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# **Women's representation in local politics: Evidence from The Philippines**

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## ***Abstract***

*Although at the beginning of the 21st century, over 95 percent of all countries in the world have granted women the right to vote and the right to stand for election (Ballington & Karam, 2005), gender equality in terms of representation in political structures remains to be a challenge around the world. This study seeks to determine the level of political representation of women at the level of the smallest unit of Philippine government—the village or barangay. Data comparison—within a span of 11 years—using the results of the July 15, 2002 and October 28, 2013 barangay elections, shows an increase of women's representation in the 98 barangays of Zamboanga City, Philippines. After the 2013 barangay elections, the total number of female Barangay Captains increased to 14 compared to 8 in the 2002 election results. A total of 159 female Barangay Councilors were also elected in 2013, an increase of 14 percent compared to the 139 female councilors who won in the 2002 elections. The increasing number of elected female barangay officials in 2013 reached 173 women (22 percent) compared to 147 (19 percent) in 2002. In year 2013, a total of 147 women (18.75 percent) were elected as barangay officials out of 784 barangay positions throughout the city. The study concludes that women's participation in politics at the barangay level is directly and inversely proportional to the representation of men in the same political structures. While existing laws and pertinent public policies promoting women's equal representation with men in local politics and the efforts to improve the political landscape for women around the world, still the political structures, even at the smallest unit of the government, is a male-dominated arena.*

## INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in political participation is a fundamental aspect of modern democratic governance (Ukrainian Women's Fund [UWF], 2011). Under international standards, men and women have an equal right to participate fully in all aspects of the political process (United Nations, 2005). Although at the beginning of the 21st century, over 95% of all countries in the world have granted women the two most fundamental democratic rights: the right to vote and the right to stand for election (Ballington & Karam, 2005), gender equality in terms of representation in political structures remains to be a challenge.

The extent of women's participation in politics and women's access to decision-making can be seen as the key indicators of gender equality in a society. Gender equality in decision-making is to be viewed in the context of whether women are in the position to make or influence public decisions on the same footing as men (UWF, 2011). However, women have to overcome a lot of obstacles to create an impact in politics as leadership is still viewed as a male strength.

Social definitions of role still pervade the society with women are pictured as supportive of the "leader-husband" and whose main tasks are to entertain constituents (socialization and diplomacy) and provide charity work (social welfare or even dole-outs). The double-burden challenge also contributes to the "glass ceiling" in politics. Wives are supposed to take care of the next generations of the political family. The "old boys" nature of political relations and transactions also put the role of women in the margins. This reduces the access to resources and decision-making thus diminishes their political clout (Hega, 2003). Tackling governance, leadership and political participation from a gender transforming perspective involves considering women as responsible individuals, capable of taking decisions and indispensable for their societies democratization processes (Labani, Kaehler & Ruiz, 2009).

Previous studies on the political participation of women are focused at a national or international level. It all revealed, at a wider scale, that women are underrepresented in various electoral positions around the world. Hence, this paper seeks to determine whether the same trend is being experienced in the smallest unit of Philippine government—the village or barangay.

## **Research Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are the following:

1. To examine the level of women's political participation in Zamboanga City barangays in terms of women's political representation;
2. To analyze the existing policies in the Philippines which promote women's leadership and political participation; and
3. To analyze how these policies impact the level of women's political representation in Zamboanga City barangays.

## **Significance of the Study**

Gender equality means equality between women and men in all aspects of life including political opportunity (Smee & Woodroffe, 2013). In elected office, gender equality has also become a commitment of national governments and international organizations around the globe motivated by arguments that women's inclusion is crucial to achieve justice, promote women's interests and make use of women's resources for the good of society (Krooke & Norris, 2014). While there were studies made tackling this subject matter specifically focused on women's political participation, there were few or none which gave attention to the political participation of women in the barangay.

This study is significant as it seeks to determine whether gender equality in terms of political representation of women is experienced in Zamboanga City barangays. Moreover, the significance of this study also derives not only from its ability to determine the level of political participation of women in Zamboanga City barangays in terms of women's political representation but also its examination of the existing policies which promote women's political representation.

UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet (2011) stressed that it is so important to actively promote women's political participation, including through affirmative measures, as appropriate. The data gathered from this study is hoped to lead to new affirmative policies that will help enhance gender mainstreaming and equal participation in barangay political structures.

## Conceptual Framework

This study uses the policy feedback model (see Figure 1) of McDonagh (2010) which explains how state policies affect political attitudes, civic engagement, and women's political representation as electoral outcomes. Public policies can either be maternal public policies or democratic public policies. These policies have interpretative effects that show people who belongs to society, what traits are associated with the state itself, and who is suitable to be a political leader. Policies also have resource effects that provide people with the time, information, and material to increase their civic capacity to participate in the political process, as in voting.

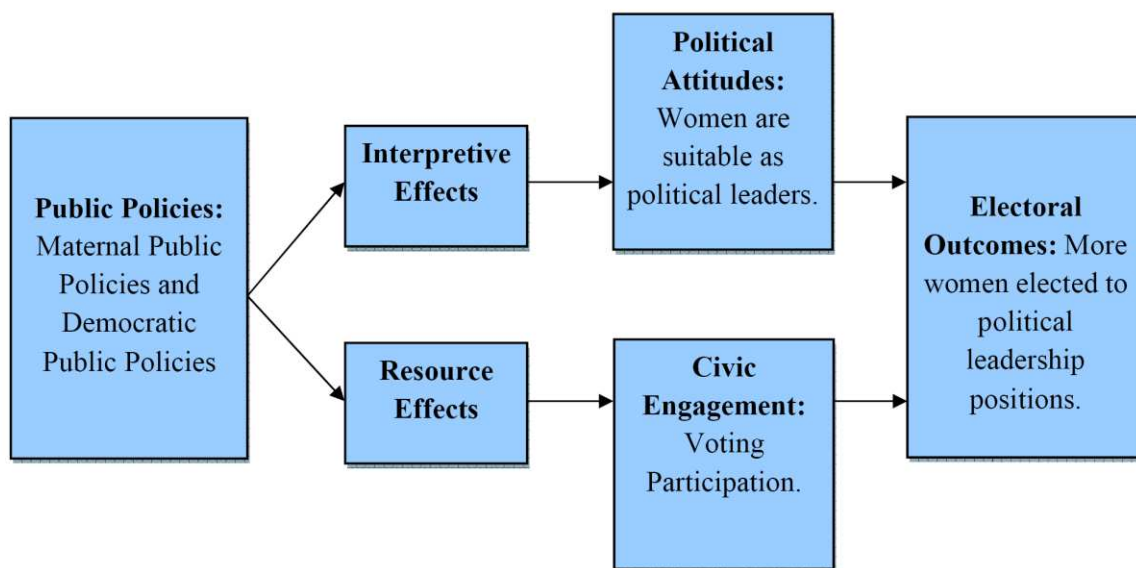


Figure 1. Policy feedback for mass public: How policy affects political attitudes, civic engagement, and electoral outcomes. Source: "It takes a state: A policy feedback model of women's political representation" by E. McDonagh, 2010, *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(1), pp 69-91, © American Political Science Association 2010.

Democratic policies are those affirming women's sameness with men such as the right to vote in spite of one's sex. These policies have an interpretative effect on public attitudes by teaching voters that women's equality with men signifies that women are as suitable as men to be political leaders in the public sphere of the state. Such policies also have resource effects that promote civic capacities to participate in political processes, such as voting, by expanding the electorate. Thus, liberal democracies founded on a principle of individual equality, or sameness, foster women's political representation.

Maternal policies, on the other hand, represent women's group difference from men. Examples of these policies are welfare provisions and gender quotas. Welfare provisions are attributed to women since it is a traditional task of women within the home, as wife, mother, daughter, sister, aunt, or grandmother to care for children, husbands, the elderly, the ill, the disabled, and those who in other ways need assistance. A country that adopts welfare provision teaches voters that to have maternalist attributes, as women are assumed to have, indicates a location in the public sphere of the state itself. The interpretative impact primes voters to view women as more suitable as political leaders, and the resource effects of welfare provision increase civic capacities to engage in political processes. Hence, a democracy that affirms individual equality as well as women's maternal group difference by adopting welfare provision will promote more favorable attitudes about the suitability of women as political leaders and women's election to political office. Gender quotas are a gendered political structure that directly connects political rule in the state in the form of access to national legislatures with women in distinction to men which signify that the political meaning of women's female sex classification is to be located inside the state thereby, increasing women's representation in political structures.

The course of this study will commence in gathering data that will establish the level of women's participation in terms of political representation. The data will determine whether there is an increase or decrease of the political representation of women in Zamboanga City barangays. Once this has been established, the study will proceed in examining the existing policies in the country which promotes women's leadership and political participation. By doing so, the researcher can relate how these policies impact the level of women's political representation.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The following literature tackles the definition of political participation as well previous studies specifically focused on women's political participation. The next section is an overview of the present scenario of women's representation in political structures in the Philippines and particularly in Zamboanga City where this study is carried out.

**Defining Political Participation:** According to Rai (2013), political participation can be described as any voluntary act with the purpose to influence elections or public policy. It can be in the form of casting a vote or running for office, and has always been taken as an essential indicator to measure empowerment in the political process. This concept can be linked with having control and gaining further control in decision making bodies as well as in family and society.

**Women's Political Participation:** Numerous studies specifically pertaining to women's political participation has been made. Fox and Lawless (2010) provided the first thorough analysis of how gender affects women and men's efficacy to run for office in their paper *Gendered Perceptions and Political Candidacies: A Central Barrier to Women's Equality in Electoral Politics* which was presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA) in 2010. Their findings reveal that, despite comparable credentials, backgrounds, and experiences, accomplished women are substantially less likely than similarly situated men to perceive themselves as qualified to seek office. Herrick, R., Mendez, J., Thomas, S. and Wilkerson, A. (2012) in their paper *Gender and Perceptions of Candidate Competency* even found a gender gap in evaluations of competence and maturity by merely looking at the faces of political candidates revealing that people are more likely to prefer men candidates than women candidates. In the paper *It Takes a State: A Policy Feedback Model of Women's Political Representation*, McDonagh (2010) argued that the state's public policies constitute a political environment that has an impact on public attitudes about women's suitability as political leaders and women's election to political office. Therefore, what promotes women's political representation is a state that combines democratic policies affirming women's sameness with men and maternalist policies representing women's group difference from men.

A joint publication of the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) entitled *Opportunities and Challenges of Women's Political Participation in India: A Synthesis of Research Findings from Select Districts in India* authored by Bhatla, N., Walia, S., Khanna, T., & Verma, R. (2012) concluded that women in local governments face a number of barriers such as low literacy, poor preparatory training, a high household work burden and negative attitudes towards women in public office that constrain their ability to fulfill their governance

roles or that make them unlikely to re-contest. On the other hand, True, Niner, Parashar & George (2012) examined the patterns of women's political participation in the four sub-regions (Eastern Asia, South-Eastern Asia, South Asia and the Pacific Islands) of the Asia-Pacific region and analyzed the key enablers and obstacles to women's equal participation in formal politics (legislative institutions) and public life. The study revealed that high status for women has been claimed in South Eastern Asian societies, yet relative gender disparity and low levels of women's political representation compared with the rest of the world is pronounced. Meanwhile, Labani, et al. (2009), explored the situation regarding women's political participation in South- East Asian countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Vietnam) analyzing the limiting factors that are barriers to the access and permanent presence of women in power structures and decision-making positions, as well as the empowerment factors.

Current Status of Women's Political Participation in the Philippines and Zamboanga City: Although the Philippines appears to be ahead of its neighboring countries by having two women presidents in its history, major hurdles are still in place for women to gain a firmer foothold in politics. It is still basically an elite-male dominated political landscape. While there is a perceptible increase in the number of women elected into government posts, assumption to institutional leadership does not necessarily translate into the expected degree of political clout. The question of resources also affects women's access to decision-making positions since women and men do not enjoy the same access to resources that yields power. The lack of economic power, similarly, deprives women of their rights and opportunities (Hega, 2003). Balili-Gener and Urbiztondo (2002) presented two challenges in terms of future directions of women's political participation in the Philippines: first, is creating a conducive environment that promotes the role of women in politics; and second, is strengthening political organizing towards women's political participation and empowerment.

At the start of the 15th Congress, there were 3 female senators and 65 women representatives. In the 16th Congress following the 2013 national and local election, the Senate and House of Representatives saw an increase of their women members. The Senate was occupied by six female senators or 25% of the total 24 senatorial seats and the House of Representatives with 289 seats was comprised of 78 or 27% female members including Zamboanga City-District II Congresswoman Lilia Macrohon-Nuño. Moreover, Maria Isabelle Climaco-Salazar assumed office as the City Mayor becoming the second female mayor in Zamboanga City's history. However, only two female councilors were elected to the City Council which translates to 12.5% of the total 16 seats divided equally into two congressional districts.



Zamboanga City is composed of 98 barangays— 37 of which belong to District I and 61 to District II. The Local Government Code of the Philippines (1991) defines the Barangay as the basic political unit which serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects, and activities in the community, and as a forum wherein the collective views of the people may be expressed, crystallized and considered, and where disputes may be amicably settled. Each Barangay has a Punong Barangay and seven (7) Sangguniang Barangay members.

# **METHODOLOGY**

## **Data Gathering**

To examine the current levels of women's political participation in Zamboanga City barangays, the barangay election results for 2013 and 2002 were obtained from the Office of the City Elections Officer. The election results from the barangay election which were conducted 11 years apart were gathered to establish a comparison of women's numerical representation. From the data, the number of elected women as Punong Barangay and Barangay Kagawad in all 98 barangays in Zamboanga City was determined.

Data of the existing policies in the Philippines which promotes women's leadership and political participation were obtained from various references and resources which document such policies.

## **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data from the election results, statistical measures and mathematical operations such as summations and percentages were performed and presented in the form of figures through Microsoft Office Excel. On the other hand, the policies which promote women's leadership and political participation were also analyzed using the Policy Feedback Model by McDonagh (2010).

## **Limitations**

This study limits itself on women's political participation in Zamboanga City barangays only in terms of the number of women elected to barangay electoral positions (i.e. Punong Barangay, Barangay Kagawad) based on the results of the election conducted in 2002 and 2013. Moreover, this study only tackles those policies which specifically promote women's leadership and political participation in the Philippines.

## RESULTS

Zamboanga City is composed of 98 barangays which means in every barangay election, 98 Punong Barangay and 686 Barangay Kagawad positions are contested which makes a total of 784. In the 2002 barangay election which was conducted on July 15, 2002, only 8 women were elected as Punong Barangay and only 139 women were elected as Barangay Kagawad compared to 547 men as shown in Figure 2. A total of 147 females or 18.75% were elected as barangay officials out of 784 barangay positions throughout Zamboanga City (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Number of male and female elected as Punong Barangay and Barangay Kagawad in the 2002 barangay election in Zamboanga City.

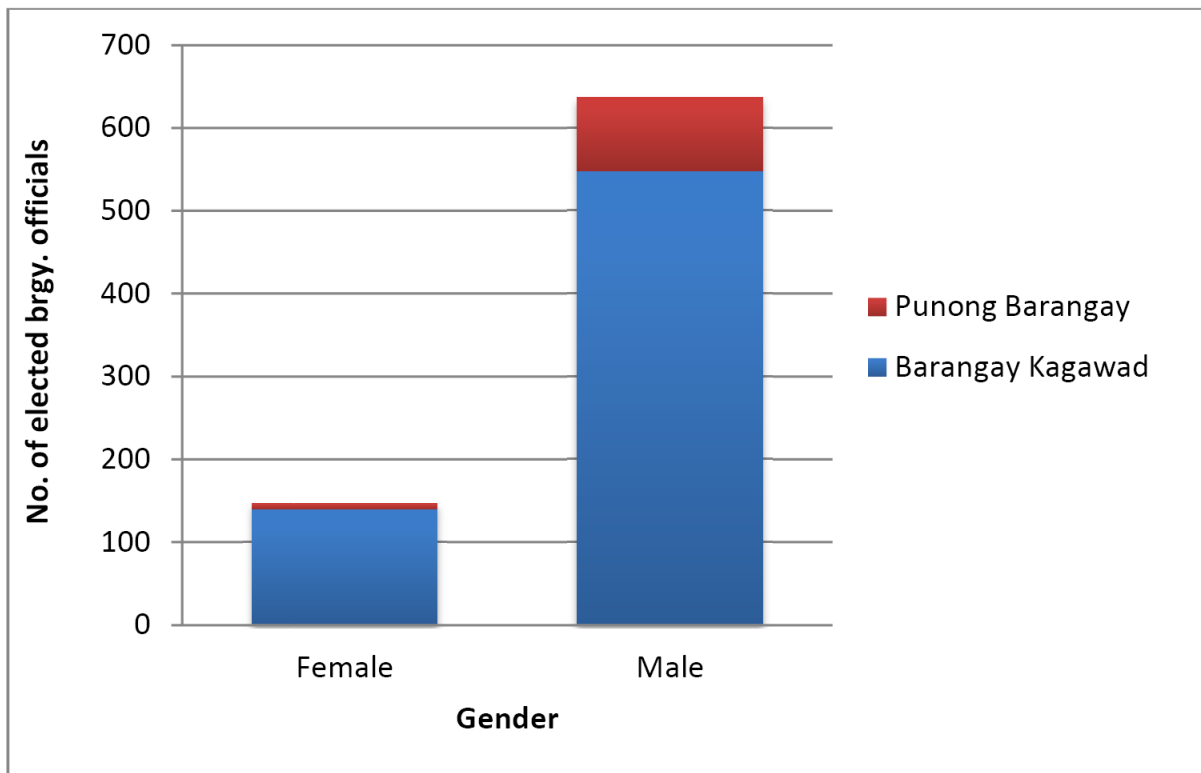
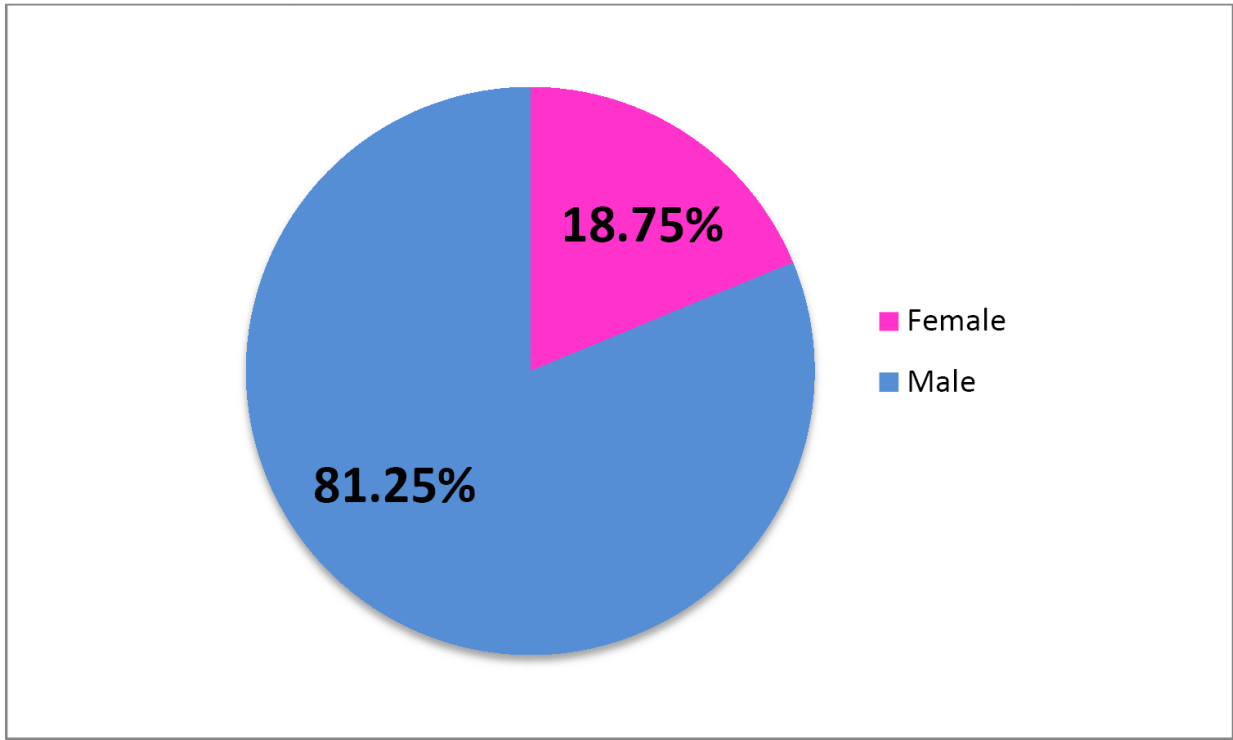


Figure 3. Total percentage of male and female in Zamboanga City barangay political structures based on the 2002 barangay election results.



The most recent nationwide barangay election was conducted on October 28, 2013 but the Commission on Elections decided to move the elections in Zamboanga City to November 25, 2013 as the city was still recovering from the effects of the Zamboanga City Crisis and of massive floods. As shown in Figure 4, only 14 women were elected as Punong Barangay and only 159 women were elected as Barangay Kagawad compared to 527 men. A total of 173 or 22.07% were elected as barangay officials out of 784 barangay positions throughout Zamboanga City (see Figure 5). The number of women elected as barangay officials in both 2002 and 2013 barangay election is summarized in Figure 6.

Figure 4. Number of male and female elected as Punong Barangay and Barangay Kagawad in the 2013 barangay election in Zamboanga City.

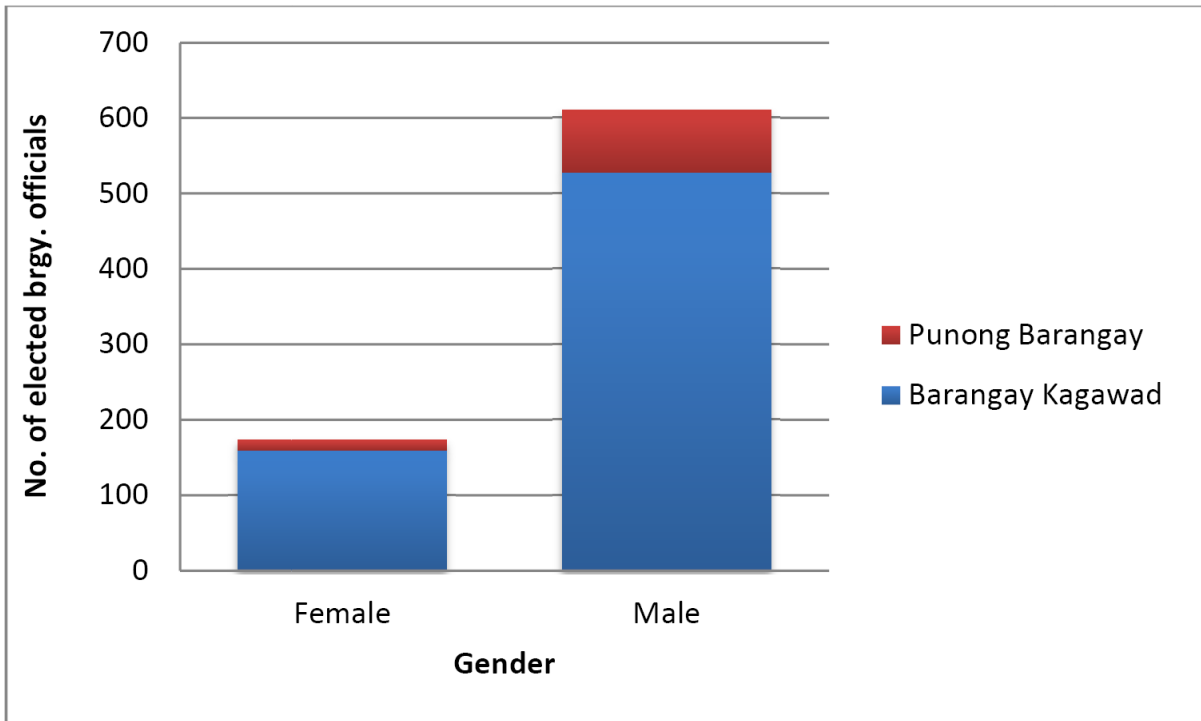


Figure 5. Total percentage of male and female in Zamboanga City barangay political structures based on the 2013 barangay election results.

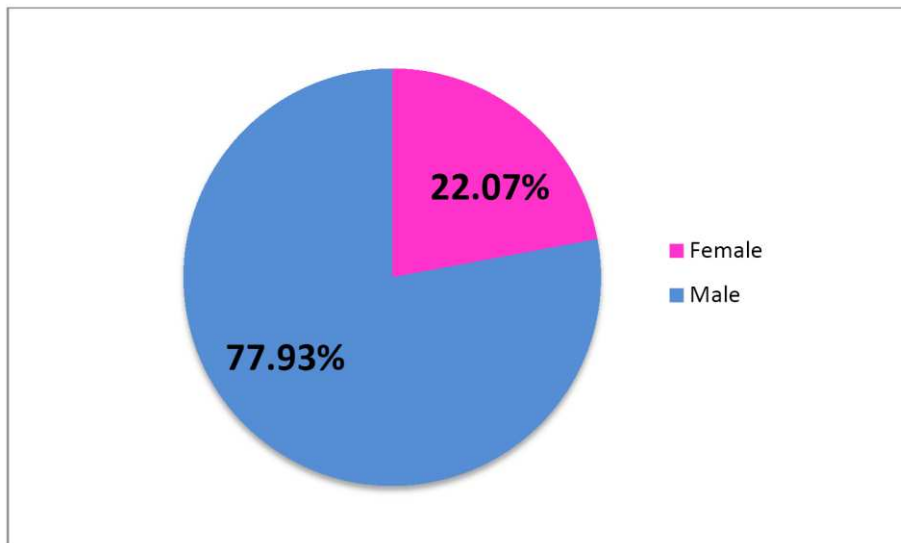
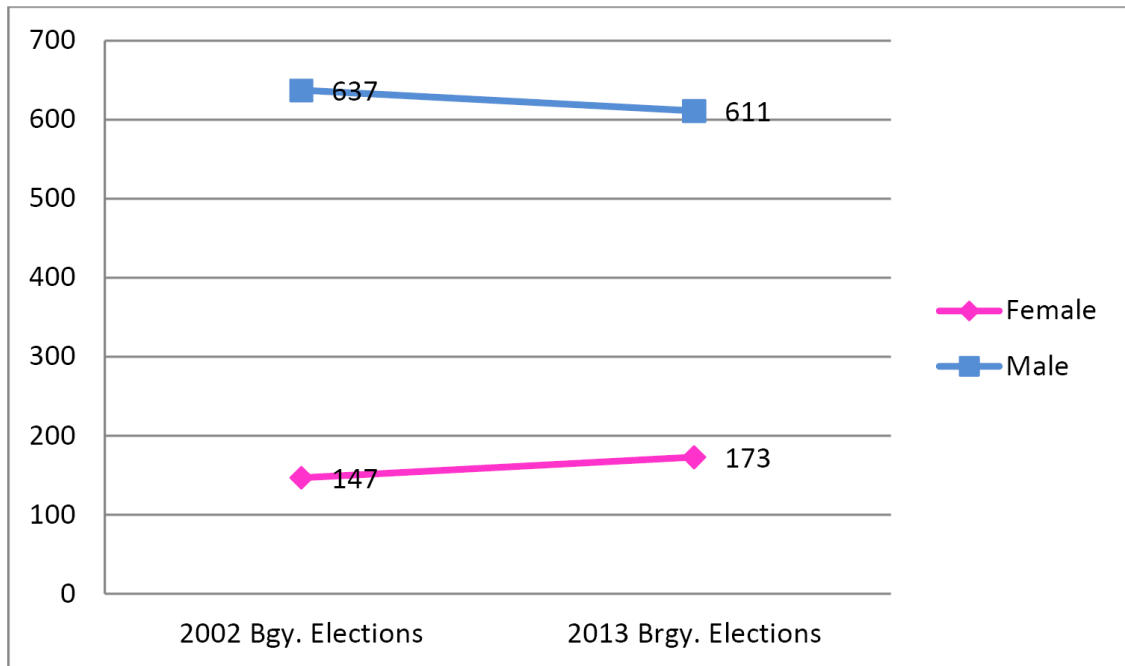


Figure 6. The number of female and male elected as barangay officials in 2002 and 2013.



## Philippine Policies Promoting Women's Political Participation

The Philippine Women's Suffrage Plebiscite in 1937 paved the way for the inclusion of a provision in the 1935 Constitution, which extended the right of suffrage to women. Aside from this, there are other various legislations which specifically sought to promote gender equality in the bureaucracy including improvement of women's participation and representation in decision-making bodies as enumerated by Hega (2003) and Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the primary policy-making and coordinating body on women and gender equality concerns in the country.

The most notable is R.A. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Woman which mandates the government to institute affirmative action measures so that women can participate meaningfully in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies, plans, and programs for national, regional, and local development. Salient features of the law include:

- Increasing the number of women in third level positions in government to achieve a fifty-fifty (50-50) gender balance within the next five years while the composition of women in all levels of development planning and program implementation will be at least 4%;

- Leave benefits of two (2) months with full pay based on gross monthly compensation for women employees who undergo surgery caused by gynecological disorders, provided that they have rendered continuous aggregate employment service of at least six (6) months for the last twelve (12) months;
- Non-discrimination in employment in the field of military, police and other similar services that include according the same promotional privileges and opportunities as their men counterpart, including pay increases, additional benefits, and awards, based on competency and quality of performance;
- Provision for equal access and elimination of discrimination in education, scholarships, and training. Thus, "expulsion, non-readmission, prohibiting enrollment, and other related discrimination of women students and faculty due to pregnancy out of marriage shall be outlawed;
- Non-discriminatory and non-derogatory portrayal of women in media and film to raise the consciousness of the general public in recognizing the dignity of women and the role and contribution of women in family, community, and the society through the strategic use of mass media;
- Equal status given to men and women on the titling of the land and issuance of stewardship contracts and patents.

Other policies of the government which seeks to foster women's leadership and political participation are as follows:

1. R.A. 7160 Local Government Code (1991) - has been amended to provide representatives for women in all of the 1,600 local legislative assemblies (Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Sangguniang Panlungsod, Sangguniang Bayan and Sangguniang Barangay) nationwide. This is consistent with the 1987 Constitution recognizing women's vital role in nation-building.
2. R.A. 7941 Party List Law (1995) - provides that there shall be party-list representatives and the women sector is to be allocated a seat therein (Art. VI, Sec. 5 [2]). Before the enactment of Republic Act No. 7941, the sectoral representative for women was appointed by the President. This law now provides for the election of party-list representatives through the party-list system including the women sector.

3. R.A. 7192 Women in Development and Nation Building Act (1992) - provides guidance and measures that will mobilize and enhance participation of women in the development process in ways equal to that of men.
4. R.A. 7688 An Act Giving Representation to Women in the Social Security Commission (1994) - guarantees women representation in the Social Security Commission.
5. Labor Code (1989) - covers issues such as night work prohibition, specifies that employers must provide special facilities for women, prohibition of discrimination against women in respect to terms and conditions of employment, prohibition of discrimination by reason of marriage of a woman worker.
6. R.A. 7822 (1995) An act providing assistance to women engaging in micro and cottage business enterprises.
7. Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1995-2025) - the National Plan for Women that consolidates the action commitments of the Philippines during the Beijing World Conference on Women. This is the over-all frame that is also the point of reference for the discussions and monitoring of gender mainstreaming.
8. Gender and Development (GAD) - aimed at “institutionalizing gender concerns in the mainstream development process and agenda and not just peripheral programs and projects of the government”. Concretely, it prescribes for the allocation of 5% of the government agency’s/local government unit’s budget on gender-responsive activities and projects. As a result, implementation of the development programs and policies of government also means women partaking a role in governance. As primarily stakeholders in the development process, women have the right to maximize their involvement in governance, be it at the local or national level.
9. Framework Plan for Women (FPW) - part of the Philippine Plan for Women which focus on three thrust namely: promoting women’s economic empowerment; advance and protect women human rights; and promote gender responsive governance. This plan identifies the concrete gender issues that will be addressed, pinpoint targets and indicators, name programs, formulates the implementation plan, and set-up tools for monitoring and evaluation.



The CSC also collaborated with the PCW and the Career Executive Board in implementing three programs that aim to increase women's capacity and skills namely:

- Career Advancement of Women in Government Services (CAPWINGS) seeks to enhance support mechanisms, capacity building, training and other enabling mechanisms for women employees;
- Merit Promotion Plan, which guides promotions based on merit, and has been revised to ensure that gender biases do not obstruct recruitment and promotion and to emphasize equal opportunities for women and men;
- Directory of Women on the Move, which provides information about qualified women candidates for vacancies in the Cabinet and other executive positions to ensure that appointing authorities have information and choices about qualified women for top posts.

## **ANALYSIS**

Comparing the data gathered in the barangay election results for July 15, 2002 and October 28, 2013, it can be said that there is an increase of women's representation in barangay political structures in Zamboanga City. This improvement comes from the increase of both elected female Punong Barangay and Barangay Kagawad. After the 2013 barangay election, female Punong Barangay totaled to 14 compared to 8 after the 2002 election. A total of 159 female Barangay Kagawad were elected in 2013, an increase compared to 139 in 2002. This increase of elected female barangay officials in 2013 totaled to 173 compared to 147 in 2002 which accounts for a 3.32% increase. This also means that there is a decrease by 3.32% of men in barangay political structures.

These results will tell us that women's representation in Zamboanga City barangays is evident and improving. However, the numbers also show that the same trend is experienced throughout Zamboanga City barangays as in the national and international scenario where there are relatively low women's representations in political structures as they are mostly dominated by men.

### **Philippine Policies Promoting Women's Political Participation**

The Philippines' constitutional and legal framework acknowledges the need for gender mainstreaming and this is manifested in the number of policies and initiatives which are directed to women's empowerment. These policies can be categorized in democratic public policies or maternal public policies (see Table 1) as McDonagh (2010) suggests in the Policy Feedback Model. Democratic policies are those affirming women's sameness with men while maternal policies represent women's group difference from men.

Table 1. Philippine policies promoting women’s leadership and political participation categorized into democratic or maternal policies.

Democratic Public Policies	Maternal Public Policies
Women's Suffrage provision in the 1935	R.A. 9710 Magna Carta of Woman
R.A. 9710 Magna Carta of Woman	R.A. 7160 Local Government Code
R.A. 7192 Women in Development and Nation	R.A. 7941 Party List Law
Merit Promotion Plan	R.A. 7688 An Act Giving Representation to Women in the Social Security Commission
	Labor Code
	R.A. 7822 An Act Providing Assistance to Women Engaging in Micro and Cottage Business Enterprises
	Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1995-2025)
	Gender and Development (GAD)
	Framework Plan for Women (FPW)
	Career Advancement of Women in Government Services (CAPWINGS)
	Directory of Women on the Move

The Magna Carta of Woman (R.A. 9710) can be categorized as either democratic or maternal public policy because it includes provisions which both affirm women’s sameness with men and women’s group difference from men. It is democratic as it features non-discrimination in employment that includes the same promotional privileges and opportunities; equal access and elimination of discrimination in education, scholarships, and training; non-discriminatory and non-derogatory portrayal of women in media and film; and equal status given to men and women on the titling of the land and issuance of stewardship contracts and patents. On the other hand, it can also be maternal as it features measures that set aside seats in the bureaucracy or decision-making bodies for women such as increasing the number of women in third level positions in government and the composition of at least 40% women in all levels of development planning and program implementation. It also features certain provisions that are unique to women like the leave benefits of two (2) months with full pay for employees who undergo surgery caused by gynecological disorders.

The right of suffrage given to Filipino women as included in the 1935 Constitution served as the precursor to emphasizing women’s sameness with men and is categorized as a democratic

public policy. Other policies categorized under democratic public policies are: R.A. 7192 Women in Development and Nation Building Act (1992), and the Merit Promotion Plan. These policies all emphasize women's sameness with men as it advocates equal opportunities for women and men. Moreover, these policies have an interpretative effect on public attitudes sending a message that women's equality with men makes women as suitable political leaders.

Philippine policies categorized under maternal public policies are those who emphasize the difference of women to men. As mentioned earlier, policies which set aside seats in the bureaucracy or decision-making bodies for women are considered maternal such as R.A. 7160 (Local Government Code of 1991) which was amended to provide representatives for women in all local legislative assemblies nationwide; R.A. 7941 Party List Law (1995) which provides that there shall be party-list representatives and the women sector is to be allocated a seat therein; and R.A. 7688 (1994) which guarantees women representation in the Social Security Commission. Policies which are specific or commonly attributed to women are also maternal such as certain provisions in the Labor Code (1989) which specifies that employers must provide special facilities for women, prohibition of discrimination against women in respect to terms and conditions of employment, and prohibition of discrimination by reason of marriage of a woman worker; R.A. 7822 which is an act providing assistance to women engaging in micro and Cottage business enterprises (1995); the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1995-2025); Gender and Development (GAD), the Framework Plan for Women (FPW); Career Advancement of Women in Government Services (CAPWINGS); and the Directory of Women on the Move. In this case, the interpretative effect is that women are seen to be more suitable political leaders because the policies are associated to women. As these policies edify the public to view women as suitable leaders, it also have resource effects which encourage civic engagement to expand the electorate of women political candidates thereby increasing women's political representation.

The Impact of Public Policies to Women's Political Participation in Zamboanga City

It is important to note that despite the relatively low level of women's political representation in Zamboanga City barangays which follows international and national trends, there is still an increase of the number of women elected as barangay officials in an 11-year span from 2002 to 2013. This increase can be attributed partly— as the study restricts itself to only certain policies— to the different policies carried out by the government to foster women's leadership and political participation. These policies categorized either as democratic or maternal public policies both have interpretative and resource effects which affect political attitudes and civic engagement resulting to electoral outcomes in favor of women thereby increasing women's representation in political structures.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The political participation of women in Zamboanga City barangays in terms of representation is relatively low as political structures are still mostly dominated by men. Nevertheless, women's political representation in Zamboanga City barangays is increasing for the past 11 years. This improvement can be associated with the initiatives of the government who formulates and implements policies which promote women's leadership and political participation and subsequently increase women's representation in political structures.

It is recommended that further studies regarding women's political representation in the barangay to include other policies of the government which may not necessarily pertain to leadership and political participation but in one way or the other create interpretive and resource effects that contribute to the increase of women's representation in political structures. Future studies can also explore women's political participation not only in terms of representation but also other forms of participation in the political process such as women as voters or as political candidates.

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