2022)	6 June 2023
AMELIA V. GUANZON, Former Commissioner, Commission on Elections (2015-February 2022)	19 March 2023
KAREN GOMEZ-DUMPIT, Former Commissioner, Commission on Human Rights (2015- May 2022)	12 March 2023
JEAN ENCINAS-FRANCISCO, Associate Professor , Dept. of Political Science, University of the Philippines	13 March 2023
MYLENE ABIVA, Chairperson, Women’s Business Council Philippines	14 April 2023
RAISSA TATAD-HAZELL, Deputy Director for Asia, National Democratic Institute	24 March 2023
KRISTINE E. YUZON-CHAVEZ, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Women	
LAWRENCE FORTUN, Vice Mayor, Butuan City and 3-time Member of House of Representatives (Butuan, 2013-2019)	19 March 2023

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

FGD Series	Participants and Designations	Field Represented (For Complete Details on Background, please see Annex of FGD Report Pax)
FGD Series 1/ 12 April 2023	Ma. Elena T. Abacajan	Political Party

	Carla May Bautista	Legislative Dept. (Technical)
	Mary M. Bridget Chiongbian	Former Incumbent, Vice Governor and Business/Private Sector Leader, Political Clan Member
	Met Jimenez	Former Candidate, Civil Society
	Susan Macion	Retired Professional
	Tita C. Valderama	Media, Academe
	Shanina M. Roncal	Youth/Student Leader
Series 2/25 April 2023	Beckie Malay	Civil Society Organization/NGO
	Grace Padaca	Politics, Media
	Miks Padilla	CSO/Women's Organization and Indigenous People
	Aurora LiwagLomibao	Academe,
	Mylene Abiva	Business Sector Leader, Member of a Political Clan
	May Gladys Butoy	Civil Society Organization, International Development Organization
Series 3, 28 April 2023	La Rainne Sarmiento	Politics, CSO
	Rowena Paraan	Media

	Marian Vanslembrouck	Young Professional
	Jehan Yap-Mitug	Government Employee, BARMM
	Grace Jamon	Academe
	Rose Trajano	CSO
	Claire Balgan	Politics, Former Councilor, Pampanga
Series 4 (Validation)/ 2 May 2023	Damcelle Torres - Cortes	Academe, CSO
	Helen Graido	CSO, Young Professional
	Ibrahim	CSO, BARMM
	Soraya Adiong	Young Professional
	Karren Clarissa Domingo	Youth

GROUP INTERVIEW WITH COMELEC SENIOR MAIL AND FIELD OFFICIALS

Group Interview Conducted	Series/Date	PARTICIPANTS
Group 1/ 16 February 2023		Jane Valeza, Regional Executive Director (RED), Region V
		Monalisa Mamukid, RED
		Gay Asuncion-Enumerables, Assistant RED, Region XI

Group 2/ 17 February 2023	Gloria Petallo, RED, Region IV-B
	Geraldine Samson, Asst. RED, CARAGA
	Maria Dulce Cuevas-Banzon, Asst. RED, Region X
	Jonalyn Sabellano, Provincial Election Supervisor, Batangas
Group 3, 2/18	Margaret Ching, Head, Personnel Dept.
	Sonia Bea Wee, Office of Overseas Voting

**INITIAL WORKSHOP WITH COMELEC EN BANC REPRESENTATIVES AND DIRECTORS
(3 February 2023)**

PARTICIPANTS	Designation
Chairperson Goerge Erwin Garcia	Chairperson, COMELEC (2022 to present)
Comm. Ernesto Ferdinand Maceda Jr	Commissioner, COMELEC (2022 to present)
Comm. Nestor Celis	Commissioner, COMELEC (2022 to present)
Dir. Esmeralda Amora-Ladra	Former Head, GAD Office, COMELEC
Dir. Divina Blas	Head, Election and Barangay Affairs Dept., COMELEC
Dir. Efraim Bag-id	Head, Campaign Finance Office
Dir. Ma. Norina Casingal	Head. Legal Department,
Dir. Margaret Ching	Head, Personnel Dept.
Dir. Consuelo Diola	Head, Commission Secretariat

Dir. Sonia Bea Wee-Lozada	Head, Office for Overseas Voting and Head, GAD Office, COMELEC
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XXX Tolentino	EA V, Office of Chair Garcia
Cenit Casina	EA IV, Office of Chair Garcia
Chairmane Cala	Atty VI, OCSMC
XXX Ann Buenconsenjo	Atty VI, Office of Comm. Celis
Lyka Santos	Atty. V, Office of Comm. Cels
Felice May Tejuca	Atty. V, Office of Comm. Celis
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John Carlos Cuadra	EA IV, Office of Comm. Celis
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Manuel Lucero	Atty. VI, ECAD
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Mary Anne Sanchez	Election Officer, Office of the DEDO
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XXX Cuchon	Division Chief, Planning Dept.
XXX Garcia	Division Chief, Personnel Dept.
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Riza Halili	Project Manager, UNDP
Dr. Jean Encinas-Franco	Workshop Resource Person, Dept. of Political Science, University of the Philippines
Arlan Brucal	Former Economist, UNDP
Judith Fortin	UNDP
Sheena Kristine Cases	UNDP
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Reinabelle Reyes	UNDP
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Blesida Ludovico	Research Assistant, Democratic Insights Group

Research Paper 2:

Advancing Transformative Leaders: A Quantitative Examination of the Factors Influencing Women's Candidacy in the Philippine Elections

ANNEX B: NOTES ON CAUSAL MAPPING EXERCISE

B.1. LITERATURE REVIEWED FOR CAUSAL MAPPING

Bergman, D., and others. (August 2021) From Believing to Doing: The Association Between Leadership Self-Efficacy and the Developmental Leadership Model. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 12. Available at:

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Labonne, J., and others (2019). Political Dynasties, Term Limits, and Female Political Empowerment: Evidence from the Philippines. Available at:

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Philippine Commission on Women. n.d. Enacting Women's Political Participation and Representation Law. Available at: <https://pcw.gov.ph/assets/files/2019/10/PCW-WPLA-PB-07-Womens-Political-Participation-and-Representation.pdf?x12251>.

Salvador, C.G. (2017). PATHS TO POWER: Case Studies of Filipino Women Transcending Dynastic Politics. Available at: https://cswcd.upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PJSD-Vol-9-2017_Salvador.pdf.

Schweisfurth, M., and others (2018). Higher education, bridging capital, and developmental leadership in the Philippines: Learning to be a crossover reformer. *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 59, pp.1-8. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323487452_Higher_education_bridging_capital_and_developmental_leadership_in_the_Philippines_Learning_to_be_a_crossover_reformer.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2019). Women's Political Participation and Leadership. Available at:

https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SDPB%202019-03_Political%20Participation_1.pdf.

B.2. CAUSAL MAPPING WORKSHOP

The workshop was held on 19 April 2023 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the UNDP Philippines Office, Rockwell Business Center, Mandaluyong City.

B.2.1. PARTICIPANTS:

Commission on Elections

Atty. Ian Michel G. Geonanga, Office for Overseas Voting

Lead Consultants

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Lorraine Goyena, Data Engineer, Pintig Lab

Judith Fortin, Gender and Knowledge Management Specialist, Pintig Lab

Sheena Kristine Cases, Data Analyst, Pintig Lab

Ranel Ram Cheng, Social Innovation Analyst, Accelerator Lab

B.2.2. OUTPUT:

Barriers to Women Participating as Political Candidates	Is there a Data?	Data Source	Other causes	Is there Proxy Data?	Proxy Data Source	To Gather Data Through a Survey?
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS						
Cultural and social norms	✓	World Values Survey (WVS)				
Being Part of a Political Dynasty/ Being related to a male politicians	✓	Ron Mendoza, PCIJ, Ateneo, Institute for Political and Electoral Reform	Women having support networks	✓	COMELEC (SOCE)	Women ACTS like a MAN
Female being benchwarmers Women get selected in high positions	✓	Congress since 1901 (website), No. of Terms (COMELEC)	Allied with women's movement (civil society), e.g., Diana Mendoza Study			Not used to dirty politics
Violences against women in Politics	✓	DILG, CHR, PNP, Social Media, PCW	Nominees campaign finance			Political leadership skills/ experience
Perception: Most Filipinos still regard Men are better as Politicians than Women / Social and familial expectations and responsibilities/ Patriarchal norms & values	✓	National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS)	Cost of joining an election (it's not just monetary)			Perceptions and characteristics
Issues and needs of women are tackled/ addressed	✓	UN Studies (UN Women & UNDP), WVS (#of laws & policies)				
INSTITUTIONAL						
Having Pro-women policies	✓	PCW website, CHR	Women having access to party resources			
If we had a Gender quota	✓	IDEA, Institute for Electoral Reform, COMELEC Resolution on Incentivizing women candidates	First-past-the post electoral system Term limit in the Philippines			
PERSONAL						
Quality (higher) Education	✓	CHED				
More carework	✓	OXFAM				

Better leadership skills	✓	IPER
More confidence		
Other concerns raised		Other sources
Labor force participation		Identify Data gaps in the Philippines
No Party resources		Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES)
Resources as an issue in itself		
Cost of getting elected		
Substitution Rule		
50-50% male-female participation per Magna Carta of Women		
Digitization of datasets/ Identify data gaps in the Philippines (gender & women)		
Omnibus Election Code (revisit/ amend)		
Gender audit on the full implementation/ utilization of the Gender and Development (GAD) budget		

ANNEX C: POOLED AND PANEL REGRESSION RESULTS

C.1.1. CROSS-COUNTRY VARIABLE CORRELATIONS

	Proportion of seats occupied by women	GDP per capita (constant 2015 US\$)	Individuals using the Internet (% of population)	Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15-64)	Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism: Estimate	Women Business and the Law Index Score (scale 1-100)	Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure)
Proportion of seats occupied by women	1							
GDP per capita (constant 2015 US\$)	0.3089	1						
Individuals using the Internet (% of population)	0.3488	0.6809	1					
Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15-64)	0.3021	0.3399	0.2604	1				
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism: Estimate	0.1963	0.5695	0.5135	0.3687	1			
Women Business and the Law Index Score (scale 1-100)	0.5092	0.3931	0.4877	0.5514	0.4492	1		
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	-0.1511	-0.4649	-0.6386	-0.0851	-0.5081	-0.4617	1	
Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure)	-0.02	-0.1816	-0.239	-0.0461	-0.0336	-0.1248	0.1717	1

C.1.2. CROSS-COUNTRY VARIABLE DESCRIPTIONS

Variable	Description	Main Data Source
Proportion of seats held by women in the parliament	Women in parliaments are the percentage of parliamentary seats in a single or lower chamber held by women.	Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (www.ipu.org)
GDP per capita (constant 2015 US\$)	GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by midyear population. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in constant 2015 U.S. dollars.	World Bank National Accounts Data and OECD National Accounts data files
Individuals using the Internet (% of population)	Internet users are individuals who have used the Internet (from any location) in the last 3 months. The Internet can be used via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.	International Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report and database
Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15-64)	Labor force participation rate for ages 15-24 is the proportion of the population ages 15-24 that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period.	International Labour Organization. "Labour Force Statistics database (LFS)" ILOSTAT.
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism: Estimate	Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism measures perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically-motivated violence, including terrorism. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 to 2.5.	Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay and Massimo Mastruzzi (2010). "The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues". World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5430 (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1682130).
Women Business and the Law Index Score (scale 1-100)	The index measures how laws and regulations affect women's economic opportunity. Overall scores are calculated by taking the average score of each index (Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets and Pension), with 100 representing the highest possible score.	World Bank: Women, Business and the Law. https://wbl.worldbank.org/
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	Total fertility rate represents the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with age-specific fertility rates of the specified year.	(1) UN Population Division. World Population Prospects: 2022 Revision. (2) Census reports and other statistical publications from national statistical offices, (3) Eurostat: Demographic Statistics, (4) UN Statistical Division. Population and Vital Statistics Report (various years), (5) U.S. Census Bureau: International Database, and (6) Secretariat of the Pacific Community: Statistics and Demography Programme.
Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure)	General government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers) is expressed as a percentage of GDP. It includes expenditure funded by transfers from international sources to government. General government usually refers to local, regional and central governments.	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). UIS.Stat Bulk Data Download Service. Accessed October 24, 2022.

Source: World Bank World Development Indicators. Metadata Glossary. Available at: <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/all/series>.

C.2.1 WITHIN-COUNTRY VARIABLE CORRELATIONS

	Percentage women candidates in local elections	Percentage of Elected Officials who has a Relative also Currently in Office	Provincial Competitiveness Index	Disaster Incidence	Average Annual Family Income	Average Years Education of Women	Percentage of Islamic Population	Percentage of Women who think wife-beating is justified
Percentage women candidates in local elections	1							
Percentage of Elected Officials who has a Relative also Currently in Office	0.2271	1						
Provincial Competitiveness Index	0.0345	-0.0165	1					
Disaster Incidence	-0.5626	0.0314	-0.0708	1				
Average Annual Family Income	0.1238	0.1364	0.291	-0.0927	1			
Average Years Education of Women	0.258	0.022	0.2169	-0.1568	0.739	1		
Percentage of Islamic Population	-0.0468	0.2133	-0.1138	-0.262	-0.2928	-0.33	1	
Percentage of Women who think wife-beating is justified	-0.1402	0.1679	-0.0903	0.0708	-0.231	-0.303	0.144	1

C.2.2. WITHIN-COUNTRY VARIABLE DESCRIPTIONS

Variable	Description	Main Data Source
Percentage women candidates in local elections	Percentage of women candidates per province in local Philippine elections	Commission on Elections (COMELEC). "National and Local Elections (NLE) Dataset".
Percentage of Elected Officials who has a Relative also Currently in Office	Percentage of elected officials who have relatives who simultaneously hold office	Ateneo Policy Center (APC). "Political Dynasties Dataset". https://www.inclusivedemocracy.ph/data-and-infographics
Provincial Competitiveness Index	The Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index is an annual ranking of Philippine cities and municipalities developed by the National Competitiveness Council through the Regional Competitiveness Committees (RCCs) with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development. Provincial rankings are based on population and income weighted average of the Overall scores of cities and municipalities under a province.	Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI). https://cmci.dti.gov.ph/index.php
Disaster incidence	Incidence of Natural Disasters, 2000-2023 Natural Disaster Data	EM-DAT The International Disaster Database
Annual average family income	Family income is defined the primary income and receipts from other sources received by all family members during the reference period, as participants in any economic activity or as recipients of transfers, pensions, grants, interests, food and non-food items received as gifts by the family.	Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). "Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES)". https://psa.gov.ph/
Average Years Education of Women	Average number of years of formal education of women	Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). "Census of Population and Housing". https://psa.gov.ph/
Percentage of Islamic Population	Number of individuals with Islam as religious affiliation in the province over total population of the province	Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). "Census of Population and Housing". https://psa.gov.ph/
Percentage of Women who think wife-beating is justified	Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who consider that a husband is justified to beat his wife at for least one of the specified reasons: wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses sexual relations.	Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). "National Demographic and Health Survey". https://dhsprogram.com/

C.3. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE REGRESSION MODELS USED

Pooled OLS regression model is used as the main workhorse of the analytical exercise. The simple OLS model, as specified below, has been specified differently to include (1) panel-specific effects or unobserved heterogeneity that are time-invariant; and (2) time period dummy variables.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{percentage seats occupied by women in the parliament}_{it} \\ = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{GDP per capita} + \beta_2 \text{Individuals using the internet} + \beta_3 \text{Female LFPR} \\ + \beta_4 \text{Political stability estimate} + \beta_5 \text{Women Business and the Law Index Score} \\ + \beta_6 \text{Total fertility rate} + \beta_7 \text{Government expenditure on education} + \varepsilon_{it}, \end{aligned}$$

where u_i is the unobserved country-specific effect and ε_{it} is the residual error for the i^{th} country at time t .

For the within country analysis, a similar pooled OLS regression model on provinces was used, but adding province-specific and time or year election dummies:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{percentage of women candidates}_{it} \\ = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Percentage of elected officials who has a relative also currently in office} \\ + \beta_2 \text{Provincial competitiveness index} + \beta_3 \text{Disaster incidence} + \beta_4 \text{Family income} \\ + \beta_5 \text{Years of education of women} + \beta_6 \text{Percentage of Islamic population} \\ + \beta_7 \text{Percentage of women who think wife – beating is justified} + \varepsilon_{it}, \end{aligned}$$

where and ε_{it} is the residual error for the j^{th} province at time t . The time period considered in the dataset are the election years from 2010 to 2022. While other models such as panel regression with province-specific effects can be considered, it's worth noting that there is multicollinearity between these effects and the regressors. This consideration led to the use of pooled OLS regression with province-specific effects as a suitable and interpretable approach.