

PATHS TO POWER: Case Studies of Filipino Women Transcending Dynastic Politics

Camille Genevieve M. Salvador

Abstract

This article presents case studies of four incumbent Filipino women politicians who are not members of any political dynasty, focusing on their backgrounds as these bring to light possible alternative paths that may also be open to other women. Highlighting their education, professional background, affiliations, and political and civic experience prior to their political careers, the article examines how the intersecting social identities arising from these factors have paved the way for their entry into politics. An important entry point for women is their involvement in the women's movement and in various socio-civic organizations through which they gain the credentials that would allow them to be recognized as possible political candidates or leaders.

Introduction

One of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action's strategic objectives is to take necessary measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power and political decision-making (UN, 1995). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal No. 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, reiterates the same point. Although women have the right to vote and, in fact, make up almost half of the voting public in most countries, they remain underrepresented in public office. More than two decades after the Platform was adopted, only 23.3 percent of all national parliament members at the end of 2016 were women, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2017). In the Philippines, from 1998 to 2013, women comprised an average of only 18% of elective positions (Commission on Elections, 2015).

Political representation and equal participation in decision-making are important as these are "not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account" (UN, 1995:119). Once elected, women are more likely to be responsive to women's needs and interests and to initiate and sponsor bills and programs on behalf of women and other marginalized groups (Schwindt-Bayer, 2003). Having a critical mass of women in decision-making positions may initiate a shift in priorities

favoring women's issues and concerns. Women have also formed caucuses and standing committees in several developing countries to coordinate work in legislative committees and focus on women's rights and equal opportunities, demonstrating leadership by working across party lines (UN Women, 2013; IPU, 2008). In local governance bodies, women have had a greater voice in public administration, allocating public resources to human development priorities such as health, nutrition, and employment (UN Women, 2015).

It is thus important to explore the various ways women are able to enter politics, especially as there has been a significant number of research studies showing that women are more likely, or even only able, to enter politics by having close family ties to male politicians (Labonne, Parsa, & Querubin, 2017; Folke, Rickne, & Smith, 2017; Smith & Martin, 2017; Basu, 2016; Tolentino, 2016; Querubin, 2015; Jalazai, 2010 and 2004; Dal Bó, Dal Bó, & Snyder, 2009). It is in this light that this article attempts to highlight other paths to power by presenting case studies of several Filipino women, currently occupying elective national positions in the Philippine government, who have transcended dynastic politics by entering politics through paths other than political dynasties, and while in position, have consistently pushed for women's rights and empowerment.

Exploring the backgrounds of these women politicians would be crucial in "understanding the ultimate success of women reaching the highest positions of political power" (Jalazai, 2004:86) and would hopefully add to current discussions on plausible alternative paths women could take so that more would be able to occupy political decision-making positions. Given that present circumstances around the world have seen a significant drop in the number of female political leaders worldwide, with the recent loss of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 United States presidential elections and of Keiko Fujimori in Peru, as well as the removal from power of Brazil's Dilma Rousseff (Coolidge & Bell, 2017), it is imperative that we find more effective ways and paths women could take to have equal access to and full participation in decision-making and political processes.

Taking off from Farida Jalazai's 2004 study of past and present women political leaders as well as from Pamela Paxton and Melanie Hughes' 2014 book *Women, Politics, and Power* (in which they identified seven structural factors that influence women's political participation), this article will focus on four incumbent women politicians and their backgrounds as characterized by the following factors: (1) education; (2) profession before joining politics; (3) any political or civic experience prior

to their current political positions; (4) various affiliations (with any political party, party-list, socio-civic organization, or women's organization); and (5) familial ties to former or current politicians, if any. The intersecting social identities arising from these factors have shaped and resulted in their varied career trajectories and political experiences, which may lead to a privilege through which women successfully enter politics, or to an obstacle in which women, despite being qualified in terms of experience or education, may prove unsuccessful due to the lack of the economic and family background perceived to be required for a successful entry into politics. A combination of these social identities may both grant a woman entry into "certain positions of power yet keep...her out of others" (Davidson-Schmich, 2011:332).

The four subjects of this study were selected from among women politicians occupying national elective positions primarily because they are not members of a political dynasty and have not been attached by name to powerful men. While there has yet to be an official, legally enforceable definition of a political dynasty (only a provision in the Philippine Constitution on its prohibition, without an actual enabling law), definitions from various academic sources were adopted and consolidated. In this article, a political dynasty is defined as one in which a family occupying or having held elected office through its multiple members, whether through subsequent or simultaneous terms, having earned political positions through electoral advantage because of their "family brand" while self-perpetuating their family's political power, which is used for the benefit of their families (Smith & Martin, 2017; Feinstein, 2010; Roces, 1998). Without being a part of a political dynasty, these women have demonstrated the possibility of winning national elective positions, showing alternative paths to power.

This research uses data gathered from various government websites as well as from the official websites of these women and the organizations they are affiliated with, particularly focusing on their backgrounds as characterized by the aforesaid five factors. In addition, information on the women's advocacies, as particularly reflected in the type of legislation or programs that they initiate or endorse, was also collected to illustrate whether and how they were able to use their positions to support and promote women's rights. This article also provides a review of scholarly work to present factors affecting women's political participation, various political entry points for women, and a profile of women in Philippine politics.

Review of Literature

Related literature was reviewed and is discussed below, primarily focusing on three main parts: factors affecting women's political participation, political entry points for women, and women in Philippine politics.

Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation

Women's historic exclusion from political structures is a result of multiple structural, functional, and personal factors, the impact of which differs according to the various social contexts in countries where these women reside (Aguilar, 1992; Mungai, 2014; Bledsoe & Herring, 1990; Dahlerup, 1978). While there are no actual formal or legal barriers in most countries, in practice, women continue to be excluded from political office because of discriminatory attitudes and "old boys' networks" in political parties; lack of funds for election campaigns; and family responsibilities that compete for time with the inflexible work hours of political institutions (UN Women, 2015; UN, 2005). These obstacles at a religious, legal, economic, social, and political level can be particularly discouraging for women considering running for public office (Labani, Zabaleta, Kaehler, & De Dio Ruiz, 2009).

Men have traditionally dominated politics, causing many women to find it unwelcoming or even hostile. Some societies, where patriarchal values are strong and where there are still prejudice and cultural perceptions about the role of women, disapprove of women entering politics, with women often relegated to the margins and their access to resources and decision-making reduced, thus weakening their political power (Hega, 2003; UN, 2005; IPU, 2008). Moreover, leadership continues to be perceived as an exclusively male characteristic, often claimed to be a sign of strength, with women only pictured as supportive of the "leader husband" and mainly expected to entertain male constituents (e.g., socialization and diplomacy) and take part in charity work (e.g., social welfare). As part of their family responsibilities, women are also expected to take care of the next generation of politicians in the family (Hega, 2003). Women also face a range of practical barriers to entering politics, including the lack of financial resources, lower levels of education, increased capacity gaps, lack of access to health care, and greater and more family responsibilities (the single most important deterrent to women's political participation). Women also often lack the political networks necessary for electoral success (UN, 2005; UN Women, 2013; Mungai, 2014).

Recognizing these structural constraints, the IPU noted four factors most influential in creating more gender-sensitive parliaments: (1) support of the ruling party in parliament; (2) work of parliamentary committees; (3) work of women's parliamentary caucuses (or the cross-party networks of women); and (4) rules that govern the parliament's operations. However, even with these, the adoption of electoral quotas and the implementation of sensitization programs remain important mechanisms to address the structural constraints faced by women when entering politics (IPU, 2008).

Political Entry Points for Women

There are four main political entry points for women: (1) political dynasties; (2) political parties; (3) quota systems; and (4) the women's movement.

As mentioned, women have had more access to political networks and resources if they were related to male politicians. In Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines, politics has been dominated by large political dynasties, with families presenting various members successively for political positions as the common practice. The first successor is typically the father's son and only if there was none should the daughter be considered as the next in line for the position. Wives, and particularly widows, can also extend their husbands' political position and power (Labani, Zabaleta Kaehler, & De Dio Ruiz, 2009; Paxton & Hughes, 2014; Hega, 2003). Everett (2008) writes about "proxy women" or women in decision-making positions as relatives of powerful men only being put in such positions for their signatures or mere presence rather than substantially representing women (Everett, 2008).

Hega (2003) writes about the "push factor" leading these women to politics in which their relationship with a male politician helped them win their seats through their political machinery and knowhow, as well as the family's political name. In the Philippines, family connection is a key factor in political involvement in general, with most politicians having close relatives in either politics or government. Hega also writes of women benchwarmers. "Due to term limits, wives and daughters have taken over the positions left by the husbands or fathers for one term and then the man makes a comeback" (Hega, 2003:7). While this reaffirms that women tend to be mere appendages of men's political power, there are still instances when women have managed to create their own spaces and niches in politics (discussed in a later portion) (Hega, 2003).

The second entry point is through political parties. Among the most important institutions that affect women's political participation and being the most common route to elected office, they determine which candidates are nominated and elected and which issues are brought to the fore. Candidates depend on these for their base of electoral support, assistance during the campaign, financial resources, and continued assistance once elected into office. These parties vary in the extent to which they seek to promote women to occupy leadership positions; to recruit women as candidates; and to address political, economic, and social concerns of women. What role women play in political parties determines their prospects for entry into politics (Mungai, 2014). Given the influential role that such parties play in women's political empowerment, governments and international organizations focus on developing mechanisms to enhance women's political participation through these parties (UN, 2005; Mungai, 2014).

In the context of the Philippines, the political party system has been a peculiar one. The main political parties are hardly ideological nor programmatic, still being driven mainly by patronage and personality politics and characterized by turncoatism. Political parties in the Philippines remain tied to political dynasties in which women members of political families may also be supported by political parties controlled by the same families and figureheads. It has thus been the trend for elite women, who are members of political dynasties, to run under and be supported by a major political party (Hega, 2003).

The third entry point is through quota systems, which are one of the most effective ways to ensure that women are elected into office. It is a legal obligation in many countries for party candidate lists to be gender-balanced and include a certain proportion of women, with the usefulness of such a system being dependent on how it is implemented. A zippered list, in which every other candidate is a woman, provides the best chances for women. Countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina implement a quota system as enshrined in their election law, requiring that men and women constitute at least one-third of the candidates listed and that both occupy positions high enough on the lists to ensure a more balanced representation (UN, 2005). These quota systems were introduced in countries like Jordan and Afghanistan where women historically were almost totally excluded from politics, effectively initiating women's entry into politics. In other cases, quota systems were introduced to strengthen existing efforts. Such systems increase diversity among the types of women elected, raise awareness of women's issues, change the gendered nature of

politics, and inspire female constituents to be more active and vocal in politics (Escartin, 2014).

The last entry point is through women's organizations and movements. This is an ideal way for women to enter politics, as participation in such entities may provide them with the credentials necessary to become a party candidate or even leader. Women's movements may also influence political party platforms, ensuring that women's issues are addressed. Overall, non-government organizations and other civil society institutions could contribute to the advancement of women's political participation by identifying women to become candidates, providing various training programs, improving and expanding networks to further women within and across parties, as well as assisting with gender-sensitive voter's education (UN, 2005).

In the Philippines, various organizations created along gender-specific issues serve as platforms for women to enter politics. Groups like PILIPINA, GABRIELA, *Ugnayan ng Kababaihan sa Pulitika*, the SIBOL Legislative Network, and KILOS KABARO have led the way in advancing women's issues and concerns through various policies and legislations. Intense lobbying by these groups resulted in the passage of several landmark laws, among which are the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 and the Anti-Rape Law of 1997 (Hega, 2003).

Women in Philippine Politics

In Carmencita T. Aguilar's study (1992), she profiled Filipino women in electoral politics in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds, entry into politics, and career backgrounds, among others. She notes that women career politicians are typically from elite and middle-class families, expounding that, to be an elite in the Philippines, "one must come from a traditionally rich family (old rich); the family has been prominent in the community where they originated and must also be known in the country in certain cases" (Aguilar, 1992:25). Members of elite families have usually held important private and government offices by virtue of their prestige and prominence and are known to have provided leadership in their communities. Meanwhile, those belonging to middle-class families may not be as wealthy but have attained a college education, thereby allowing them to have lucrative positions that enable them to afford basic living requirements and send their children to decent schools. An examination of each Philippine legislative body she studied showed that a majority of the women legislators could be considered as elite: (1) the 1978-1984 Interim

Batasang Pambansa had 70% elite women; (2) the 1984-1986 Batasang Pambansa had 90% elite women; and (3) the 1986-1992 Congress had 62% elite women (Aguilar, 1992).

This shows that financial resources matter when running for public office, with political elections being so expensive that only the elite and moneyed middle class can afford to enter politics. “The wealthy women who can afford to compete in national elections can do so by virtue of their birth, their marriage to rich husbands who are supportive of their political inclination and by their own business acumen” (Aguilar, 1992:26). Meanwhile, women politicians in local governments, although some still belong to prominent families, are generally known for their involvement in socio-civic activities prior to their election into office. Most local women politicians had also been working women before their assumption to office, with their husbands as businessmen or professionals with substantial earnings. Both husbands and wives were members of civic and social organizations in their community—often considered as those whom the poorer members of the community could ask financial assistance from for emergencies. “They may not be so rich as to afford all the dole outs that the less fortunate members of the community would require, but they are people who are ready and willing to give their money and time to charity work and to give a helping hand to others” (Aguilar, 1992:27). People elected them in recognition of their community work and what they were capable of doing.

With regard to their academic backgrounds, women national legislators received their education from exclusive schools, even pursuing degrees or special programs abroad. Alternatively, those who were only high school graduates had rich experience in government service and public office, and those who appeared lacking in formal education and experience compensated with their wealth, social status, and political capital. These women were also professionals prior to entering politics, working as teachers, managers, social workers, lawyers, or businesswomen. In terms of career history in politics, these women at both the national and local levels may not have had lengthy careers. However, those already elected into national office built their political careers by serving first in local government positions, with some of them as re-electionists (Aguilar, 1992).

Filipino Women Transcending Dynastic Politics

The women politicians whose backgrounds are presented herein are from both the upper and lower houses of the 17th Congress.

As aforementioned, they were chosen because they were able to win national elective positions without enjoying any electoral advantage because of any familial ties with powerful men—able to transcend dynastic politics. Their backgrounds will hopefully underscore possible alternative paths to power that women could take and make use of in order to occupy crucial decision-making positions.

Senator Loren Legarda

Senator Loren Legarda has been in the public eye for a long time, first becoming popular as a multi-awarded broadcast journalist before becoming a well-known politician who is notably the only female to top two senatorial elections. She is well known for her advocacies involving the environment, women, children, and indigenous communities, among others.

Senator Legarda hails from San Pablo, Laguna, where her grandfather previously served as mayor as indicated in her Senate profile. That she came from a family of public servants is clearly something that she takes pride in and draws credibility from. However, unlike other typical women in Philippine politics who were able to access their male relatives' political network or were members of influential political dynasties, Senator Legarda won senatorial seats several times based on her own merit and popularity, which were steadily established during her years as a broadcast journalist covering a wide range of stories and issues.

She graduated cum laude from the University of the Philippines with a degree in Broadcast Communications and earned her master's degree in national security administration. In terms of political backing and support, Senator Legarda has, through the years, changed parties and was often accused of turncoatism because of her timing of changing parties nearing election periods (i.e., LAKAS-NUCD to *Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino* to Nationalist People's Coalition to the Nacionalista Party). Despite her changing of political parties, Senator Legarda has twice failed to win in her bid for the vice-presidential post (i.e., the first time as the running mate of the late actor Fernando Poe, Jr. and the second time with former Senator Manny Villar).

While Senator Legarda is not part of a political dynasty and not backed by a political party only because of a “family brand advantage,” she has the educational and professional background most would consider as qualifying her for a position in public office. What really helped her win seats in national elections is her exposure to the public as a well-known broadcast

journalist. Notable from the onset has been her consistent support for women's causes, even establishing foundations like the Bessie Legarda Memorial Foundation, Inc., which provides medical assistance to indigent breast cancer victims. This support has translated into legislation she has authored or co-authored, among which are the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act, the Magna Carta of Women, the Anti-Child Labor Law, and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, among other vital pieces of legislation (e.g., the Universal Healthcare Act, the Enhanced Basic Education Act, the Climate Change Act, and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act).

Other foundations she established include the *Libro ni Loren* Foundation, Inc., which aims to help improve the literacy level in the country's poorest provinces, and the *Luntiang Pilipinas* 1998, which seeks to raise environmental awareness in the country.

Senator Risa Hontiveros

Senator Risa Hontiveros is also one of the incumbent female politicians who have transcended what is expected from women in traditional politics due to her roots in the women's and civil society movements.

Educated at St. Scholastica's College and the Ateneo de Manila University, Senator Hontiveros was previously a broadcast journalist who shifted to NGO work, eventually becoming a party-list representative and a director of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth). She ran for the Senate thrice, eventually winning a seat in the 17th Congress. Her activism started early when, in high school, she actively campaigned against the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. She also served as member of the government panel for peace talks with the National Democratic Front from 1998 to 2004, earning for herself a Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award for Peace Advocacy. She is also affiliated with various civil society groups, including the Akbayan Citizen's Action Party and PILIPINA, and has served as one of Akbayan's representatives in the House of Representatives.

Senator Hontiveros has a strong education background and experience in the women's movement. She has been unfortunately widowed, although her late husband was not a politician (thus, invalidating any discussion of the "widow's succession" route to politics [Kincaid, 1978]). Rather, she has been steadily working towards entering politics by building up her background, expanding her network, and being very staunch and passionate in pursuing and lobbying for measures to help her advocacies gain support. She was able to enter politics through her party list and with the support of the Liberal

Party. However, it must be noted that, despite the backing of the Liberal Party during her first and second attempts running for a Senate position, she was not able to win, but it was through effective media exposure and a more focused platform that she was finally able to do so. As she once stated in an interview, someone like her who does not come from a political family and did not have enough financial resources to support her campaign proved that it is possible to have a fighting chance for a Senate position.

Senator Hontiveros has continually pushed for women's rights, from her stint as a member of the House of Representatives for the Akbayan party list, and until now as Senator of the country with a wider and better reach and a more powerful platform. Legislation that she authored or co-authored as a representative include the Cheaper Medicines Law, the Reproductive Health Act, and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms; while as Senator, she has filed the following bills: the Anti-Rape Bill (SB No. 1252), the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill (SB No. 1250), and the Gender-Based Electronic Violence Bill (SB No. 1252).

Dinagat Islands Representative Kaka Bag-ao

Like Senator Hontiveros, Rep. Kaka Bag-ao has her roots deeply set in the women's and civil society movements as an alternative lawyer and human rights activist.

Rep. Bag-ao received her degree in Political Science from the De La Salle University and her Juris Doctor from the Ateneo de Manila University. She was also a Hubert H. Humphrey fellow for Law and Human Rights at the University of Minnesota. She used her educational background in Political Science and Law to help marginalized communities as a coordinator of the Peasant Unit of the *Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panlegal*, handling litigation work cases on agrarian reform and labor and for women, the urban poor, fisherfolk, and victims of violence, as well as conducting seminars on local legislation, poll watching, and the role of women in governance and development. She also served as the legal counsel of the Sumilao farmers when they marched from Sumilao, Bukidnon to Manila.

Rep. Bag-ao also served as the Executive Director of BALAOD Mindanaw, an alternative law organization working toward the advancement and protection of the rights of farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, women, and other marginalized communities through their legal empowerment, the creation of a network of practicing lawyers to work with them, and raising awareness on alternative lawyering among law students and schools, among others.

Prior to winning as the representative of Dinagat Islands under the Liberal Party in 2013, Rep. Bag-ao was the Akbayan party-list representative. She was also appointed the caretaker of Dinagat Islands by then House Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr., since the seat had been vacant since former Representative Ruben Ecleo (of the ruling Ecleo family) went AWOL after being convicted of his wife's murder. In 2016, she was re-elected for her second term as Dinagat's representative, calling for the advancement of people empowerment to eliminate political patronage and strengthen the province's recent development. As part of Congress, she has continually pushed for the passage of legislation focusing on the just and rational use of land resources, environmental protection, LGBT rights and welfare, and youth empowerment, among others. She also co-authored the Reproductive Health Act and the *Sangguniang Kabataan* Reform Act, as well as bills like the National Land Use Bill, Anti-Discrimination Bill (or the SOGIE Equality Act), Freedom of Information Bill, Security of Tenure Bill, and the Philippine HIV/AIDS Policy Bill, among others.

Like Senator Hontiveros (who ran under the Liberal Party and won), Rep. Bag-ao has used her educational background and professional experience as an alternative lawyer to work toward the empowerment of marginalized groups. Remarkably, she won over the political dynasty in Dinagat Islands (although admittedly this was made possible by Rep. Ecleo's conviction) and continues to use her position to push for legislation that would benefit these marginalized groups. It must be noted, however, that she had the backing of a party list and a long-established political party to help her during the campaign season.

GABRIELA Women's Party Representative Emmi de Jesus

Rep. Emmi de Jesus has been a long-time figure in the women's movement and, as one of the representatives of the GABRIELA Women's Party, has shown how important the party-list system is in giving marginalized groups access to political representation.

Rep. de Jesus came from a hardworking peasant background, with her father working as a taxi driver and her mother as a home care provider. She graduated from the Manila Science High School and earned a degree in BS Physics from the University of the Philippines Diliman where she first became an activist during the Martial Law years. She was part of the First Quarter Storm, and eventually had the opportunity to work with trade unions and gain experience on how to assist Filipino laborers who were exploited. She has been an advocate for women's and human rights since being detained

during Martial Law. In 1983, she helped found the *Samahan ng Malayang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa* or SAMAKANA. The following year, she helped establish the GABRIELA National Alliance of Women, mobilizing women to strengthen their voices in society while opposing oppression and injustice. She worked as a grassroots organizer of women—students, professionals, workers, and mothers from urban poor communities.

Together with previous GABRIELA representatives, Rep. de Jesus has pushed for important pieces of legislation, which, once approved, finalized, and implemented, may help women empower themselves and, in so doing, empower other women as well. Among these pieces of legislation are Acts amending the Anti-Rape Law of 1997, the Revised Penal Code to provide for a system of protection for victims of prostitution, and those decriminalizing adultery and concubinage, increasing the maternity leave period, and prohibiting the establishment of political dynasties, among others.

Rep. de Jesus has shown the importance of the women's movement in giving women the opportunity to participate meaningfully in political processes and platforms. She has her feet firmly planted in grassroots and women's organizing, and was also supported by the same movement during the national elections in order to catapult her onto a platform where she could make meaningful changes in society. This also shows how critical the party-list system is, despite its many flaws, for specific sectors that would otherwise not have the platform to raise their voices and express their concerns and issues.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the past, women who entered Philippine politics were mostly part of elite, political dynasties, often well-educated and wealthy enough to support an electoral campaign. They were often urged by male members of the family to run for office in order to continue their family's foothold over certain places or regions—with most women believed to have won electoral seats because they were related to powerful and influential men. To some extent and for some, they were considered as “proxy women” needed only for their signatures and presence, without actually substantially representing their constituents, especially their women constituents and other marginalized groups.

However, recent years have seen an increase in women entering politics with the sincere intent of changing the status quo in order to

empower other women by providing them with enough tools and capacity-building mechanisms and assistance programs. Moreover, there have been women, not related to male politicians by blood or marriage, who have entered politics successfully through their own merit and hard work in various civil society and women's movements and organizations. These women, despite not belonging to political dynasties, have found ways to enter politics successfully—by building solid credentials, whether through education or professional experience, that would make the voting public consider them eligible or competent enough to represent them in government.

The importance of women's movements as a way for women to enter politics should also be underscored. It is through these that women gain the credentials that would allow them to be recognized as possible candidates or leaders. This subsequently ensures that women's issues are brought to the fore and addressed, since coming from the women's movement, these leaders would know firsthand what issues, concerns, and problems need to be addressed. Still, it should likewise be noted that a party-list system may seem to address women's political participation now (in which women are represented by a sectoral party [i.e., GABRIELA]), but a more long-term mechanism should be put in place to ensure that women's political representation in the Philippines reaches a more equitable proportion. Implementing quota systems and zippered lists, as well as rethinking how to address patronage politics in the country, should also be considered.

However, it should also be noted that alongside easing women's access to public office, the state and the political parties should also be responsive to women's issues in order to translate women's political presence into substantial and progressive change in terms of policy and its implementation. The state should likewise provide support and resources to women's organizations and movements to strengthen them and capacitate them to engage other women in order to bolster their agency, voice, and participation. It should also reconsider the electoral process and its facilities to make these more friendly to families that have a difficulty balancing family and political obligations (especially for women who do not belong to elite families with the resources to hire other women to alleviate them of their domestic responsibilities). Likewise, the state should provide training programs to women in order to capacitate, encourage, and empower them to take on leadership positions.

On the side of research, data gaps remain, particularly on the impact of women's representation on policies. More research should be conducted

to provide policymakers with more information on what should be done to effectively address and possibly accelerate whatever progress has been achieved thus far on women's political participation and representation.

Lastly, both women and men should recognize that "real change requires political will and partnership" (IPU, 2008:23), as equal participation of women in the political process would benefit the entire society, while it would also mean a chance to correct longstanding inequality in terms of political representation and participation. As Elizabeth Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner of the Australian Human Rights Commission, said in her speech celebrating International Women's Day in 2012, "Public policy has the capacity to either perpetuate or eliminate discrimination and gender inequality. It is only by making gender a central consideration in the development and implementation of public policy that we can hope to advance gender equality and women's human rights..." (Broderick, 2012).

References:

- Aguilar, C. T. (1992). Filipino women in electoral politics. In P. Domingo Tapales, *Filipino women and public policy* (p. 120). Manila: Kalikasan Press.
- Basu, A. (2016). Women, dynasties, and democracy in India. In K. Chandra, *Democratic dynasties: State, party, and family in contemporary Indian politics* (pp. 127-160). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bledsoe, T., & Herring, M. (1990). Victims of circumstance: Women in pursuit of political office. *The American Political Science Review*, 84(1), 213-223.
- Commission on Elections. (2015, August 19). *Data on women in elections: 1998 to 2013*. Retrieved from COMELEC: <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=SpecialProjects/GenderandDevelopmentProgram/StatisticsPerElectivePositionBySex/StatisticsPerElectivePositionBySex>
- Coolidge, K., & Bell, C. (2017, January 9). The number of countries with female political leaders has plummeted. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved 2017, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/01/09/this-is-whats-behind-the-stunning-decline-in-female-political-leaders/>

- Dahlerup, D. (1978). Women's entry into politics: The experience of the Danish local and general elections 1908-20. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 2-3.
- Dal Bó, E., Dal Bó, P., & Snyder, J. (2009). Political dynasties. *Review of Economic Studies*, 76, 114-142. Retrieved from http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Economics/Faculty/Pedro_Dal_Bo/pd.pdf
- Davidson-Schmich, L. K. (2011). Gender, intersectionality, and the executive branch: The case of Angela Merkel. *German Politics*, 20(3), 325-341. doi:10.1080/09644008.2011.606566
- Escartin, M. (2014). Do women represent women's interest? An examination of gender mainstreaming in electoral politics. *Philippine Sociological Society National Conference*. General Santos City. Retrieved from http://philippinesociology.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ESCARTIN_Women-Representation.pdf
- Everett, J. (2008). Women in local government in India. In A.-M. Goetz, *Governing Women, Women's Political Effectiveness in Contexts of Democratisation and Governance Reform* (pp. 196-215). New York and London: Routledge.
- Feinstein, B. D. (2010). The dynasty advantage: Family ties in congressional elections. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 37(4), 571-598. Retrieved from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1690358>
- Folke, O., Rickne, J., & Smith, D. M. (2017, June). Gender and dynastic political recruitment: Theory and evidence. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2985230>
- Hega, M. (2003). *Participation of women in Philippine politics: A situationer*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Philippines.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2008). *Equality in politics: A survey of women and men in parliaments*. Lausanne. Retrieved from <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/equality08-e.pdf>
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2015). *Women in parliament: 20 years in review*. Geneva. Retrieved from <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP20Y-en.pdf>
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2017, March). *Women in national parliaments*. Retrieved from <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

- Jalalzai, F. (2004). Women political leaders. *Women & Politics*, 26(3-4), 85-108. doi:10.1300/J014v26n03_04
- Jalalzai, F. (2010). Madam president: Gender, power, and the comparative presidency. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 31(2), 132-165. doi:10.1080/15544771003697643
- Kincaid, D. D. (1978, March). Over his dead body: A positive perspective on widows in congress. *The Western Political Quarterly*, 31(1), 96-104.
- Labani, S., Zabaleta Kaehler, C., & De Dio Ruiz, P. (2009). *Gender analysis of women's political participation in 7 South-East Asian countries 2008-2009*. Toronto: Association for Women's Rights in Development.
- Labonne, J., Parsa, S., & Querubin, P. (2017, February). Political dynasties, term limits and female political empowerment: Evidence from the Philippines. Working Paper. Retrieved from https://sites.google.com/site/pabloquerubin/ph_gender_web_201702.pdf?attredirects=0
- Mungai, P. W. (2014). Factors influencing women participation in political process: The case of the Orange Democratic Movement Party, Kenya. University of Nairobi.
- Paxton, P., & Hughes, M. (2014). *Women, politics, and power: A global perspective*. California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Querubin, P. (2015, October). Family and politics: Dynastic persistence in the Philippines. Retrieved from https://0d7619fa-a-62cb3a1a-s-sites.googlegroups.com/site/pabloquerubin/RDPaper_QJPS_Revised_wTables.pdf
- Roces, M. (1998). *Women, power, and kinship politics: Female power in post-war Philippines*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Schwindt-Bayer, L. A. (2003). Legislative representation in Latin America: A comparative study of descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation of women. University of Arizona.
- Smith, D., & Martin, S. (2017, February). Political dynasties and the selection of cabinet ministers. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 42(1), 131-165. doi:10.1111/lsq.12146

- Tapales, P. D. (2005, October 11). *Women in contemporary Philippine local politics*. Lecture delivered at the University of California Los Angeles Center for Southeast Asian Studies Colloquium Series, USA. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8zk78303>
- Tolentino, C. A. (2016, April). *Women and political influence: Evidence from local elections in the Philippines*. Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia.
- UN Women. (2013). *In brief: Women's leadership and political participation*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/12/un%20womenlgthembriefuswebrev2%20pdf.ashx>
- UN Women. (2015). *Progress of the world's women 2015-2016*. United Nations. Retrieved from http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf
- United Nations. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Retrieved April 2017, from http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?vs=800
- United Nations. (2000). *Millennium Development Goals and beyond 2015*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml>
- United Nations. (2005). *Women & elections: Guide to promoting the participation of women in elections*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/WomenAndElections.pdf>
- United Nations. (2015). *Sustainable Development Goal 5*. Retrieved from Sustainable Development Goals: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>

Camille Genevieve M. Salvador is a graduate student of the Department of Women and Development Studies (DWDS) of the UP College of Social Work and Community Development. She graduated with a B.A. in Sociology, magna cum laude from the UP College of Social Sciences and Philosophy. Her article won the best paper award given by the DWDS in 2017.