

THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN CONGRESS

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to assess the political participation of women in the Philippine legislature. It focuses on the House of Representatives, specifically, the current Congress. It looks at the number of Congresswomen from the 8th to the 12th congress. The study also reviews their profiles and lawmaking activities.

Since the Philippine Congress or Legislature is mandated with the function of lawmaking, the women representatives in Congress and the nature of the laws it passes are worth examining in terms of the importance it places on women's concerns in relation to the country's commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) and the International Conference on Population and Development Program for Action (ICPDPA).

The study also reveals that the increase in the number of women legislators from the 8th to the 11th Congress did not necessarily translate into a greater number of bills on women's concerns that were filed and approved.

Introduction

In September 1995, the People's Republic of China hosted one of the largest international conferences ever held. Some 17,000 participants, including 6,000 delegates from 189 countries, over 4,000 representatives of accredited non-

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governmental organizations, a host of international civil servants and about 4,000 media representatives attended the United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women, otherwise called the Beijing Conference. Moreover, some 30,000 people also participated in the parallel NGO forum on women.

The Beijing Declaration, an output of the conference, reinforced the consensus and progress made at previous UN Conferences and summits—on women in Nairobi in 1985, on children in New York in 1990, on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, on human rights in Vienna in 1993, on population and development in Cairo in 1994 and on social development in Copenhagen in 1995, with the objective of achieving equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity. It also reaffirmed the governments' commitments to the equal rights and inherent human dignity of women and men and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Declaration on the Right to Development.

The Conference formulated the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) as an agenda of women's empowerment. The BPA called for integration of gender perspective in all policies and programs. It focused on concrete measures to address the critical areas of concern worldwide. Implementation is primarily the responsibility of governments but is also dependent on a wide range of institutions in the public, private, and NGO sectors at the community, national, subregional/regional and international levels.

In response to its commitment to implement the BPA, the Philippines formulated the Philippine Plan for Gender-

Responsive Development (PPGD) for 1995 to 2025. It is the logical translation of the Beijing Conference into national commitments and initiatives. Executive Order No. 273 which approved and adopted the PPGD in 1995 mentioned that the plan shall serve as the main vehicle for implementing in the Philippines the action commitments during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. The PPGD set the priority sectoral gender concerns for the country that shall be addressed within the 30-year duration of the plan. These concerns are congruent with the 12 critical concerns in the BPA: poverty, health, education, economic empowerment, power and decision-making, violence against women, the girl-child, mechanisms for advancement, effects of armed conflict, women's rights, mass media and the environment.

The PPGD highlighted the emphasis of the Philippine Country Report on Women in 1986-1995 that empowerment for the greater majority of women must start with the sharing of women of decision-making and of the political power that men have traditionally held. It is in the political arena and through political will that gender-responsive development is most effectively achieved. The PPGD stressed that "While Filipino women were instrumental in toppling a dictatorship in the past decade and catapulted into power the country's first woman president, their participation in politics and governance continues to be limited." The limited political participation of women in the country has also been confirmed by studies of Tapales (1992-1999), Reyes (1996-1998), Conda and Francisco (1997), Aguilar (1992, 1995), Tancangco (1992), the NCRFW, the University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies, the Institute of Women's Studies, the UP National Center for Public Administration and Governance—Center for Local and Regional Governance and the Center for Citizenship, Leadership and Democracy. These studies

looked at the political participation of women as (a) voters, (b) campaigners and (c) candidates in the previous administrations.

Nonetheless, no study has been conducted on the women representatives in the 12th Congress (July 2001-June 2004), involving the current congresswomen. The political participation of women in the current Congress is noteworthy, considering that there are 38 congresswomen constituting 17.8 percent of the 214 seats in Congress (as of October 3, 2001). This is an increase of 8.2 percent compared to the 20 women that constituted 9.6 percent of the 208 seats in the 11th Congress. Twenty-eight (28) out of the 38 congresswomen are first termers, i.e., they are serving their first term in Congress. Though the number of congresswomen in the 12th Congress is remarkable compared to the previous years, the percentage of seats in Congress is still low compared to the U.N.'s proposed international benchmark of 30 percent (BPA, 1995). Furthermore, the UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) showed that the Philippine figure for the percent of seats in parliament held by women of 11.8 percent (1990-1999 data) is low compared with countries like China (21.8 percent), South Africa (27.9 percent), Malaysia (14.5 percent) and Mexico (15.9 percent). The top three countries in terms of women representation in parliament are: Sweden (42.7 percent), Denmark (37.4 percent) and Finland (36.5 percent). Notwithstanding, a consolation for the Philippines is that, although it ranks number 70 in the human development index, it ranks number 62 (or higher than its HDI rank) in the gender-related development index (GDI) and number 46 in the gender empowerment index (GEM) part of which is contributed by women representation in parliament. (UNDP HDR 2001)

With more women legislators in the 12th Congress, it is expected that there will be more advocates for women's concerns

and that this will translate into policies and projects to enable the Philippines to fulfill its commitments to the Beijing Platform of Action and to women-related commitments in the ICPD. Hence, this study aims to examine the trends in the political participation of congresswomen from the 8th to the 12th Congress, with particular emphasis on the latter. This research attempts to discover the personal and political backgrounds of the new breed of congresswomen, their perceptions on women's concerns, their assessment of the probability of the passage of women-related bills and their plans to pursue the women's legislative agenda in the light of the country's international commitments.

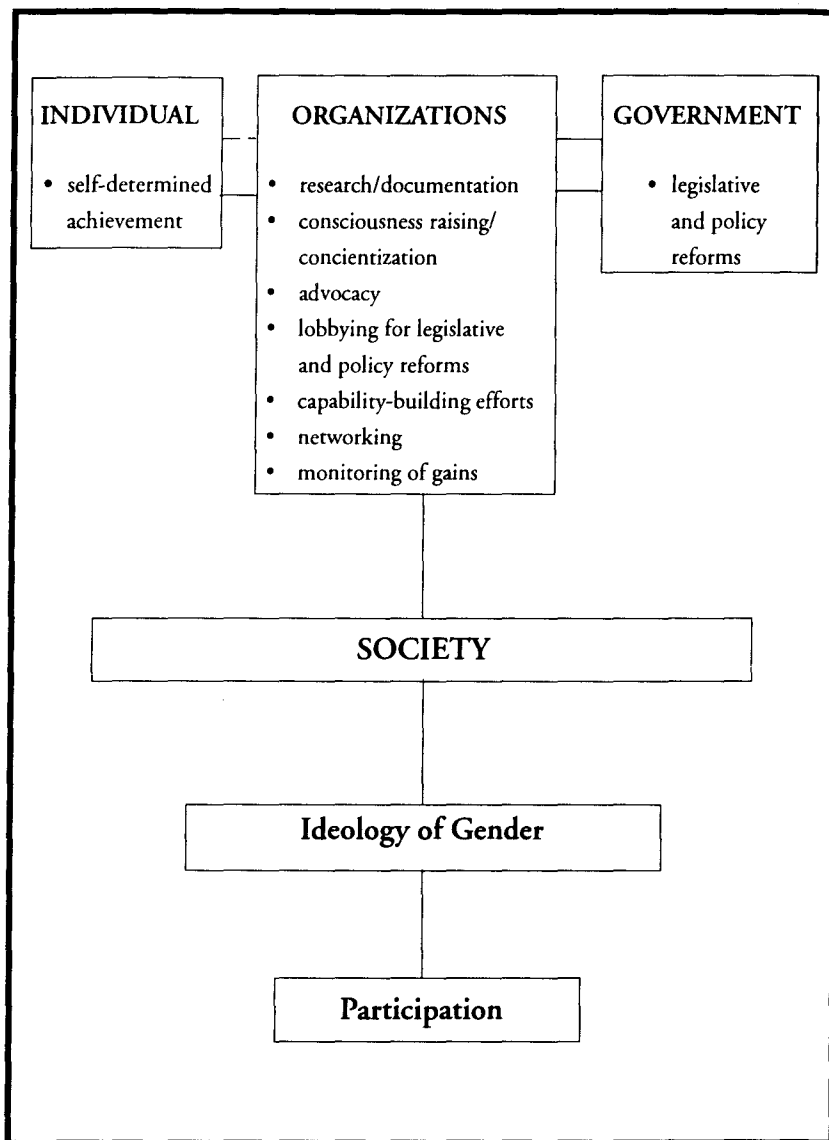
This paper aims to assess the political participation of women in the Philippine legislature. It focuses on the House of Representatives, specifically the current congress. It looks at the number of congresswomen from the 8th to the 12th Congress. The study also reviews their profiles and lawmaking activities.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

An analysis of the political participation of women legislators in the Philippine Congress necessitates the construction of a conceptual framework that links political participation, human development, social development with the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action, the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development and the women's initiatives in Congress. The framework shows the continuum of social development as a process (Fig. 1) that provides the impetus for international commitments, the national response in terms of plans and the actualization of these plans in the legislative agenda. Hence, how women in the legislature push the women's agenda is worth examining. Do more women legislators mean more women's bills?

Figure 1

TRANSFORMATION OF THE GENDER IDEOLOGY
TOWARD MORE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION



Do more women legislators mean greater chances of women's bills becoming laws? With the new Congress, it is also noteworthy to determine the perceptions of the new congresswomen, as these would influence their advocacy for women's concerns in the legislature.

Political Participation, Human Development and Social Development

McClosky (1968) defined political participation as a voluntary action by which members of the society share in the selection of rules and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy. It includes activities like voting, seeking information, verifying, attending meetings, contributing financially and communicating with representatives, enrolling in a party, speech, writing, campaigning and running for office. Rahman (1981) equates political participation with mobilization and the struggle for political power. It is achieving a transformation of social power through the exercise of political power. Wun Gaeo's (1983) concept of political participation is a redistribution of control of both resources and power and for the politically excluded and socially disadvantaged (e.g., women). Martin (1974) posits that political participation will involve confronting power structures.

Dr. Huub Spoormans (Garcia 1993) views political participation with the framework of human rights as formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They express the citizen's rights to political participation as (1) the right to take part in the conduct of governments; and, (2) the more specific right to vote in elections. The right to political participation is embedded in a number of other rights such as: (1) negative rights, i.e., those that protect one's physical integrity like the right not to be

subjected to torture; (2) those rights that assure procedural fairness when a government curtails individual liberty, i.e., those that ensure due process and a fair trial; (3) anti-discrimination norms, i.e., those that respond to the idea of equality, e.g., regardless of gender; (4) expressive rights, i.e., the right to free speech, assembly and association; and, (5) the right to political participation itself. He emphasizes a broader concept of political participation as more than an instrument to protect people against the violation of their interests. The character of political participation is that wherein people (1) learn how to conduct their common affairs themselves, i.e., self-government; and, (2) develop their personal qualities and realize their human capacities, i.e., self-realization.

Self-realization, self-respect, political freedom and human rights like the right to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living are choices that each person needs to have. The process of enlarging people's choices is human development. (UNDP HDR 1990). Human development includes both the formation of human capacities such as improved health, knowledge and skills and people's use of these acquired capacities — for leisure, productive purposes or being active in cultural, social and political affairs. Participation is an essential element of human development. (UNDP HDR 1993:21). Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. Since participation requires increased influence and control, it also demands increased empowerment. Thus, any proposal to increase people's participation must pass the empowerment test — does it increase or decrease people's power to control their lives?

Empowerment releases the creative potential of people to improve their lives. This process of enhancing the well-being

and the enrichment of the quality of people's lives is termed social development (Blumer 1966). The UNCRD (1988) elucidates on the concept of social development as:

. . . A process not measured only by improved access to services such as health, education or welfare, but by progress in achieving more complex and sometimes nebulous social goals such as equity, 'social justice', cultural promotion and "peace of mind" and will as enhancing the capacity for action by the people so that their creative potential can be released and shape social development.

The Beijing Platform for Action

As a blueprint for social development in terms of empowering women, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) articulates political participation as a human right and women's rights as human rights. As a consensus document produced during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995, the BPA called upon governments to take strategic action in twelve critical areas of concern:

1. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women
2. Inequalities and inadequacies and unequal access to education and training
3. Inequalities and inadequacies and unequal access to health care and related services
4. Violence against women
5. The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation
6. Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources
7. Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels

8. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women
9. Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women
10. Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media
11. Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment
12. Persistent discrimination against violation of the rights of the girl-child.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

Held in 1994, a year earlier than the Beijing Conference, the ICPD produced the ICPD Program of Action (ICPDPA) that also recognized women as instruments of social development. The ICPDPA's chapters on women are Chapter 4 on gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, Chapter 5 on the family, its roles, rights, composition and structure, Chapter 7 on reproductive rights and reproductive health and Chapter 8 on health, morbidity and mortality. The PLCPD (1994) summarizes the gender issues in the ICPD thus:

The ICPD aims to ensure that all population and development policies and endeavors emphasize women's equality. Education, employment opportunities and health services, including reproductive health care and family planning are crucial components of women's advancement. Gender equity issues need to be addressed from a human rights perspective. This requires removing all legal barriers to women's equality; ending violence against women; and eliminating administrative, cultural, social and economic obstacles to the realization of

women's rights and economic independence. Population policies will not succeed unless women are better represented and equal to men in making and directing policy. Development policies and programs should be designed to promote women's interests.

The Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) 1995-2025

The Philippine government formulated the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) as a blueprint for translating the commitments to the BPA and to the ICPDPA into action. The plan noted the institutional developments that were formed in order to address women's issues. It also noted the policy developments in terms of laws on gender that were passed between 1989 and 1995.

In the sphere of women in politics and governance, the plan identified the following concerns:

1. Lack of a women's vote
2. Low number of women occupying national and local elective positions
3. Confinement of local women officials to traditional positions and tasks
4. Need to encourage women voters to support candidates with clear political agenda for gender and development (GAD)
5. Low level of participation of women in decision-making positions in government
6. Socio-cultural, economic and other structural factors affecting women's participation in electoral politics and governance.
 - Electoral politics is regarded as dirty and basically for men only

- Women who run or get elected to office are mostly the wives/widows or immediate relatives of politicians
- Lack of political education for women
- Multiple burden

7. Lack of gender-specific data.

To address these issues, the plan mapped out 13 policies and strategies and 21 recommended programs and projects.

Legislative Agenda on Women

The realization and implementation of the policies, strategies, plans and programs stated in the PPGD depends on government, the private sector and civil society. Government plays the lead role as the initiator, catalyst and funder of initiatives to promote women's concerns. In particular, the Philippine Congress or Legislature is mandated with the function of law-making. Hence, the women representatives in Congress and the nature of the laws it passes are worth examining in terms of the importance it places on women's concerns in relation to the country's commitments to the BPA and the ICPDPA.

Performance of Women Legislators in the 8th to 12th Congress

Number of Women Legislators in Congress or Congresswomen

The total number of women in parliament, or in Congress, is an important indicator of the political participation of women. It is also one of the measures used in computing for the gender empowerment index in the UN Human Development Report.

Hence, it is noteworthy to examine these figures in the Philippines.

The number of congresswomen from the eighth to the twelfth Congress, i.e., from the period 1987 to 2001 ranged from 19 to 38 or an average of 24 congresswomen. The eighth Congress had the least number of congresswomen, i.e., 19. Of the total number of seats or the total number of members of Congress of 200 to 214 members, women occupy from 9.4 percent to 17.8 percent of the total seats or an average of 11.6 percent. The Eighth Congress had the smallest percentage of women as members of Congress at 9.4 percent while the 12th Congress has the most number and percentage of women members at 38 and 17.8 percent, respectively. Furthermore, 28 out of the 38 congresswomen are serving their first term in Congress. Despite the marked increase, the figures still fall short of the UN international benchmark of 30 percent reached during the Beijing Conference on Women. (Refer to table 1).

House Bills on Women

This study deals also with house bills on women's concerns that were referred to the House Committee on Women. It does not include other bills on other concerns filed by women or men.

Bills Filed by Women. From the 8th to the 11th Congress, congresswomen filed an average of 20 bills on women's concerns per term. Women in the 8th Congress filed 13 bills and four of these were approved and became Republic Acts (RA) and another bill was approved as a House Resolution. Women in the 9th Congress filed 21 bills and one of these became a law. Women in the 10th Congress filed 28 bills. Another bill was approved as a House Resolution. Women in the 11th Congress filed 20 bills

in all. However, during the 10th and 11th Congresses, no bills filed by women became law. Reasons for the non-approval of the bills filed were because they were still referred to various House Committees; they were pending action by Senate or they were up for the second or third reading, or they were considered unfinished business.

In the current 12th Congress, the congresswomen have filed 21 out of 29 bills on women.

Bills Filed by Men. From the 8th to the 11th Congress, congressmen filed an average of 19 bills on women's concerns per term. Men in the 8th Congress filed 22 bills, i.e., nine bills more than those filed by the women. Three of these bills filed by men were approved and became Republic Acts (RA). Men in the 9th Congress filed eight bills, compared to 21 bills filed by the women. Of the eight bills, one bill was approved and this became a law. Men in the 10th Congress filed 23 bills or 45.1 percent of the total number of bills on women filed. Nonetheless, neither one of these nor those filed by the women became law. The men in the 11th Congress filed 22 bills, but not one of these became a law. During the 10th and 11th Congress, no bills filed by men on women were passed.

Total Number of Bills Filed. The 8th to the 11th Congress members, both men and women, filed an average of 39 bills on women's concerns. The 8th Congress filed 35 bills, seven of which were approved and became RAs. The 9th Congress members filed 29 bills, two of which became RAs. The 10th and 11th Congress members filed 51 and 42 bills respectively, but not one bill became an RA. The 12th Congress members filed 29 bills on women's concerns. It is still too early to assess their performance since they are barely four months in office. Nonetheless, the number of bills filed by the 12th Congress is remarkable

when compared to the previous Congresses, which had from 29 to 51 bills on women for their entire three-year terms.

Implications. A thorough study of bills filed by women and bills filed by men to address women's issues show the following averages:

- Seven women to file six bills;
- 96 women to file five bills that would become law;
- 32 women to file and lobby for the approval of three bills that would become law, regardless of the gender of the person who filed the bill;
- Three women to file and lobby for the filing of five bills, regardless of the gender of the person who filed the bill and whether or not these bills would become law.

The increase in the number of women legislators from the 8th to the 11th Congress did not necessarily translate into a greater number of bills on women's concerns that were filed and approved.

It was in the 8th Congress where there were only 19 women where the most number of bills were approved. The figures are also attributed to the men filing more bills than women and having three of these approved and enacted as RAs. The ratio of the number of women to the number of bills they filed was 3:2, i.e., it took three women to file one bill. The ratio of the number of women to the total number of bills filed was 1:2. This number indicates that a woman's role in congress is not limited to the filing of bills; it also includes lobbying with her male counterparts to file and approve bills.

In the 9th Congress, a 15.8 percent increase in the number of women resulted in a 61.5 percent increase in the number of bills filed by women. However, taking the total number of bills filed by men and women, there was a 17.1 percent decrease compared to the 8th Congress. Moreover, only 6.9 percent of

the total bills on women filed became law compared to the 8th Congress where 20 percent of the bills filed became law. The ratio of women to bills filed by women was 1:1. The ratio of women to the total number of bills filed was 3.4. Although the number of bills filed by women increased with an increase in the number of women, the total number of bills filed by both men and women decreased. This was due to the decrease in the number of bills filed by the men.

In the 10th Congress, there was a slight decrease in the number of women by 4.5 percent but there was a 33.3 increase in the number of bills filed by women. There was also a 187.5 percent increase in the number of bills filed by men on women's concerns. Compared to the 9th Congress, there was an increase of 76 percent in the total number of bills filed by men and women. However, not one of the 51 bills became a law. Nevertheless, this shows that even though there was a decrease in the number of women in Congress, there were men who took the initiative to file bills on women's concerns. The ratio of women to bills filed by women was 3:4, i.e., it took three women to file four bills, or one woman filed at least one bill. The ratio of women to the total number of bills filed was 2:5, i.e., it took two women to file and lobby for the filing of five bills.

Comparing the 10th and the 11th Congress, there was a 4.8 percent decrease in the number of women and a 28.5 percent decrease in the number of bills filed by women. There was also a 4.3 percent decrease in the number of bills filed by men. There was a 17.6 percent decrease in the total number of bills on women filed by both men and women. There were no bills that became law. The ratio of women to bills filed by women was 1:1. The ratio of women to the total number of bills filed was 1:2, i.e., it took one woman to file bills and to convince men to file and support two bills. Graph 1 shows the trend in the number

of congresswomen vis-à-vis the number of bills on women filed from the 8th to the 11th Congress.

Bills on Women in the 12th Congress

In order to examine the 12th Congress' capability to enact laws to fulfill the country's commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action and the ICPD Platform of Action, it is necessary to determine the bills that were filed (as of the end of 2001). At this writing, these bills are still under deliberation but they provide an indication of the priorities of the current administration. In accordance with the BPA, these bills were classified as shown by Table 2 on page 38.

The table shows that the following BPA critical concerns had a lesser number of proposed legislative action or bills: education and training, access to health care and related services, natural resources and environment and stereotyping of women, inequality in women's access to and participation in communication systems. The reasons behind this are varied. The bills could have been referred to more appropriate committees like population and family relations, agrarian reform, civil, political and human rights, ecology, health, education, people's participation, labor and employment, public information, social services and other committees. Other reasons could be the contentiousness of the issues, e.g., divorce and abortion. The next section examines the personal viewpoints of the women legislators of the 12th Congress on the women's legislative agenda.

PROFILE AND PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN THE 12TH CONGRESS

This part shows the results of the survey administered to the women legislators in the 12th Congress. The respondents, 22

out of 38 congresswomen or 58 percent of the total number of congresswomen, revealed information on their personal characteristics, their political career, their knowledge, perceptions and attitudes on gender and development issues and their assessment of the prospects of bills on women in Congress.

A. Personal Characteristics

The women members of the 12th Congress who were the respondents of the study are 29 to 65 years old, with an average age of 47.3 years. Fourteen or 63.6 percent of them are married. Only one woman claimed to be single. They have an average of three to four kids. Eleven or 50 percent of them are college graduates and the rest have postgraduate units and degrees. Fifteen or 68.2 percent of them are presidents, advisers, directors and officers of socio-civic, religious and professional organizations. These include male-dominated groups like the Rotary Club, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the Philippine Medical Association and the Lions' Club. (Table 3)

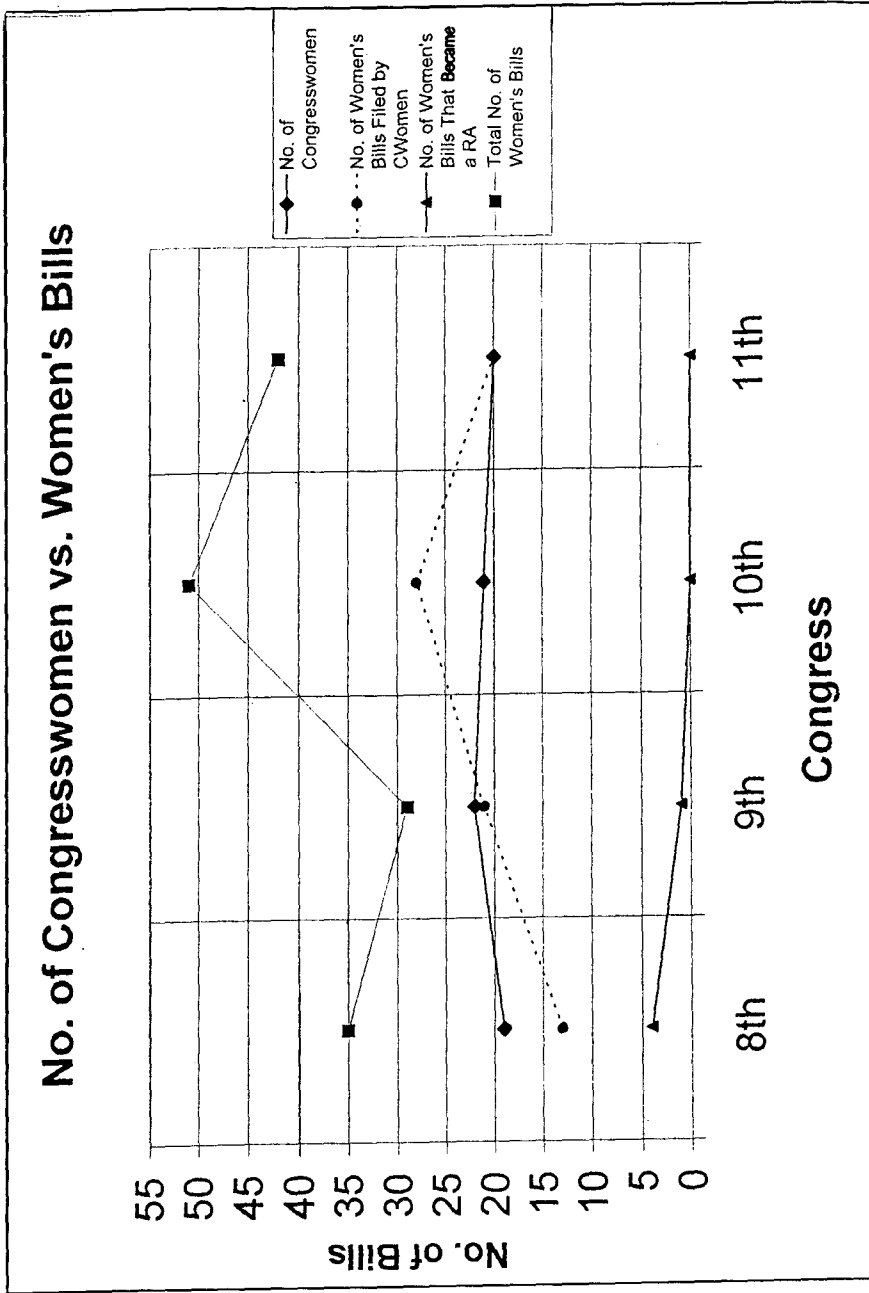
B. Political Career

Twelve or 54.4 percent of the respondents occupied elective positions in the public sector before they became congresswomen. These positions were as congresswoman/party list representative/assemblywoman, provincial board member, vice governor, mayor, councilor and barangay captain. This means that a majority of the respondents were not new to politics. Five of them were elected to public office even before the 1987 elections. Eleven of them were members of national political parties for six months to ten years. Seven of them belonged to local political parties for four months up to nine years. (Table 4).

As to their mode of entry into politics, the respondents ranked their political links as their first mode of entry. This meant that these women (1) had husbands that came from a political family; (2) came from political families and (3) were drafted by their political parties. This phenomenon is similar to the findings of Dr. Proserpina Tapales (1999, 2000) in her studies on the mode of entry into politics of women local chief executives. Nonetheless, the respondents mentioned that the important factors that made them win a Congressional seat were, according to rank, (1) performance in previous elective post, dedication to public service and husband's influence; (2) name; (3) personality; (4) support of community organizations; (5) party support; (6) family support and (7) one's being a woman. The congresswomen did not see the gender factor as significant enough to get them the votes needed to win the elections.

Thirteen or 59.1 percent of the respondents plan to run for another term as congresswoman. Two of the respondents would rather run for local positions like mayor and governor, since these were posts they occupied before they became congresswomen. One of them has a politician husband while the other woman comes from a political family (Table 5). Fifteen or 68.2 percent of the women encouraged other women to run for public office. The reasons they gave for encouraging women to run during elections were: to increase the representation of women in government; to prove that women are as capable as men; to ensure that laws are gender-responsive; to serve the community, especially the women; to promote an alternative government agenda and because women have excellent qualities like dedication, righteousness, transparency and sincerity. The respondents mentioned the following ways to encourage women to run for public office: (1) the current women politicians need

Graph 1
No. of Congresswomen vs. Women's Bills



Prepared by C.Naz, UP-NCPAG, Oct. 2001.

to provide good role models; (2) that information, education and communication campaigns for women be conducted; (3) that women should be involved in government and community undertakings; (4) that the multiple-burden and gender stereotyping of women's roles be lessened. (Table 6).

C. Knowledge, Awareness and Perceptions on Gender and Development (GAD)

Fifteen or 68.2 percent of the respondents were familiar with GAD. Seven of the respondents were not familiar with GAD as they did not have GAD training (Table 7). These seven respondents could be the target recipients of GAD training and the targets for advocacy of women NGOs and POs. Those women who were aware of GAD spelled out the GAD concerns on women trafficking; violence against women; discrimination against women and equality of women in education; access to health services; to economic freedom and to power and positions in the government and in other employment sectors. What is notable is that nine out of 19 women marked "no" to the questionnaire item that equated GAD with feminism and women's liberation. Surprisingly, two of these women did not have GAD training, yet they were able to detect this tricky item.

Among the top GAD concerns in the districts of the congresswomen were: (1) poverty; (2) unemployment and preference of industries in hiring men; (3) violence against women; (4) lack of day-care centers; (5) husband's consent is needed for women to work and to own and inherit property; (6) few women occupy key positions in government; (7) women trafficking (Table 7). This was so because (1) women were not informed of their rights; (2) there was discrimination against women; (3) lack of government support to protect women; (4) societal

norms, traditions and beliefs, patriarchal culture and (5) migration problems.

D. Promotion of Gender and Development (GAD)

Nineteen or 86.4 percent of the respondents were in favor of promoting GAD by (1) authoring, co-authoring and supporting bills on women; (2) initiating projects that educate and train women to be involved in politics, either as campaigners, voters or candidates; (3) run for elective positions again; (4) participate in projects that empower women; (5) encourage other women to run for elective positions; (6) allocate part of their CDF for projects on women; (7) provide scholarships for women; and, (8) recommend women to leadership positions in government. The respondents did not place a high priority on the item, "I will vote for women candidates" as a means of promoting GAD. This may indicate that they do not believe that voting for women just because they are women was a good way of promoting women's political participation.

The bills on GAD that the respondents planned to file consisted of those on the anti-trafficking of women and minors, anti-prostitution, support for day care and barangay health workers, anti-domestic violence, anti-breast cancer. Besides the GAD bills, the respondents plan to file bills on improving the economy, on education and on livelihood. Majority of the respondents agreed that the following bills had good chances (no respondents marked "no" to these proposals) of being filed and passed in the 12th Congress, to wit:

- Establishment of an office of women's concerns in each LGU (54%);
- Single, unwed mothers in the bureaucracy can avail of maternity leave (50%);

- Revision of elementary and high school textbooks to include gender-fair messages (50%);
- A married woman can inherit, buy and own property without her husband's consent (45.5%);
- Reproductive rights of women, e.g., increased access to family planning methods (45.5%) [This did not specify what type of family planning methods];
- Allocation of a certain percentage of their CDF for GAD (31.8%);
- Prioritization of women in hiring practices of the government and private sector (22.7% and 27.3%, respectively).

On the other hand, the respondents gave a “no” signal to the probability of the passage of the following proposed bills, to wit:

- Setting a quota or percentage of women representatives in Congress (40.9%);
- Setting a quota or percentage of women as heads of congressional committees (27.3%);
- Setting a quota or percentage of women representatives in the *Sanggunians* (27.3%);
- Legalization of abortion for certain reasons, e.g., maternal health (27.3%);
- Legalization of divorce for certain reasons, e.g., wife-beating (18.2%).

While some respondents gave low chances to the approval of the latter set of proposed legislative measures, these measures were considered to have some probability of being passed, albeit, they had more chances of getting disapproved than approved. Except for the proposed bill on abortion, wherein no respondent gave a “yes” mark to its being passed, the figures show that there

are some women legislators who see the benefits of the passage of the latter set of bills on representation and divorce.

One reason for the probable approval of some of the proposed bills is that some of these have been deliberated in Congress and it would be a matter of time that these would be approved. Reasons for the probable disapproval or non-passage of the proposed bills, especially the latter set which deal with constitutionality include lack of women's support, and the presence of other priority concerns and religious beliefs. One congresswoman, noted for her staunch support for GAD concerns, mentioned that it was still too early to give an assessment of the probability of the approval of proposed legislative measures. She indicated that such proposals would have to go through the "tough" scrutiny of Congress, which is still a "macho" and male-dominated territory.

Lastly, twelve or 54.5 percent of the respondents supported NGOs and POs with regards to GAD issues and concerns. Two of them did not support NGOs and POs in this aspect. This information could provide an entry point for NGOs and POs to advocate GAD concerns to these congresswomen and to invite their involvement in GAD activities.

Conclusions

Our study led us to conclusions about doing research on the participation of women in Congress, and on teaching the promotion of the gender agenda.

1. On the number of women vis-à-vis the number of bills on women filed and approved in Congress, it would be noteworthy to compare the total number of bills filed by women, regardless of whether these had to do with women or not, to

the number of congresswomen and to determine whether or not these bills were approved.

2. Since bills on women are multi-faceted, e.g., they are not only handled by the House Committee on women but they are also handled by other House Committees on health, family and population, civil and political rights, economy, local government, participation and other concerns, a better method of tracking of the performance of the women legislators in terms of bills filed as well as the determination of the gender-responsiveness of the House bills needs to be devised.

3. It is noteworthy to examine the performance of the women in the current Congress as to whether an increase in their number would translate into an increase in the number of bills on women filed and approved, considering their remarkable performance during the early months of their term.

4. Women legislators need to be appraised of the country's commitments to the BPA and the ICPD so that their legislative agenda would be broadened to cover neglected sectors such as women's health and reproductive rights, greater political participation, women and the environment and education and training of women. This would result in women filing more substantial bills or to their convincing their male counterparts to file and support bills in relation to the BPA and the ICPD.

5. The issue on kinship ties as a factor that contributed to the winning of a woman candidate needs to be examined in another light. This is whether or not kinship ties enabled a woman legislator to perform better in terms of the number and nature of the bills filed and her capability to solicit support for these bills from her colleagues. This is with the assumption that her political ties like her husband, brother, mother or relative provided her with the advice and training to put her at a higher level of the legislative process' learning curve.

Table 1
Performance of Congresswomen (CW) in Terms of Number of Bills
on Women Filed Which Became Laws

Congress	8th		9th		10th		11th		12th*		8th-12th		
	freq	% of Bills on Women	freq	% of Bills on Women	freq	% change	freq	% of Bills on Women	freq	% Change	2001	% Change	Average
Year that the Term Commences	1987		1992	15.8%	1995	-4.5%	1998	20	47.6	2001	38	90.0%	24
No. of Congresswomen	19	37.1%	22	3.4%	21	54.9%	20	0	21	72.4%	38	90.0%	24
No. of CW as a % of Total Congress	9.4%		11.0%	16.9%	10.3%	-6.4%	9.6%	17.8%	17.8%	-6.6%	17.8%	84.7%	11.6%
Total Members of Congress	202		200	-1.0%	204	2.0%	208	2.0%	214	2.9%	214	2.9%	205.6
Bills on Women													
	freq	% of Bills on Women	freq	% of Bills on Women	freq	% Change	freq	% of Bills on Women	freq	% Change	freq	% of Bills on Women	Average
Filed by Women	13	37.1%	21	72.4%	28	33.3%	20	47.6%	21	-28.6%	21	72.4%	20.5
Filed by Women; Became a RA	4	11.4%	1	3.4%	0	-100.0%	0	0.0%	0	indef	0	0.0%	1.25
Filed by Men	22	62.9%	8	27.6%	23	187.5%	22	52.4%	8	-4.3%	8	27.6%	18.75
Filed by Men and Became a RA	3	8.6%	1	3.4%	0	-100.0%	0	0.0%	0	indef	0	0.0%	1
Bills on Women that became RAs	7	20.0%	2	6.9%	0	-100.0%	0	0.0%	0	indef	0	0.0%	2.25
Total Bills on Women	35		29	-17.1%	51	75.9%	42	-17.6%	29	-57.1%	29	39.25	39.25
Bills on Women													
		% Change		% Change		% Change		% Change		% Change		% Change	Average
Filed by Women		61.5%		-75.0%		33.3%		-28.6%		-28.6%		22.1%	22.1%
Filed by Women; Became a RA		-75.0%		-63.6%		-100.0%		indef		indef		-58.3%	-58.3%
Filed by Men		-63.6%		-66.7%		187.5%		-4.3%		-4.3%		39.8%	39.8%
Filed by Men and Became a RA		-66.7%		-71.4%		-100.0%		indef		indef		-55.6%	-55.6%
Bills on Women that became RAs		-71.4%		-17.1%		-100.0%		indef		indef		-57.1%	-57.1%
Total Bills on Women		-17.1%		-17.1%		75.9%		-17.6%		-17.6%		13.7%	13.7%
Ratio of No. of Congresswomen to:													
(1) No. of bills filed by women	1 1/2 or 3:2		1		3/4 or 3:4		1		1			1 1/6	1 1/6
(2) No. of bills filed by women & became a RA	4 3/4 or 19:4		22		indef		indef		indef			19 1/5 or 96:5	19 1/5 or 96:5
(3) No. of bills filed that became RA (filed by men & women)	2 5/7 or 19:7		11		indef		indef		indef			10 2/3 or 32:3	10 2/3 or 32:3
(4) Total no. of bills on women filed	1/2 or 1:2		3/4 or 3:4		2/5 or 2:5		1/2 or 1:2		3/5			3/5	3/5

Note:

% of bills on women: percentage of bills compared to the total no. of bills on women; freq. = frequency or the no.

* Figures for bills in the 12th Congress covered the period July 1 to Oct. 13, 2001.

indef. means indeterminate, i.e., even if there were congresswomen, no bill on women filed by women became a RA

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Table 2
Bills Filed in the 12th Congress Relating to Gender Concerns

BPA Critical Concerns	ICPD PA Concerns	PPGD Sectors	Proposed Legislation 12 th Congress
Poverty	Gender Equality Equity and Empowerment	Agriculture and Fisheries Agrarian Reform Environment & Natural Resources Industry, Trade and Tourism Labor and Employment	HB00033 – Magna Carta for Women HB00325, HB00539 HB00741, HB02368 HB02991
Education and training	Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment Population, Development and Education	Education and Human Resource Development	HB00033 HB02970
Access to health care and related services	Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health Health, Morbidity & Mortality	Health, Nutrition and Family Planning Urban Development & Housing Social Welfare and Community Development	HB00077, HB00879 HB01010, HB01307 HR00034
Violence against women	Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment	Violence Against Women	HB00077, HB00140 HB00189, HB00419 HB00879, HB01011 HB01118, HB01248 HB01307, HB01308 HB03228
Effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those in foreign countries	International Migration	Peace Women and Migration Justice and Peace and Order	Anti-trafficking of women HB00140, HB00189 HB00879, HB01012 HB01307, HB02844 HB02991, HB03298 HB03366
Inequality in econo- mic structures and policies	Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment	Agriculture and Fisheries Agrarian Reform Environment & Natural Resources Industry, Trade & Tourism	HB00033, HB00325 HB00539, HB00741 HB01607, HB00879 HB02548, HB02970 HB03231

Table 2 (Continued)

BPA Critical Concerns	ICPD PA Concerns	PPGD Sectors	Proposed Legislation 12th Congress
Power & decision-making at all levels (focus of the study)	Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment	Politics and Governance	HB00033, HB00325 HB00539, HB00741 HB01012, HB01607 HB00879, HB02548 HB03231, HB02970
Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women	Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment Population, Development and Education	Education and HRD	HB00033, HB00325 HB00539, HB00741 HB01092, HB01607 HB00879, HB02518 HB02548, HB02970 HB03231
Human rights of women	Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment	Justice and Peace and Order All other sectors	All HBs
Stereotyping of women, inequality in women's access to and participation in communication systems	Population, Development and Education	Media Arts and Culture	HB00033, HB00539 HB00741
Natural resources and environment (sustainable dev't.)	Population, Sustained Economic Growth and Sustainable Development	Environment and Natural Resources	HB00325 (labor) HB00539 (labor) HB00741 (labor) HB00879 (labor) HB02548 (labor) HB03231 (labor)
Rights of the girl-child	Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment Family, Its Role Rights and Composition	Health, Nutrition and Family Planning Violence Against Women	HB00140, HB00189 HB00419, HB00879 HB01012, HB01118 HB01248, HB02844 HB02991, HB03228 HB03366, HB02963

Table 3

PROFILES OF CONGRESSWOMEN, 12TH CONGRESS

3.1. Civil Status	f	%
Single or never married	1	4.5%
Married	14	63.6%
Widowed	4	18.2%
Legally Separated/Divorced	3	13.6%
Total	22	100.0%
3.2. Educational Attainment	f	%
College graduate	11	50.0%
MA/MS level units	3	13.6%
MA/MS/LL.M. graduate	5	22.7%
Ph.D./M.D. graduate	3	13.6%
Total	22	100.00%
3.3. Membership in Socio-civic, Religious and Professional Organizations	f	%
No	3	13.6%
Yes	15	68.2%
No Response	4	18.2%
Total	22	100.0%
3.4. Positions Before Congress	f	%
Public Sector- elected position	12	54.5%
Public Sector- appointive position	2	9.1%
Private Sector	4	18.2%
No Response	4	18.2%
Total	22	100.0%

Table 4

ENTRY INTO POLITICS OF CONGRESSWOMEN

4.1. Year First Elected into Political Office	f	%
Before the 1987/88 elections	5	22.7%
1987/88 elections	3	13.6%
1992 elections	2	9.1%
1995 elections	5	22.7%
1998 elections	6	27.3%
2001 elections	1	4.5%
Others, 1997 barangay elections	22	100.0%
4.2. Respondents' First Elected Position		
01 Congresswoman/Party List Representative/ Assemblywoman	11	50.0%
02 Provincial Board Member	2	9.1%
03 Vice-Governor	1	4.5%
04 Mayor	5	22.7%
05 Councilor (City/Municipality)	2	9.1%
06 Barangay Captain	1	4.5%
Total	22	100.0%

Table 5

TABLE OF THE RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS

5.1. Plan to run for congresswoman again	f	%
Yes	13	59.1%
No	2	9.1%
No Response	7	31.8%
Total	22	100.0%
5.2. Plan to run for another political office	f	%
Yes	2	9.1%
No	10	45.5%
No Response	10	45.5%
Total	22	100.0%
5.3. Plan to run again for what position?		
a. Mayor. The respondent was a former mayor and NGO leader. Her husband is a politician. She mentioned that her achievements as an NGO leader and former mayor and the achievement of her husband were the primary factors that made her win as a congresswoman.		
b. Governor. The respondent was previously a provincial board member. She also comes from a political family. She attributes her sincerity and dedication as the primary factors that made her win as a congresswoman.		

Table 6

POLITICS FOR OTHER WOMEN

61. Congresswoman recommends other women to run for public office	f	%
Yes	15	68.2%
No	0	0.0%
No Response	7	31.8%
Total	22	100.0%
6.2. Reasons why women should run for political office		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is an opportunity to serve the community and the people especially the women. 2. To strive for equality between men and women. 3. To prove that women can be active partners in nation building. 4. To ensure that laws are gender-responsive. 5. Women are as able as men to hold any position in government. 6. To increase the representation of women in government, since they are a marginalized sector. 7. Because of the qualities of women like their righteousness, their values, they are less prone to vices, dedicated, sincere, hardworking and transparent and they are more serious and focused on their responsibilities. 8. They can relate to the issue about women and they can help. 9. To observe women's basic right to participate in governance. 10. To promote an alternative government agenda. 		
6.3. How to encourage women to run for public office?		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. By being a role model or providing a good example. b. Through information dissemination/education on the role of women in nation building, legislation and in the local government. c. Increase the [political] awareness of women. d. By getting women involved in government and in community undertakings. e. By lessening the multiple burden and gender stereotyping of women's roles. 		

Table 7

GENDER CONCERNS

7.1 Familiarity with Gender & Development (GAD)	f	%
Don't know	2	9.1%
No	5	22.7%
Yes	15	68.2%
No Response	5	22.7%
Total	22	100.0%
7.2 GAD Issues the Congresswomen are aware of		
Women trafficking. Violence against women. Discrimination and violation of rights of women. Equality of women in education, access to health services, to economic freedom, position/ power in government and employment.		
7.3 Attendance in GAD Seminars	f	%
No	7	31.8%
Yes	9	40.9%
No Response	6	27.3%
Total	22	100.00%

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