

Women in Political Affairs: A study of women councilors in 1990

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Binigyang tuon ng pag-aaral na ito ang pagpapatotoo ng paniniwalang sa lipunang Pilipino ay may pagkakapantay-pantay kaysa ibang lipunan. Ito ay ginawa sa pamamagitan ng pag-aaral ng isang grupo ng kababaihan na nagtangkang pasukin ang sinasabing larangan ng mga kalalakihan—ang politika. Ang mga datos ay nagmula sa sarbey ng 770 bilang ng mga babaeng konsehal, na pinangunahang likumin ng UPPI at ng National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women noong 1990. Ayon sa resulta ng pag-aaral ang kasarian ay hindi isang balakid sa partisipasyon sa politika. Ito pa nga ay nagsilbing benepisyo upang manalo at nang lumaon ay makapagsilbi ng mahusay sa katungkulan, dahilan sa mga positibong katangian at pagiging katangi-tangi ng mga babae sa isang larangang panlalaki. Ipinakita rin ng pag-aaral ang mga suliraning naranasan ng mga babae sa pagpasok sa politika, at ang kakulangan sa kasanayan sa naturang larangan. May mga katanungan tungkol sa epekto ng mga babaeng ito sa kanilang mga pinamamahalaang kababaihan. Gayunpaman, ayon sa pag-aaral, ang gawaing pampulitika para sa kababaihan ay isang mahusay na opsyon para sa kanila na nagbibigay ng mas maraming pakinabang para sa pangkalahatang pagsulong ng kanilang kapwa babae.

Introduction

Filipino men and women pride themselves on having a more egalitarian society among nations insofar as man-woman relationships are concerned. For example, Filipino women are given equal opportunities to attain the same, if not higher levels

of education as men. In the professional field, Filipino women practice alongside men even in generally accepted "male" disciplines such as medicine and physics¹.

However, the participation of women in the political sphere remains limited. After a hard fought battle, Filipino women were finally accorded the right of suffrage and eligibility for election to public office in 1936. Nevertheless, after more than half a century of enjoying civic and political rights as explicitly provided for in the present Constitution, politics continues to be male-dominated especially at the higher policy-making levels both in elective and appointive rank (NCRFW, 1985). Available statistics show that women comprise only 7 percent of municipal mayors, 9 percent of all local officials and only 1 percent of the House of Representatives (NSO, 1993).

Studies also reveal that the average Filipina, aside from voting during elections, is not very enthusiastic over political affairs. Generally, her political participation is confined to such activities as voting, helping in campaigns and participating in socio-civic charitable organizations (NSO, 1993). This is partly reflected in a research study jointly undertaken by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) and the UP College of Education, Diliman in 1981-83 entitled "Values of Filipino Women: Their Implications for Education, National Policy and Social Action". The findings show that of 500 women respondents, answers to the question, "What activities during election do you participate in?" revealed the following percentages: voting (62 percent), attending meeting/rallies (32 percent), none (20 percent), campaigning (15 percent) serving food/drinks etc. (9 percent), others (7 percent) and putting up posters (7 percent). Indeed, Filipinas rarely compete in the political arena and even in political parties, their participation leaves much to be desired (NCRFW, 1985).

It is of interest, therefore, to study a group of women who have opted to venture into non-traditional lines of work.

What characterizes this unique group of women? What made them decide to enter politics? Is being a woman an advantage or a disadvantage to one's political performance? The present study looks into the entry of women into Philippine politics, an issue made interesting not only by the fact that few women have dared to venture into this field but also by the knowledge that those who do have to contend with the immense responsibilities of dealing with their constituents in addition to their multiple roles in household management.

The Survey

The study utilizes valuable information which was obtained from a survey of women councilors in 1990. The Survey of Women Councilors was conducted jointly by the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI) and NCRFW. The survey covered 770 women councilors who were gathered to attend a nationwide convention utilizing three sets of self-administered questionnaires. The first set dealt with questions on their beliefs concerning politics before they attended the congress. The second set was a Personal Data Sheet administered during the Congress which covered questions ranging from background information to queries on their political involvement, including reasons for joining politics, assessment of their performance and their future plans. After the congress, the councilors were asked to prioritize a list of 21 areas for skills training and research.

Survey Findings

Profile of Women Councilors

What characterizes these women councilors? The age composition of this group of councilors varies widely from 19 to 80 years old. Average age stands at 49.2 years with twenty six of the women councilors still active in politics despite their ripe ages of 70 or over. (Table 1)

Table 1: Profile of Women Councilors

Characteristics	GEOGRAPHIC AREA			Total
	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	
Age				
< 30	8.5	4.2	3.6	5.8
30-39	13.0	15.4	18.4	15.2
40-49	25.3	29.8	34.7	29.3
50-59	28.7	27.9	29.1	28.6
60-69	20.1	18.6	12.2	17.5
> 69	4.4	4.2	2.0	3.7
Mean	49.7	49.7	47.9	49.2
(N)	(293)	(215)	(196)	(704)
Marital Status				
Never married	12.1	15.7	8.5	12.1
Currently married	70.3	70.4	77.5	72.3
Widowed/Div./Sep.	17.6	13.9	14.1	15.5
(N)	(323)	(230)	(213)	(766)
Number of Children				
Ever born				
0-1	20.0	23.5	12.2	18.9
2-3	22.9	21.2	23.1	22.4
4-5	27.3	27.9	24.6	26.7
6-7	14.7	14.6	22.6	16.9
8+	15.1	12.7	17.5	15.1
Mean CEB	4.2	4.0	4.9	4.3
(N)	(319)	(226)	(212)	(757)
Age of Youngest Child				
< 8	18.4	20.2	24.5	20.9
8-14	27.9	29.9	31.5	29.6.
15-19	18.4	20.9	21.0	20.0
20-24	20.6	12.9	11.0	15.6
25+	14.7	16.1	12.0	13.9
Mean Age of Youngest Child	16.0	15.5	13.8	15.2
(N)	(277)	(187)	(200)	(664)

Highest Educational Attainment

Elem.	6.3	2.6	3.8	4.5
High School	28.7	25.5	25.2	26.9
Some College	16.4	13.9	19.1	16.4
College	37.9	46.8	43.3	42.0
MA +	10.7	11.3	8.6	10.3
(N)	(317)	(231)	(210)	(758)

Main Activity Prior

Working	58.9	49.6	54.4	54.7
Housekeeping	31.9	43.9	37.4	37.0
Civic leader/ volunteer worker	2.6	2.6	2.9	2.8
Councilor/ Brgy. Captain	1.6	.9	2.4	1.6
Student	5.1	3.1	2.9	3.9
(N)	(314)	(228)	(206)	(749)

Occupation

Professional	24.8	22.4	25.7	24.3
Administrative/Clerical	4.6	3.9	4.7	4.4
Sales	20.1	14.2	19.2	18.1
Service	3.4	.4	0	1.6
Agricultural/Production	8.0	7.3	8.9	8.1
Not Working	39.1	51.8	41.5	43.5
(N)	(323)	(232)	(214)	(769)

Husband's Occupation

Professional	21.5	19.3	17.8	20.1
Administrative	1.9	4.1	2.7	3.6
Clerical	9.8	10.3	7.5	9.3
Sales	16.1	10.3	21.9	16.3
Service	3.9	1.4	2.7	2.8
Agriculture	19.5	33.8	26.7	25.8
Production	11.7	12.4	12.3	12.3
AFP	4.9	2.8	4.8	4.2
None/Retired	7.3	5.5	3.4	5.6
(N)	(205)	(145)	(146)	(496)

Comparing the women from the three island groups, women councilors in Mindanao differ noticeably in their age distribution from their counterparts in Luzon and Visayas, being younger on the average than women councilors from Luzon and Visayas (47.9 vs. 49.7).

Most of these women are married (72 percent). Only 12 percent are never married while 16 percent are either widowed or separated from their husbands. Marriage in Mindanao, at least among the councilors, is relatively more universal as only less than one in ten (9 percent) are never married, while this proportion is slightly higher at 12 and 16 percent for both Luzon and Visayas, respectively.

This supports our previous statement that women with political tasks are often faced with additional duties of managing a home. Indeed, our sample shows that two in five reported having more than five children, the mean number of children ever born (CEB) being 4.3. Councilors from Mindanao posted the highest fertility with a mean CEB of 4.9. Councilors from Luzon and Visayas have lower mean CEB of 4.2 and 4.0, respectively.

Politics is a demanding profession which keeps a woman away from home for an extended period. Their participation may, however, be facilitated if their children are older and do not need much parental attention. The mean age of the youngest child of these women is 15.2 years. Women in Mindanao have younger children (13.8 years) compared to either Luzon (16.0 years) or Visayas (15.5 years).

These councilors are highly educated. More than half (52 percent) have had at least a college degree with 10 percent even having post graduate training and/or degrees. On the other hand, even those with much lower educational attainments had the chance to win in this highly competitive process.

Councilors in the Visayas appear to have a higher educational attainment relative to their Luzon or Mindanao counterparts. Almost three in five (58 percent) of councilors from the Visayas have had at least a college degree. The corresponding proportion in Mindanao is 52 percent while that for Luzon is 49 percent.

Owing in part to their generally high educational attainment, it is not surprising to know that a large proportion of these women (24 percent) were working as professionals prior to their election. On the other hand, larger percentages of husbands are in the agricultural sector compared to their councilor wives.

The entry of students in politics is also evident. Four (4) percent of the sample were still studying before joining politics. On the other hand, it is also interesting to note that almost two in five (37 percent) were mainly housewives prior to their election.

First Timers vs. Re-electionists

While some 68 percent of the councilors have just been initiated into the world of politics ("first timers"), 32 percent reported prior political experience ("re-electionists"), reiterating the endurance of a further select group of women who have rendered public service for an extended term. A comparison of these two groups of women according to selected demographic factors is shown in Table 2.

First timers are younger with a mean age of 47.4 years, 6 years younger on the average, than re-electionists (52.8 years old). Owing to their younger ages, it is not surprising that their mean number of children ever born is smaller (3.9) relative to their counterparts (5.2) and younger, the mean age of their youngest children averaging 14 years, compared to 17 years for the re-electionists.

Table 2: Comparison of First Timers and Re-electionists by Demographic Factors

Demographic Factors	First Timers	Re-electionists	Total
Mean Age	47.4	52.8	49.1
Mean CEB	3.9	5.2	4.3
Mean Age of Youngest Child	14.1	17.4	15.2
Highest Educational Attainment			
Elem.	2.2	10.2	4.7
H.S.	18.1	33.8	23.0
Some College	15.5	18.7	16.5
College Grad.	47.5	29.3	41.8
Post Grad.	12.7	6.2	10.7
Vocational	4.0	1.8	3.3
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(497)	(225)	(722)
Marital Status			
Never Married	14.8	7.4	12.5
Currently Married	70.7	75.1	72.1
Widowed	13.0	17.0	14.3
D/S	1.4	.4	1.1
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(499)	(229)	(728)
Main Activity			
Housekeeping	35.1	41.1	37.0
Student	4.9	1.3	3.8
Working	57.0	50.4	55.0
Community Service	3.0	7.1	4.3
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(493)	(224)	(717)
Prior Work			
Professional	45.9	36.6	43.2
Administrative	3.1	.8	2.4
Clerical	6.5	3.3	5.5
Sales	31.6	32.5	31.9
Service	2.0	4.1	2.6
Agriculture	7.1	16.3	9.8

Production	2.4	3.3	2.9
Laborers NEC	1.4	3.3	1.9
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(294)	(123)	(417)

**Occupation of
Husband**

Retired	4.6	7.4	5.5
Professional	21.4	17.4	20.1
Administrative	4.3	2.7	3.8
Clerical	8.7	10.7	9.3
Sales	17.3	13.4	16.1
Service	2.8	3.4	3.0
Agriculture	22.6	32.8	25.6
Production	7.4	4.7	6.6
Laborers NEC	5.9	4.7	5.5
AFP	5.0	2.7	4.2
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(323)	(149)	(472)

Proportionately more first timers are highly educated compared to those who are not new in the political field. Sixty percent (60 percent) have had at least a college degree compared to only 36 percent of re-electionists. A slightly higher proportion among first timers are never married (15 percent) relative to their counterparts (7 percent). In terms of their previous main activity, housekeeping preoccupied 41 percent of re-electionists and only 35 percent of first timers. Fifty-seven percent (57 percent) of first timers were working prior to their service in public office, slightly higher than the 50 percent posted by the re-electionists. Both groups were mostly found in professional occupations although a significantly higher percentage of first timers (46 percent) vis-a-vis re-electionists (37 percent) were registered under this category. It is interesting to note that sixteen percent (16 percent) of re-electionists were in agriculture compared to only

Table 3: Most Important Factor for Joining Politics

Factors	First Timers	Re-electionists	Total
Own decision/ desire to serve	33.6	30.5	32.7
Pressure/influence from community prog.	26.1	34.1	28.3
Pressure/influence from political party	17.2	18.9	17.7
Pressure/influence from family	10.1	9.8	9.9
Others	8.0	1.8	6.2
Multiple Respose	5.1	4.9	5.1
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(429)	(164)	(593)

7 percent among the first timers. Moreover, a higher percentage of re-electionists also have husbands who belong to the agricultural sector.

What prompted these women to enter politics? Table 3 shows that the more common reasons include "own decision/desire to serve" as the most important factor cited by about 33 percent of the women councilors; 28 percent cited "pressure/influence from community"; and 18 percent gave "pressure/influence from political party" as a major reason for joining. A comparison of first timers and re-electionists show that comparatively more of the re-electionists (34 percent) found pressure from the community as the major reason relative to the first timers (26 percent).

Surprisingly, only 10 percent of the women cited influence of the family as the most important factor for joining politics. Nevertheless, the country's personalistic type of politics based on family alliances is still reflected by the fact that 48 percent of the women councilors have had at least one relative who

Table 4: Number of Relatives Holding Elective Positions

No. of Relatives	%
0	52.3
1	27.4
2	11.9
3+	8.2
(N)	(770)

Table 5: Most Important Factor in Winning

Factors	First Timers	Re-electionists	Total
Personal Qualities, dedication, Sincerity, Good PR	37.5	26.6	34.0
Support of Community/Organizations	21.1	22.6	21.6
Political Platform	13.8	17.6	15.0
Multiple Response	10.8	12.1	11.2
Political Machinery/Party	6.6	9.0	7.3
Support of family and friends; due to family name	5.6	6.5	5.9
Support of religious org.	3.7	4.0	3.8
Support of business sector	.9	1.5	1.1
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(427)	(199)	(626)

has ever held an elective position (Table 4). 13 and 17 percent of the women councilors have husbands and fathers who ever held a political post.

What factors contributed to their winning the elections? In view perhaps of their relatively higher educational attainment, proportionately more first timers (38 percent) mentioned personal qualification as the most important factor for winning relative to the re-electionists (27 percent) (Table 5). Indeed it is apparent particularly for the first timers that personal qualification is associated with educational attainment. The percentage of first timers who stated personal qualification as the most important factor for winning increases as one advances to higher educational levels (Table 6). A high educational attainment apparently increases an individual's capability to depend on her own skills in achieving her goals.

If the above comparison is indicative of a trend, it is expected that on the whole, new entrants to the political field, at least for women councilors, will be younger more educated and largely consisting of professionals. Perhaps fewer of them will be married or, if married, will have a smaller number of children.

The Impact of Gender on the Political Field

There are two possible ways in which being a woman can have an impact on women who seek public office. It can influence whether or not the woman gets elected to the sought post and it can affect the manner in which she performs the duties involved in the position.

The Impact of Gender on Getting Elected

Does being a woman help one win the position one is running for? Almost all of the respondent councilors admitted that being a woman helped her win the elections (74 percent

**Table 6: Most Important Factor Which Helped in Winning
by Highest Educational Attainment**

Factors	First Timers					Total
	Elem.	H.S.	Some College	College Grad	Post Grad	
Personal Qualities, dedication, Sincerity, Good PR	16.7	26.4	32.4	40.9	50	34.7
Support of Community/ Organization	50	27.6	32.4	15.9	14.8	21.3
Political Platform	0	14.9	8.8	15.9	13	13.9
Multiple Response	0	6.9	13.2	11.1	14.8	10.9
Political Machinery/Party	0	9.2	4.4	6.7	1.9	6.4
Support of family and friends;due to family name	16.7	6.9	5.9	5.3	3.7	5.7
Support of religious org.	16.7	5.7	2.9	3.4	1.9	3.8
Support of business sector	0	2.3	0	1	0	0.9
Total (N)	100 (6)	100 (87)	100 (68)	100 (208)	100 (54)	100 (423)
Factors	Re-electionists					Total
	Elem	H.S.	Some College	College Grad	Post Grad	
Personal Qualities, dedication Sincerity, Good PR	17.6	23.5	23.1	33.9	27.3	26.3
Support of Community/ Organization	23.5	26.5	30.8	11.9	18.2	22.2
Political Platform	17.6	19.1	20.5	13.6	27.3	18
Multiple Response	11.8	5.9	17.9	16.9	0	11.9
Political Machinery/Party	5.9	8.8	2.6	13.6	18.2	9.3
Support of family and friends;due to family name	17.6	4.4	0	10.2	9.1	6.7
Support of religious org.	5.9	8.8	2.6	0	0	4.1
Support of Business sector	0	2.9	2.6	0	0	1.5
Total (N)	100 (17)	100 (68)	100 (39)	100 (59)	100 (11)	100 (194)

**Table 7: Reasons Why Being a Woman Helped
in Winning the Elections**

Reasons	(%)
Percieved positive traits of women (reliable, personal, helpful good PR, cooperative, known best for community, humble)	36.6
Other women hepled	17.2
Visibility due to uniqueness	9.7
To represent women	9.2
Women's new role in politics	1.9
Non-gender specific	16.9
Others	8.8
Total	100
(N)	(413)

said “yes, very much” and 21 percent said “yes, but not so much”). About 37 percent cited the perceived positive traits of women as a great help in winning the elections (Table 7). Only 3 percent mentioned gender-related reasons to the question on “why being a woman helped but not so much”.

Most important of all, a woman’s success, or entry even, in a traditionally-male occupation may be rooted in her own personal beliefs and attitudes regarding women, their roles in life and their potentials and capabilities in this new field of endeavor. A woman’s socialization therefore plays a key role in the shaping of these values.

The women councilors of this study were presented a series of attitude statements bearing on precisely these issues and were asked whether they believed in them or had heard others say it. As expected, the sample held not only some rather unconventional views about women’s capabilities in the public sector but also some standard stereotypes regarding women which they seemed to have used to their advantage. For example, 92 percent expressed the opinion that “politics is

not affected by one's being a man or a woman" and 84 percent believe in the statement, "I am not a woman councilor, I am a councilor, period." Nevertheless, more than one-fifth of the respondents still believe that "most men are better suited for politics than most women" and 60 percent said that men are not used to aggressiveness while Filipino women are known for their charm (Table 8).

The Impact of Gender on Job Performance

How did these women see themselves on the job and how did they view their performance as compared to men? Several self-evaluation questions regarding their performance were asked of the respondents. Since these are self-reports, a caveat must be issued regarding their accuracy. But whether over- or underestimates of true worth, they nonetheless provide us an indication of performance.

In general, most of the respondents (66 percent) felt that they had done an excellent job (23 percent rated themselves as "outstanding" and 42 percent as "above average"). Thirty-four (34) percent felt that they gave only an average performance and only about one percent gave themselves a "poor" rating (Table 9).

A possible critical factor in performance or in the evaluation of performance is what the stereotype literature refers to as "solo status." People who have solo status in a situation (i.e., the only female councilor in an all-male city council), by virtue of their salient position, are rated more extremely and may be attributed greater causality, greater effectivity or even greater blame (Taylor, et.al, 1978). They may also actually perform better or worse because all eyes are focused on their performance (Jackson, 1987). A crosstabulation of the performance assessments by number of councilors (solo status versus one of several women councilors) presents interesting results. Slightly more women (27 percent) rate their performance as outstanding in the solo than in the non-unique condition (22 percent) (Table 9).

**Table 8: Beliefs Regarding Women and Their Participation
and Their Participation in the Public Sector (N = 625)**

Beliefs	(%) Who Personally Believe	(%) Who Heard Others say	Total	(N)
1. Women should learn to stand up and speak for themselves	96.4	3.6	100	(625)
2. Women are more dedicated, hard-working, honest, more religious, and God-fearing than men.	94.5	5.5	100	(625)
3. Politics is not affected by one's being a man or woman.	92.0	8.0	100	(625)
4. I am not a "woman councilor"; I am a councilor, period.	83.7	16.3	100	(625)
5. Women politicians have a tendency to "mother" their constituents	71.8	28.2	100	(625)
6. There is a subconscious resistance to women's ideas, statements, and projects from men	67.1	32.9	100	(625)
7. I don't think male politicians are biased against women politicians	66.3	33.7	100	(625)
8. Being a woman or man has nothing to do with love of country, government service, or the capacity to be the best in the world.	65.2	34.8	100	(625)
9. Men not used to aggressiveness-- Filipino women are known for their charm	60.0	40.0	100	(625)
10. Women politicians do not have to have a woman's agenda because when they plan their programs of action, they have all their constituents in mind: men, women, children, etc.	57.6	42.4	100	(625)
11. Women remain oppressed because they chose to be	49.7	50.3	100	(625)
12. "Pagbigyan natin ang kababaihan; kawawa naman sila".	32.4	67.6	100	(625)
13. I'm going to quit politics. It is impossible to fight system; nothing happens anyway.	27.5	72.5	100	(625)
14. Most women are better suited for politics than most men.	22.1	77.9	100	(625)
15. Politics is too dirty for women to be involved in.	16.6	83.4	100	(625)

**Table 9: Assessment of Performance by
Number in Council**

Performance	No. of Women Councilors		Total
	Solo	One of Several	
Outstanding	26.8	21.9	23.2
Above Average	42.4	42.2	42.3
Average	30.7	34.6	33.6
Poor	0.0	1.3	0.9
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(205)	(540)	(745)

Another performance indicator is amount of media coverage. A third of our respondents felt that they were getting more media coverage than their male counterparts (Table 10). When we break this down by number of councilors, we notice once again the solo status effect. Slightly more women in the solo situation (37 percent) say they get more coverage compared to women in the non-unique situation (33 percent).

Participation in council discussions is another measure of performance. Again, a third of our respondents claim to be more active than their male counterparts and this figure rises slightly in the solo (37 percent) versus one of several women councilors condition (32 percent).

One of the traits stereotypically attached to women is emotionality. This may be interpreted favorably (i.e., passion leading to action) or unfavorably (i.e., clouding one's judgment) for women's performance in the public sector. When asked to evaluate their emotionality in deliberations, 39 percent of the respondents said they were more emotional compared to their male counterparts and this figure rose even higher when the

Table 10: Comparison Between Women Councilors and Male Councilors by Number of Women Councilors in Council

Performance	No. of Women Councilors		
	Solo	One of Several	Total
Amount of Media Coverage Compared to Male Councilors			
Gets more coverage	36.7	32.5	33.7
Gets same coverage	56.1	61.4	59.9
Gets less coverage	6.6	5.7	6.0
No media coverage	0.5	0.4	0.4
Total (N)	100 (196)	100 (523)	100 (719)
Participation in Council Discussions Compared to Male Councilors			
More active	36.7	31.9	33.2
As active	60.7	64.5	63.3
Less active	2.9	3.7	3.5
Total (N)	100 (207)	100 (546)	100 (753)
Degree of Emotionality Compared to Male Councilors			
More emotional	44.2	37.2	39.1
About the same	43.7	51.3	49.2
Less emotional	12.1	11.5	11.7
Total (N)	100 (206)	100 (540)	100 (746)
Degree of Effectivity Compared to Male Councilors			
More effective than men	35.0	31.0	32.1
As effective as men	62.5	65.6	64.7
Less effective than men	2.5	3.5	3.2

Total (N)	100 (200)	100 (520)	100 (720)
Number of Ordinances Filed Compared to Male Councilors			
Filed more than men	17.4	18.9	18.5
Filed same number as men	58.2	56.1	56.7
Filed less	21.9	20.8	21.7
Not filed any	2.5	4.1	3.7
Total (N)	100 (201)	100 (533)	100 (734)
Availability to Public Compared to Male Councilors			
More available than men	62.7	63.6	63.4
As available as men	36.3	34.7	35.1
Less available than men	1.0	1.7	1.5
Total (N)	100 (204)	100 (539)	100 (743)

Table 11: Programs/Projects for Women

Programs/Projects	(%)
Livelihood	37.8
Arts & Crafts	14.5
Beautification/Sanitation	13.5
Health/Clinics	13.1
RIC	9.1
Others	11.6
Total (N)	100* (494)

* Total does not add up due to rounding errors.

women were alone (44 percent) than when they were one of several women (37 percent) in the council.

When asked to evaluate their effectiveness on the whole versus their male counterparts, almost a third say they are more effective (32 percent) and the majority (65 percent) say they are just as effective. Again, a higher percentage (35 percent) among those in the solo status position stated that they were more effective than men, compared to those in the several women councilors' category. Only a very small percentage (3 percent) admit that they are less effective than the male councilors. This could be interpreted to mean that women perform just as well as the men in public service or that, at least, women in this line of work have a positive image of their own worth. Either way, this can only translate into positive effects for the female gender and the currently prevailing gender stereotypes.

Why did some women think they were more effective than men? Of the 169 respondents who claimed that they were more effective, 33 percent cited gender-related reasons such as women being more industrious than men, women being more likely to fulfill commitments and women being more meticulous. Of the 262 councilors who said that they were as effective as men, 19.5 percent also cited gender-related reasons. However, none of the reasons cited for less effectivity compared to men could be categorized as specifically gender related.

When asked to identify factors that made being a councilor difficult, only 7 percent cited gender-related factors like the indifference of male colleagues, family obligations and being "only a woman." Nevertheless, 2 percent cited being a woman as a reason when asked the question "what made being a councilor easier".

Other performance indicators included number of ordinances filed and availability to the public. Compared to their male counterparts, 75 percent claimed they had filed more or the same number of ordinances and 63 percent say they are more available

to their constituents. In these instances, however, there is no substantial difference between women in solo situations and those who work with other women councilors.

The Impact of Women in Office on their Fellow Women

The true value of having women hold public office or in non-traditional lines of work, however, goes beyond the fact that these women are able to rise above the limitations set by their gender, to include all possible repercussions such groundbreaking behavior may have on other members of the minority group. Thus, beyond gender's impact on these women councilors' personal lives and careers, this study was also interested in the possible implications of having women in office on the lives of their fellow women. What are these women's concerns? Did having women in office result in programs and policies that could benefit and improve the conditions of other women? To answer these questions, the women councilors were asked about their areas of interest, their most important project at the moment and, more specifically, whether they had any programs or projects especially designed to benefit the women of their community.

In general, when asked whether they share the same areas of interest as the males in the council, half of the sample said they have the same interests as the men and half say they are more interested in some particular issue. The interests on which they differ from the males include social services, women's welfare and development, youth and children's welfare, cleanliness and beautification campaigns, livelihood projects and barangay/government affairs. In general, women councilors were involved in quite a number of projects that were very general in nature (i.e., infrastructure, livelihood, beautification and tourism, etc.) and only a few of these could be labeled as strictly female

concerns. It is possible that these women in government office think/perceive that to succeed, they cannot be too narrow and feminist in their concerns lest they alienate the other members of their constituency.

When asked if they had any programs specifically designed for women, 83 percent of the women councilors answered in the affirmative. These programs include various livelihood projects for women (mentioned by 38 percent), arts and crafts (14 percent), beautification and sanitation (14 percent) and health services (13 percent) (Table 11).

Subsequently, the respondents were asked to prioritize or rate the importance of a list of 21 areas for training and/or research. The top ten areas (ranked according to the percentage reporting them as first priority) are shown in Table 12. More than 90 percent said that "women's participation in policy planning, implementation, management and evaluation" should be given first priority. This choice together with "political socialization of women" as the top priority areas may be reflective of a need to develop specific skills in order to improve their participation in the process of governance. The prioritization also gives an indication of the increasing salience of certain feminist issues among the concerns of women councilors. For example, among the top areas of concern are "impact of technological development on women", "social support system/structures and services for dual role of women" and "socio-cultural and psychological dimension of violence among women".

Future Plans

Of the 679 women councilors, 73 percent expressed the intention to run again, 19 percent said they were not running again and 8 percent were still undecided.

While it was initially surmised that additional roles of managing a home would prove to be even more difficult for

Table 12: Prioritization of Training and Research

Topics	%	(N)
1. Women's participation in policy planning, implementation, management and evaluation	91.6	(255)
2. Impact of literacy programs on participation of women in decision making	79.6	(255)
3. Political socialization of women	77.3	(255)
4. Education programmes for parents as primary agents of socialization of children	73.8	(255)
5. Impact of technological development	67.5	(255)
6. Accessibility to information and resources for women in under-privileged groups as well as for village women	65.1	(255)
7. Post factum analysis of completed action projects with particular reference to the participation of women in decision making in those projects	64.2	(255)
8. Study of women's organizations	63.3	(255)
9. Social support system/structures and services for dual role of women	60.4	(255)
10. Socio-cultural and psychological dimension violence against women	56.3	(255)

Table 13: Proportion of Councilors Who Intends to Run in the Future by Marital Status

Marital Status/ Intention to Run	Total	(N)
Never Married	66.3	(86)
Married	75.8	(512)
Widowed	60	(105)
Divorced/Separated	87.5	(8)

the women councilors, the data show otherwise. Except for the divorced/separated who comprised only 1 percent (and hence unstable percentages) those who are married exhibited the highest proportion of those who intend to run for another term (Table 13). Moreover, the higher their number of children ever born, the higher the percentage of women councilors who intend to be re-elected (Table 14). This may be partly because the children are generally older and hence require less attention. Then again, among those who intend to run again, the same table shows that high proportions of those with 5 or more children would opt for the same position compared to those who have fewer.

On the whole, performance assessment seems to positively influence their future intentions for running. More of those who saw themselves as top performers said they would run again (77 percent). The percentages representing those who intend to run again decline as the assessment of performance level decreases from "outstanding" to "poor" (77 percent and 43 percent, respectively, Table 15). Given the nature of the study, however, we can not be too sure of the direction of causality. After all, the performance rating could be a mere justification for an a priori decision to run again.

Summary and Conclusion

The profile of women councilors of 1990 suggests that a variety of women have been drawn into politics. While most of the women are middle-aged, there is a fair representation of the young who were fresh out of school as well as the retirees who have found a new career in politics. The women also come from varied backgrounds. Many reported themselves as mainly housekeeping before running for office while others were practicing a profession. Furthermore, their educational qualification ranged from some elementary education to having graduate degrees. What seems to be common among these women, however, is that many are at the stage in their lives when they are freer of the responsibility for taking care of very

Table 14: Proportion of First Timers/Re-electionists Who Intends to Run by Desired Position and No. of Children Ever Born

Position	No. of CEB		
	0	1-4	5+
Same	56.9	60.4	56.9
Higher	37.3	27.8	37.3
Lower	0	2.4	0
Any	5.9	9.4	5.9
Total (N)	100	100	100
	(51)	(212)	(198)

Table 15: Proportion of First Timers/Re-electionists by Intention to Run in the Future and by Assessment of Performance

Intention to Run/ Assessment of Performance	%	(N)	Assessment of Performance		
			Will run	Will not run	Undecided
Outstanding	100	(163)	77.3	14.1	8.6
Above Average	100	(298)	76.8	15.4	7.7
Average	100	(226)	64.2	24.3	11.5
Poor	100	(7)	42.9	42.9	14.3
			Will run	Will not run	Undecided

young children. This, together with the support systems common to most Filipino families, may have greatly facilitated their entry into politics.

If the comparison between the first-timers and the reelectionists is indicative of a trend, then we may expect the entry of younger, highly educated and more qualified women in the political arena.

Almost all the councilors felt that being a woman greatly helped them win the elections mainly because of the perceived positive traits of women. They generally rated their performance favorably. When asked to assess themselves relative to their male counterparts, those who were the only female councilors in the council or in "solo status position", generally rated themselves as either doing as well if not bettering the performance of the men. A significant proportion said that they had more media coverage, participated more in council discussions and filed more bills and ordinances than the male councilors. They attribute their effectiveness to such gender-related reasons as being more industrious and meticulous than men.

When probed on their specific areas of interest, half of the women declared that they were interested in the same areas as the male councilors, citing such areas as infrastructure, livelihood and tourism. The others, however, seem to have had the lives and welfare of their women constituents and their families foremost in mind when they said they were interested in social services, women and child welfare, even cleanliness and beautification.

There seems to have been a realization for many that they lack certain basic skills to help them become more effective public servants. There was an almost universal clamor for training in women's participation in policy making, implementation and management and evaluation. Majority also said that political socialization of women should be given high priority.

The experience of direct participation in the political process seems to have been rewarding for these women that a majority expressed their interest in running for office again. Perhaps in the long run, these favorable experiences would contribute to a raised consciousness among the women in the larger community of the importance of direct involvement in the process of development. With increased participation of women in the political sphere, legislative and programmatic action on the welfare and upliftment of women and their families can be better ensured.

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