

**WOMEN AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE:  
EVIDENCE FROM LOCAL ELECTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES**

by

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## **Abstract**

In terms of female political leadership, the Philippines is one of the most progressive countries in Asia. At the same time, these rankings and statistics focus largely on holding national office, which masks broader problems with women's participation at the local level. For example, Labonne, Parsa, and Querubin (2016) find that the increasing number of women in Philippine national politics is largely driven by political dynasties, rather than an expansion of opportunities for women to participate in politics. As a result, while there are certainly many women in the legislature, these women tend to reflect the policy preferences and political platforms of their relatives and do not represent new voices in the decision-making process.

In order to increase not only the number of women in politics but also the opportunity for new women to enter politics, it is important to understand the underlying dynamics driving gender and political influence at the local level, because it is the primary entry point for new, non-dynastic candidates in the political system. Using household-level data collected through a survey of 284 villages in 12 municipalities after the 2013 local elections in the Philippines, this analysis shows that women are less likely to be politically influential than men even at the local village level, an effect that is driven by gender differences in recognizing influence and in socioeconomic factors that affect the ability to participate in politics. This is important because there are gender differences in policy preferences and political views.

From a policy standpoint, this thesis has three main contributions: 1) providing a methodology for identifying politically influential women at the local level; 2) analyzing the differences in policies and profiles between influential men and women; and 3) linking the

determinants of political influence to policy recommendations for promoting and supporting these women to enable them to better participate in the political sphere. In order for women to have a voice in Philippine politics, it is not enough to have more women holding office on paper, but to ensure that women are given the same opportunities and avenues for participation in politics.

## **Preface**

This thesis is an original work by Charis Mae A. Tolentino. No part of this thesis has been previously published.

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## **Dedication**

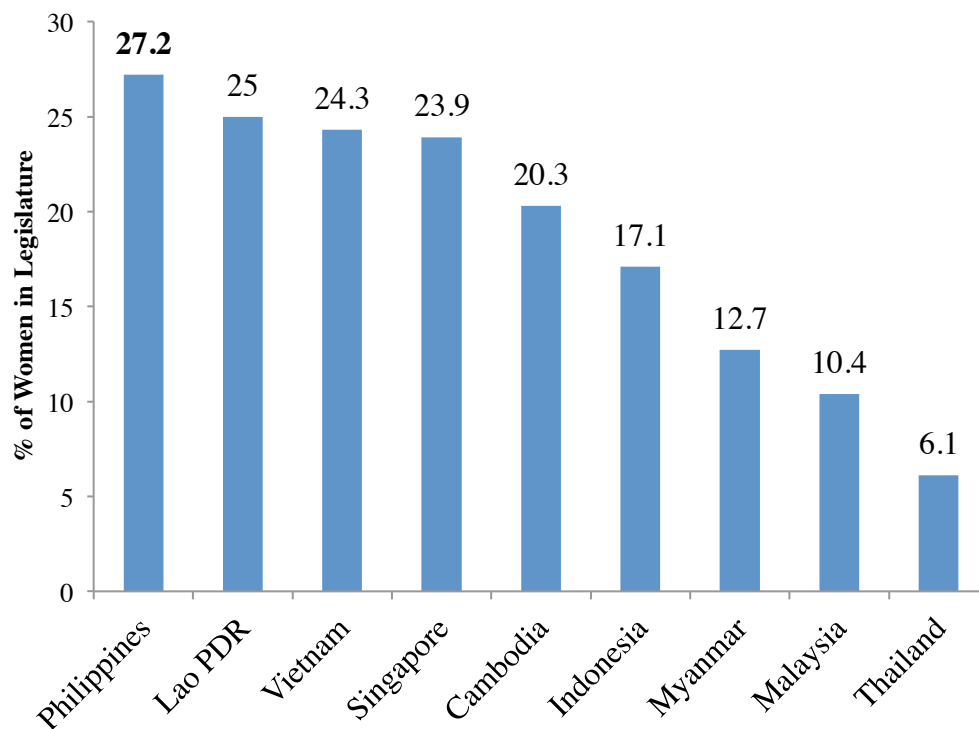
*To Daddy and Mommy*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Philippines is in the world's top ten and first in the Asia-Pacific Region in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) since 2006. The country has closed 79% of its gender gap in 2015, scoring high in the education (100%) and health and survival (98%) sub-indexes. The country is also included globally in the top twenty in the economic participation and opportunity sub-index, with a score of 79.9%.

The country ranks among the top countries in the world in terms of female political representation and leadership. It is currently ranked 17<sup>th</sup> worldwide and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Asia in the GGI's political empowerment sub-index. It is also one of the 63 out of 142 countries, which have had a female head of state or government.

In Southeast Asia (Figure 1.1), the Philippines ranks first in terms of the number of



Source: World Bank

**Figure 1.1. Women In Legislature In Southeast Asia, 2015**

women in the legislature, with females occupying 27.2% of the national assembly. It is closely followed by Laos (25%) and Vietnam (24.3%). Looking at the macro-level, the Philippines seems to be ahead of its neighboring countries in Southeast Asia in terms of female political leadership. However, these statistics do not tell the full story and mask deeper systemic issues.

Looking closely, the history of Filipina involvement in politics and governance is connected to family ties and popularity in media. The two female presidents of the Philippines, Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo both come from political families, the former being the wife of a prominent political leader, and the latter being the daughter of a previous President. Moreover, three of the current senators are also part of political dynasties, Nancy Binay (from Makati City), Cynthia Villar (Las Piñas City), and Pia Cayetano (from Taguig City).

Labonne, Parsa, and Querubin (2016) argued that the increasing number of women occupying elected office is largely driven by political dynasties. They showed that the provision of the 1987 Constitution that sets a binding term limit of three consecutive times in municipal mayorship positions, resulted in the relatives of the term-limited incumbents being elected. Since the females were elected because of family ties, they are more likely to continue the platforms set by their male relatives, hence, cannot significantly affect the policies and programs of the locality she belongs to.

Meanwhile, two other current female senators, Grace Poe and Loren Legarda rose to power through the media; Poe, being the adopted daughter of a former television and movie action star, and Legarda, being a well-known television broadcast journalist. Further, most of

the above-mentioned female leaders came from the privileged class, hence they are not representative of the typical Filipina.

From a baseline of 11.3% in 1992 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1995), the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament increased to 27% (2013), but this figure still lags behind the country's target of 50% by 2015, as specified in the country's commitment to the Millennium Development Goal 3 of promoting gender equality and empowering women.

If the country aims to close the gender gap in the political participation aspect and truly empower women in terms of decision-making, there is no better way to start than the local level. Elizabeth Angsioco, Head of the Advocacy Group of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines, pointed out that since most of the nation's female political leaders came from wealthy families, "they cannot relate to the needs of economically disadvantaged women from countryside communities," (Strother, 2013).

It is critical to look at and start from the grassroots level. What is the status of women locally; in terms of economic and social viewpoints, and especially the political aspect? Are women really less influential compared to men?

The following are the objectives of the study: 1) to identify the determinants of political influence, and 2) to characterize politically influential women in terms of demographic, economic, social, and political attributes.

The rest of the document is organized as follows: Chapter 2 provides a context of women in politics and governance in the Philippines; Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical background of the study, defining and conceptualizing political influence and the role gender plays, and looking at gender inequality globally and provides explanations for the disparity of

gender in terms of influence; Chapter 4 explains the study's research design, from the survey description to the estimation method and statistical techniques used; and Chapter 5 presents and discusses the results of the study. The proceeding section identifies some of the policy implications of the results and then provides the conclusion of the study.

## **Chapter 2: Context: Women In Philippine Politics And Governance**

This chapter provides an overview of the politics, voting and election processes in the Philippines. It also gives a brief background of the politics in the provinces where the survey was conducted. The remaining sections of the chapter discuss women's entry, participation and leadership in national and local level politics.

### **2.1 Political System<sup>1</sup>**

The Philippines is a republican state with a presidential form and unitary structure of government. The President is both the head of state and government. The government has three branches: the Executive, headed by the President; the bicameral Legislature or Philippine Congress with the Senate and House of Representatives headed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House respectively; and the Judiciary headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The three branches are equal and interdependent of each other, yet each branch functions separately. Since power is equally distributed between these branches, no one branch can be considered superior over another.

The importance of regional autonomy is emphasized in the 1987 Constitution, and local government units (LGUs) were empowered in the decentralization process, leaving the President to exercise only "general supervision." The local government system can be subdivided into provinces, led by governors, vice-governors and, provincial board members;

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<sup>1</sup> This section is heavily drawn from the chapter, "Philippines, Continuing People Power" in the book *Government and Politics in Southeast Asia* unless otherwise stated.

cities and municipalities, led by mayors, vice-mayors and, city council members; and *barangays* led by *barangay* captains and *barangay* council members.

## **2.2. Voting And Elections**

Section 1, Article V of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that, “Suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law, who are at least eighteen years of age, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year, and in the place wherein they propose to vote, for at least six months immediately preceding the election. No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage.” Anyone possessing the just-mentioned criteria therefore, has the power to elect officials whom he thinks will best serve its constituents. In the Philippines, however, “40 per cent of the electorate are either ignorant or unaware of their rights to vote,” as claimed by the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (Araneta, 2002).

The independent Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has primary responsibility to organize elections at national and local levels. It is empowered to deputize law enforcement agencies and instrumentalities of government for the purpose of ensuring free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections.

Elections are held on a regular basis. All elective officials are chosen by a direct ballot of eligible voters through a “first-past-the-post” system. The people elect the President, Vice-President, and Senators every six years (their term is six years, but half the senate is elected every three years). All local government officials are elected for three-year terms.

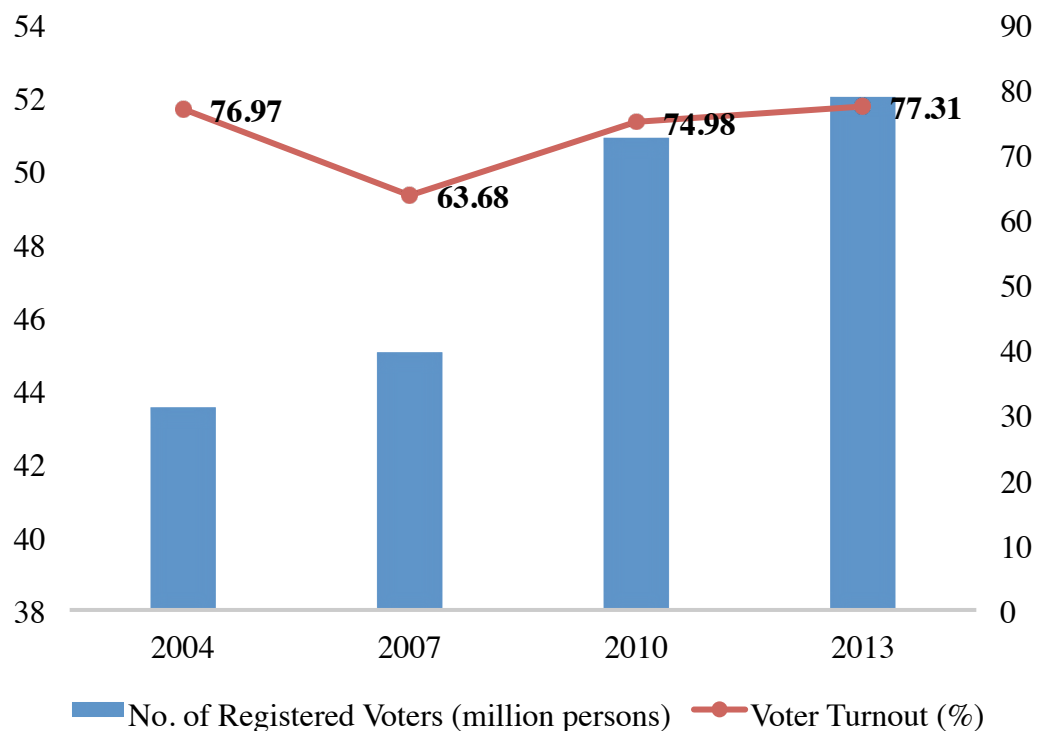
Throughout its history as a democracy, the Philippines has relied on the paper ballot system during elections. It was only in 2010 when the Automated Election System (AES)



was fully implemented despite being mandated by the Republic Act 8436 as early as 1997. However, the paper ballot has not been completely eliminated as the AES relies on the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines, where the electronically watermarked paper ballots are inserted to count the votes.

Two civil society groups, the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) are the two major providers of non-partisan oversight during Philippine elections. These organizations are well-respected by both voters and government agencies. According to then COMELEC Chief Sixto Brillantes, the coordination between these two organizations is “crucial to ensure clean elections” (Reyes, 2012).

Figure 2.1 shows that the number of registered voters increased from 2004 to 2013



Source of basic data: Commission on Elections

**Figure 2.1 No. Of Registered Voters And Voter Turnout In The Past Four Philippine Elections**

while the voter turnout averaged at 73%. Out of the voting age population, only an average of 87% decided to become registered voters.

### **2.3 Politics In Ilocos Provinces And The 2013 Local Elections**

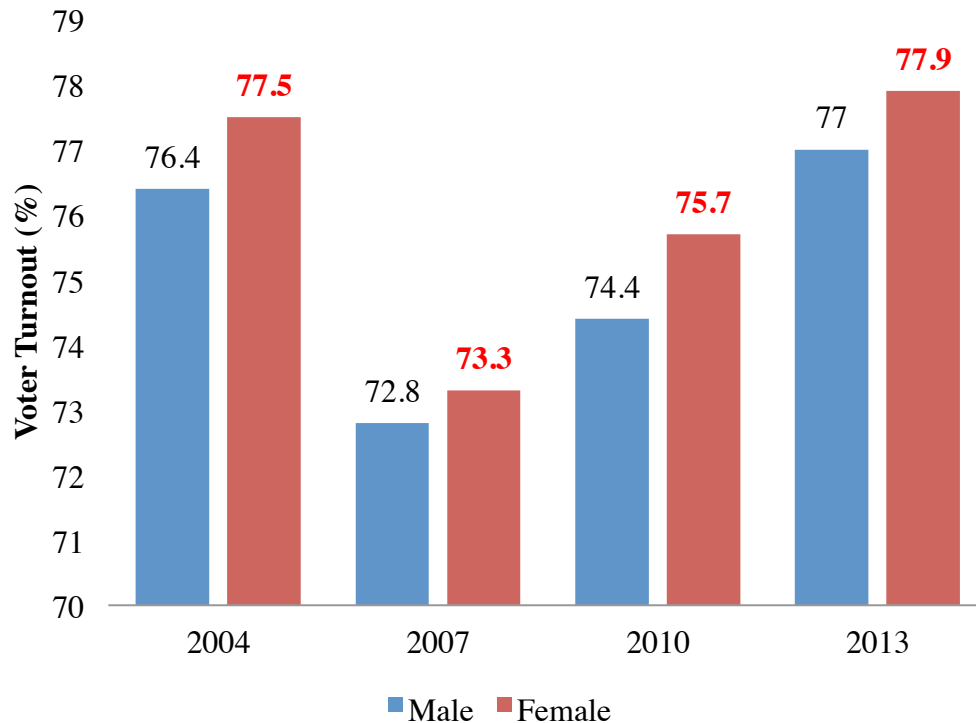
The Philippine political arena is dominated by families or alliances of families, (Lande, 1964; Hutchcroft & Rocamora, 2003; Querubin, 2010), and Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur are no exception. Ilocos Norte is the home province and territory of the Marcos family even until today. The incumbent governor and congressman of the second district are both Marcoses. Ilocos Sur is similarly dominated by political families, where the current governor, congressman of the first district, and mayor in one of the cities are part of the Singson clan.

During the 2013 elections, there were 327,250 and 401,528 registered voters from Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur, respectively. The voter turnout for both provinces exceeded national average by 6 to 8 percentage points in the last election. For both provinces, reports of vote buying (Cruz, Keefer, & Labonne, 2015) and election violence abound (Lagasca, 2013; Catindig, 2013).

### **2.4 Filipinas And The Right Of Suffrage**

The provision for women's suffrage was established in Article V of the 1935 Constitution, which stated that suffrage would only be extended to Filipino women if 300,000 of them will vote in favor of the motion in a special plebiscite. In response, 447,725 Filipinas came out to vote in a special plebiscite in April 1937, lawfully giving them the right to vote and to run for public office.

By 2013, the number of female registered voters was 1.1 million more than the male registered voters. Voter turnout, calculated by dividing the total votes cast by the total number of registered voters, is consistently higher for women than men (Figure 2.2).



Source of basic data: Commission on Elections

**Figure 2.2 Voter Turnout In The Philippine National Elections By Gender**

## **2.5 Gender And Development Initiatives In Politics And Governance**

It was stated in the Philippine Framework Plan for Women in 1994 (as cited by Hega, 2003) that, “good governance can only come about in a gender-responsive environment – one that enhances the abilities of women and men to contribute and benefit from development.” As such, several government initiatives were implemented to advance the participation and involvement of women in the Philippine political sphere.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution guarantees the substantive equality of women and

men before the law and affirms the role of women in nation building. The 1991 Local Government Code meanwhile, provides for the election of sectoral representation, including women, in local legislative councils. This was further specified in the Republic Act (RA) No. 7941 of 1995 or the Party-List System Act, as it provides for the creation of women-oriented or women-based parties to compete under the party-list system. Women's issues and representation is one of the nine sectors specified by the law.

RA No. 9710 of 2009 or the Magna Carta of Women, seeks to increase women's participation and their equitable representation in decision-making and policy-making processes in government, which are main requisites for women to completely understand their role both as agents and beneficiaries of development. Another equally critical law, the Women in Development and Nation Building Act or RA No. 7192, mandates government agencies to implement a Gender and Development mainstreaming policy that entails the incorporation of gender perspective in particular agency policies, programs and processes. In terms of gender budgeting, the latter law specifically mandated all agencies to allocate a minimum of 5%, increasing to 30%, of all official development funds in mainstreaming gender concerns; also known as the Gender and Development Budget. Through executive directives however, this 5% allocation is further expanded to cover the total budget appropriations, not only development funds, of all government agencies and local government units in the country (Anonuevo, 2000).

## **2.6 Women In The Forefront: Filipina Leaders At The National Level**

In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2015, the Philippines ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of 145 countries and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Asia-Pacific region in the Political

Empowerment sub-index. This sub-index measures gender disparity in terms of representation in decision-making processes, hence the country's overrated score, can be attributed to the rise in female leaders occupying ministerial positions. Among the current cabinet members of President Benigno Aquino, Jr., 17% are women, occupying leadership roles in the Justice, Labor and Employment and Social Welfare and Development departments. In addition, the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the well-known Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner are females.

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) reports that out of the 18,054 contested electoral seats in 2013's automated national and local elections, 20 percent (3,503) are won by women candidates, which is higher than the 18.4 percent turnout in 2010. The number of women who filed candidacy for the most recent election period, on the other hand, was 7,944 or 18 percent of the total number of candidates.

In the 2013 senatorial race, there were eight women who ran out of 33 senatorial candidates (24.2%), of which four entered the top 12 winning senators (33.3%). The participation of women in the 2010 senatorial election was slightly lower at 23.0 percent (14 out of 61 senatorial candidates) with only two women elected (16.7%). Hence currently, females comprise 25 percent or six out of the 24 Senators of the Philippines.

There are 60 women representatives (excluding party-lists) elected in the 2013 balloting of the House of Representatives. They accounted for 25.6 percent of the total 234 Representatives as members of the Lower House. This is higher than the 2010 figures and 2007, wherein only 22.5 and 18.75 percent females had secured membership in the House of Representatives, respectively.

In 1998, ABANSE! Pinay (Advance! Filipina), a pro-women's group, managed to win a seat in the first ever party-list elections, besting five other women's groups. From 2004 to present, the party-list Gabriela, a leftist organization that advocates for women's issues, has secured party-list representation in Congress. The Gabriela Women's Party continues to advance the rights of women, children and country through grassroots organizing, education, services, various campaigns and legislative efforts. Since 2007, the party-list has won two seats in the House of Congress.

Of the 55 elected party-list representatives in the 2013 balloting, 25.45 percent are women. All in all, females comprise 27% of the 294 standing members of the national legislature. This is one of the strong cases for why the Philippines ranks first in the world in the Global Gender Gap Report 2015 in terms of the number of legislators, senior officials and managers, with a female-to-male ratio of 1.33.

The country ranks fifth overall in terms of the number of years with a female head of state, having had sixteen years of female political leadership. In the last thirty years, the country saw two females occupying the highest leadership role in the country, Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010). Even in the current 2016 presidential campaign, two out of five presidential candidates are women, Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Senator Grace Poe-Llamanzares.

## 2.7 Women In The Sideline: Local Level Female Politicians<sup>2</sup>

The most recent COMELEC statistics showed that the 2013 local elections represented one of the major breakthroughs in terms of political empowerment of women. While the number of female candidates is significantly lower than men, the percentage of female candidates elected (45%) is comparatively higher than the percentage of males who won (39%).

Currently, 22.5% and 13.75% of provincial governors and vice-governors, respectively, are women. Women also constitute 18.41% of provincial board members. In addition, 21.68% and 21.02% of city and municipal mayorship positions, respectively, are held by women. Lastly, women also comprise 20.59% and 20.18% of city and municipal boards.

In her paper about women participation in Philippine politics and society, Hega (2003) reported that more women are serving in appointive positions as *barangay* secretaries and treasurers than men. According to her report, the DILG Chief in 2003 said that village level-wise, a total of 49,173 women occupy appointive positions, serving as *barangay* secretaries (23,983 compared to 15,988 males) and *barangay* treasurers (25,190 as compared to 14,794 males).

In particular, local government is a significant venue for women in politics. According to Hega (2003), Filipinas have utilized many ways of participating in local decision-making. Since women organizations are dispersed throughout the archipelago,

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<sup>2</sup> All percentages were computed based on the data from the Philippine Commission on Elections unless otherwise stated.

either as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or people's organization (POs), they are regularly involved in consultations on local issues and concerns. As NGOs and POs, they are permitted to take part in the local development council, if they are accredited. There are also Women's Code or Charter in certain cities governing the promotion of women participation and the development of programs and services.

## **2.8 Women In The Judiciary And Bureaucracy**

The participation of women in the judiciary slightly increased. In 2007, 32 percent of the total incumbent judges in the first and second-level courts, including Shari'a courts were women, while in 2010, this number increased to 34 percent. In the Supreme Court, the percentage of women justices from 2001 to 2015 increased from 20% to 25%. Data on women lawyers also showed an increasing trend of parity from its male counterparts since 2001 (Philippine Commission on Women).

Women also dominate the bureaucracy's technical or second-level positions. The latest State of the Human Resource Management in the Civil Service report in 2012 indicated that more female employees, posting a high percentage of 60% over male employees at 40%, fill the career service. Out of the total manpower of 1.1 million personnel, 53% are women.



## **Chapter 3: Theoretical Background**

This chapter provides a theoretical framework of the study. The first few sections of the chapter focus on defining and conceptualizing political influence, and then describing the role gender plays. The next sections look into gender inequality in terms of influence and provide explanations for this gender disparity. The importance of focusing on the local level is discussed in the last section of the chapter.

### **3.1 Defining And Conceptualizing Political Influence**

Political influence is commonly associated to holding an electoral or appointed position in the government. This position of power entitles this person to be “politically influential.” In his article about political influence, David (2012) mentioned that according to German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, “political influence comes in three forms: authority, reputation, and leadership.” Luhmann argued that someone has authority when his “influence cuts through time.” Meanwhile, “influence that is generalized across different circumstances” is reputation and “influence that depends on the perception that it is worth following because others go along it” is leadership. Luhmann’s take on political influence, however, is very broad, and does not provide a clear definition of political influence.

The example above is leaning more toward another equally important concept in political power – political authority. According to Djeudo (2013), “political authority is governmental power, the formal-legal authority of the public officeholders and institutions comprising the government to make and carry out decisions on public policy,” distinguishing it from political influence, the “ability of private individuals and groups to impact on the government’s making and implementation of official policy decisions.” Being politically

influential, she continues, allows these private individuals and groups “to influence, condition, shape, and thereby control the authoritative decisions and actions of those who possess the formal-legal authority to take these decisions and actions.” The example given earlier therefore rests on having political authority, and not political influence. Djeudo clarifies further that “those who are politically influential do not hold relevant offices in the government and therefore do not have the formal-legal authority to make official decisions, but they have the ability to shape and control the decision-making behavior of those who have political authority.”

### **3.2 Understanding The Role Gender Plays In Terms Of Political Influence**

In their book, *Women and Politics*, Dolan, Deckman, and Swers (2007) quoted former Vermont Governor Madeleine Kunin (1987), “More women in public life may not immediately turn swords into plowshares, but women do bring a different and diverse set of life experiences to the process – and for democracy to be truly representative, it is only just that [we] women be equally represented.”

Dolan et al. (2007) also summarized the policy attitudes and political impact of women as follows. Evidence from the United States shows that female leaders are committed to make the workplace more accessible and friendly to other working women. Riccucci and Saidel (2001) specified “women governors have used their appointment powers to bring more women into government positions.” In Rwanda, legislations ending gender violence and discrimination and accelerating investments in the health sector can be attributed to the increase of women in the parliament (Keye, 2015). Keye also noted that the rise of women parliamentarians and heads of state in Latin America led to “impressive gains in women’s

education and livelihoods.” Based on the Inter-Parliamentary Union survey of parliamentarians from 2006-2008, female in the parliament tend to “prioritize social issues such as child care, equal pay, parental leave and pensions; physical concerns such as reproductive rights, physical safety and gender violence; and development matters such as poverty alleviation and service delivery.” The study of Chen (2008) found out that the rise in the number of female lawmakers resulted in an increase in total educational spending.

Markham (2013) states that women lawmakers are often perceived to be more honest and more responsive than their male counterparts. The leadership style of women often leads to “less hierarchical, more participatory and more collaborative ways” compared to their male counterparts (Rosenthal, 2001).

### **3.3 Gender Disparity In Terms Of Holding Political Office**

Despite the increase in the female political representation globally, men still dominate the political arena and hold political office at substantially higher rates than women. In 2009, women comprise only 6% of all the heads of state worldwide and while it slightly improved in 2014 (Jalalzai, 2014), the figure still signifies that women are discriminated in this aspect. Evidence from Canada (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2009), Albania (Albanian Center for Economic Research, 2010) and the Philippines (Philippine Commission on Women, 2014) also report that women are also less likely to hold office.

### **3.4 Explanations For Gender And Influence**

Why are women less likely to be influential than men? This section provides explanations for this question through three categories: 1) economic barriers, 2) socio-cultural barriers, and 3) institutional barriers.

#### **3.4.1 Economic Barriers**

Women and girls account for 70% of the 1.3 billion people worldwide living in extreme poverty. In Asia, this figure is almost the same. UN Women in the Asia Pacific reported that women accounted for two-thirds of the poor in the region. In the Philippines, women are also identified as one of the poorest sectors in the country, with a poverty incidence of 25.6% (Philippine Statistics Authority). Economic insecurity translates to a limited influence over key assets in the home and decision-making rights on the use of income and management of property (Illo, 1997). In addition, a lot of low-income individuals are so focused on improving their household income that they no longer have time and effort to care about politics (Shvedova, 2005).

Belonging to the lower income class is also disadvantageous to running for office, as an electoral campaign requires access to resources. Financial support is particularly important to cover expenses for posters, billboards, flyers, shirts and other souvenir paraphernalia for voters as well as for door-to-door campaigning. In the Philippines where many of local campaigns are heavily dependent on illegal and quasi-legal direct compensation to voters (vote buying), substantial resources are needed to deliver money or gifts to voters (Cruz 2013; Cruz, Keefer, & Labonne 2016).

### **3.4.2 Socio-Cultural Barriers**

The Philippine Commission on Women reports that there has been a considerable increase in the number of female-headed households, from 10% in 1970 to 21.2% in 2009. In most places, however, the distinction between the decisions made by men and women in the household is still very clear: men tend to dominate strategic financial decision-making and long-term planning, such as investment and loans, while women are left with the day-to-day or household-specific issues such as childrearing and household budgeting (Illo, 1997). The strong patriarchal culture of the Philippines is one of the reasons why women shy away from entering politics (Tapales, 2005).

In the Philippines, socio-cultural norms place a strong emphasis on the importance of women in spending their time and money on their family or household life. When the Spaniards colonized the Philippines, “women’s position became one of subservience” and that the status of a Filipina was only a consequence of her role as a wife and mother, sister and daughter (Illo, 1997). She argued that the idea of wives only being housebound could also be attributed to the Spanish colonization. She explained further that while men set out uprising against the Spanish conquerors and even the Americans, females took part in traditionally female or secondary roles, and political leadership was left almost entirely to men.

For Filipino women, there also exists family and social pressure against running as candidates in the election. One of the most recent cases can be told of a Filipina actress Sheryl Cruz who openly admitted to the media that she disapproves the 2016 presidential bid of her cousin, Grace Poe-Llamanzares (Santiago, 2015). Going back to the notion of being

focused on family life, married women are often discouraged by their husbands, children and relatives to run for the elections.

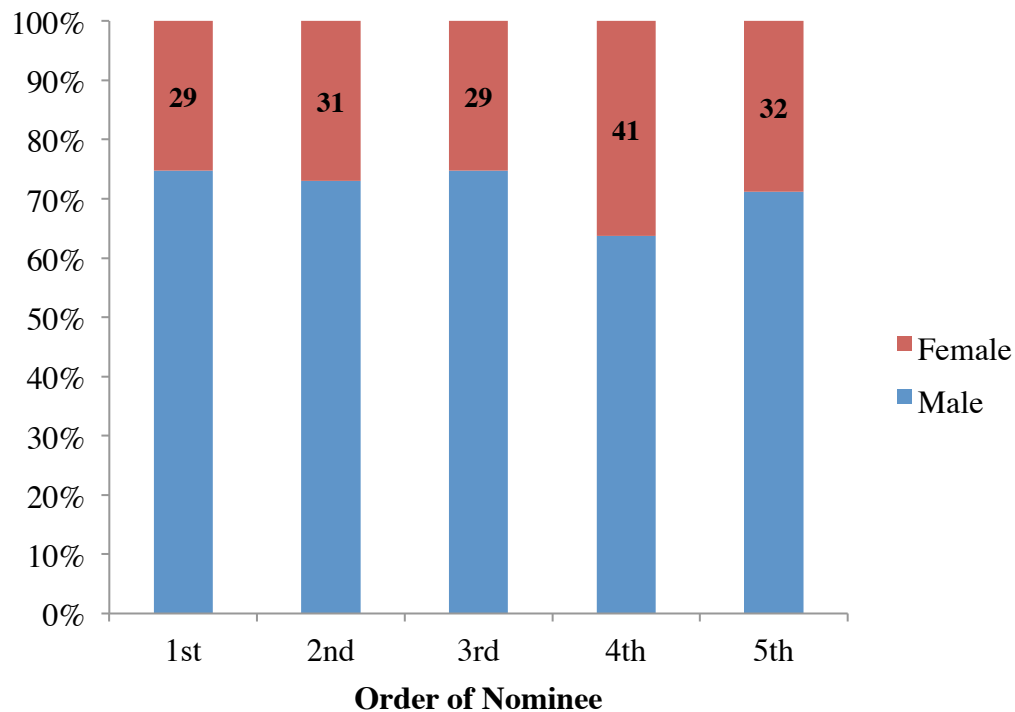
### **3.4.3 Institutional Barriers**

In most countries, there are no legal and institutional barriers to women's entry into politics. However, informal barriers still exist, especially in emerging democracies such as the Philippines. The existence of political dynasties and the party-list dynamics in choosing their representatives hinder women's political participation, influence and leadership.

Philippine politics is highly personal and centers around family alliances and patronage (Illo, 1997; McCoy, 1993). The presence of numerous women occupying elective posts locally or nationally maybe an indication of improvement of women's political participation. However, a careful examination of the Philippine legal and political setting may suggest otherwise. The 1987 Constitution limited incumbents to three consecutive terms of three years each, which then seems appealing. Nevertheless, the present-day Philippine politics is still largely dominated by families. According to Querubin (2011), the introduction of term limits did not weaken political dynasties because the incumbent's relatives can replace them in power after the expiration of their term. In addition, the incumbent can run in another position after reaching the term limit. Furthermore, Querubin et al. (2016), showed that the high numbers of women elected to municipal-level positions merely serve as placeholders, serving the position only as a replacement of their male relative.

The Philippine Constitution mandated that 20% of the total seats in the House of Representatives be allotted for the party list. Based on the recently revised formula by the Supreme Court, each group that acquires 2% of the total party-list votes gets a seat each.

Because of this, the party-list needs to choose their representatives or nominees and rank them. This list is then submitted to COMELEC, serving as basis on who gets seated in the House of Representatives once the party-list gathers 2%, 4%, and so on. Simply being nominated as a representative of the party-list is already challenging for women. As seen in Figure 3.1, women make up less than a third of nominees in the top three slots on the party lists, hindering them from entering politics. This phenomenon is not unique to the Philippines: in India, as one member of the parliament said, “It is very difficult for a woman



Source of basic data: Commission on Elections

**Figure 3.1 Proportion Of Female And Male Party-List Nominees To The 2016 Elections**

to make up her mind to enter politics. Once she makes up her own mind, then she has to prepare her husband, and her children, and her family. Once she has overcome all these obstacles and applies for the ticket, then the male aspirants against whom she is applying

make up all sorts of stories about her. And after all this, when her name goes to the party bosses, they do not select her name because they fear losing that seat.”

Based on Figure 3.1, women are less likely to be nominated as representatives of their party-lists in the Philippines. Out of the 115 party-lists running for the 2016 elections, around 74% of the first three nominees are men, while only 26% are that of the women. For the fourth nominee of the party-list, women’s representation increased to 36%, still lagging behind the proportion of men.

Among all these barriers to influence, the institutional barriers are arguably the biggest impediment to women’s political influence. Empowered women who are capable are prevented from occupying elected posts because political institutions and current policies run and function against their favor. Having organized institutions working to their advantage and well-crafted policies, which do not discriminate anyone, is the essential first step to lessen and eventually eliminate gender disparities in the economic and socio-cultural aspects.

### **3.5 Focus On The Local Level**

Although the number of female leaders has significantly risen during the recent years, women are still likely to occupy positions of less importance compared to their male counterparts. Evidence from Africa revealed that the “growth of women in governance has not necessarily translated into real influence” (Arriola & Johnson, 2014). Women are likely to occupy less prestigious ministries such as education and culture, compared to the appointments of men in highly prestigious portfolios like finance or defense. Moreover, in the same analysis, they found out that more than half of all women in cabinet were appointed



to social welfare functions (education, family affairs, community development and culture) compared to men whose distribution in the different departments range more broadly.

Though the Philippines is relatively successful in increasing women's involvement in national politics, the fact that they are still underrepresented holds a significant potential for improvement. Besides, they are still unlikely to hold leadership over higher and relatively more important positions in the national level. Out of the fifteen presidents of the Philippines, only two (13%) are women while only one female was seated in the vice-president post. Thus, it is important to start locally in order to encourage women's participation at the national level.

Elizabeth Angsioco, Head of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines believes that the country needs more women who understand women's issues in politics and that they should come from the countryside, armed with knowledge of what is truly happening at the grassroots level. Their advocacy group has been developing community leaders in the villages.

Starting from the bottom then up is also consistent with the Local Government Code of 1991, which paved the way for the process of decentralizing the powers of the national government to the local government units (LGUs). Since LGUs were given more powers, authority, responsibilities and resources, it can be ensured that women, especially those who "want to make a difference" will be more politically active in the local level and from there, can be the "change agents" that the Philippines needs. Starting from the local level is also an integral part in realizing inclusive growth, or the growth that includes all – the encompassing theme laid out in the 2011-2016 Philippine Development Plan.

## **Chapter 4: Data And Research Design**

This chapter describes the data and research design, as well as the larger research project. In addition, this chapter outlines the estimation method, statistical techniques, and concludes with a table of summary statistics and discussion of the main variables of interest.

### **4.1 Overall Plan And Operationalization**

This research uses data from a research project on campaign programs and public service conducted before and after the 2013 local elections in Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur, Philippines. The research was designed and carried out through the assistance of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), a non-partisan organization in the Philippines that serves as the voter education and monitoring arm of the Catholic Church. The project examined the effects of campaign programs on voter's candidate preferences, and determined voters' attitude and behavior toward the use of local development funds in public service delivery.

The project was conducted particularly in a local level to isolate possible effects of regional country-level and national-level differences. Moreover, with the transfer of power from the central government to local government units, in the municipal-level in particular, mayors have complete authority over and accountability to the constituency. Voters, on the other hand, have more direct interaction to the nearest political leaders, hence can have more knowledge about the candidates and the candidates' platforms and programs in the locality.

The research project had three major components: 1) candidate interviews, 2) flyer dissemination, and 3) voter survey. For the first component, candidates in the mayorship position in twelve municipalities in Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur were interviewed. Data

collected include their political history and basic socio-economic information, proposed policies and platforms, and proposed allotment of the municipal Local Development Fund (LDF) if elected. Data on the candidates' promises and LDF allotment to ten sectors (health, education, household emergencies, water and sanitation, road construction and rehabilitation, community facilities, business loans and economic projects, agricultural assistance, peace and security, and community events) were used to make municipality-specific flyers.

Villages were allocated to the treatment (where flyers were distributed) and control (villages where flyers were not disseminated) groups within each of the twelve municipalities using a pairwise matching algorithm. There were 142 treatment and 142 control villages in the twelve municipalities. The flyers were then distributed and explained by PPCRV volunteers through door-to-door visits to all households in the treatment villages before the elections on May 13, 2013.

## **4.2 Survey Description And Data**

The voter survey is the third component of the research project. Households were randomly chosen both in the treatment and control villages and one voter-respondent within the household, preferably the household head was interviewed. All in all, a total of 3,408 respondents were distributed in the twelve municipalities (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 No. Of Respondents By Province And Municipality**

Province	Municipality	Frequency	%
Ilocos Norte	Bangui	168	4.93
Ilocos Norte	Banna	240	7.04
Ilocos Sur	Burgos	264	7.75
Ilocos Norte	Dingras	360	10.56
Ilocos Sur	Lidlidda	120	3.52
Ilocos Sur	Magsingal	312	9.15
Ilocos Norte	Paoay	360	10.56
Ilocos Norte	Pasquin	360	10.56
Ilocos Norte	Pinili	240	7.04
Ilocos Sur	San Juan	312	9.15
Ilocos Norte	San Nicolas	264	7.75
Ilocos Sur	Sta. Lucia	408	11.97
Total		3,408	100

Data collected include household and income information, household political activism and knowledge, social factors such as access to media, group membership, attendance to church and village meetings, participation in *bayanihan* (a measure of good will and collective action), Local Development Fund allotment, knowledge on the candidates' profile and proposed platforms, attitude towards the candidates, voting and election information including influences, reports of vote-buying and electoral violence, and identification of politically influential people in their locality.

In the analysis section, only half of the total 3,408 observations were used to discount for the possible effect of the treatment (flyers) on the specific variables of interest.

### 4.3 Estimation Method And Statistical Techniques

This section presents the estimation method and the statistical techniques employed to analyze the results. Political influence is estimated using the following:

$$Influence_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Female) + \beta_2(X_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

Each observation  $i$  is an individual survey respondent. The dependent variable *INFLUENCE* is the number of people reporting the respondent as politically influential.

The *Female* variable is an indicator variable that takes the value of 0 if the respondent is female and 1 if otherwise. This variable is the primary explanatory variable used in the regression analysis.  $X$  is a vector of covariates consisting of several respondent and household characteristics. The usual idiosyncratic error term is represented by  $\varepsilon$ .

The baseline models are estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression with standard errors clustered by barangay. In addition to this, models are also estimated using negative binomial regression, because the dependent variable is a count variable (see section 4.4). Negative binomial regression was chosen instead of Poisson regression because likelihood ratio tests indicate over-dispersion.

The description of all variables and the summary statistics are provided in the sections below.

#### **4.4 Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in the analysis, political influence, is operationalized by counting the number of people citing the respondent as politically influential. This is analogous to an in-degree measure in social network analysis. In-degree, in social network applications, is a measure of receptivity, or popularity (Iacobucci, 1994). Identification of persons who have large in-degree, or those who are named many times (representing prominence), is important because it is through this person that resources or information can be channeled, since this person is expected to distribute the resources or circulate the information given. In this study, the ones with large in-degree are those whom many other

respondents have identified as politically influential and the ones with zero in-degree are those who are not identified to be influential by any respondent.

In the survey, the question<sup>3</sup> asked to generate this variable is “*Please name up to five individuals living in the village, but not living in your household, whose opinions you respect the most when it comes to politics.*” The names of the identified individuals were tallied and then verified to make sure that spellings are correct. These names were then matched to the names of the respondents within the *barangay* to determine the number of other respondents reporting them as politically influential.

#### 4.5 Independent Variables

Based on theory, several variables from the dataset were identified that could be potential determinants of political influence. Table 4.2 lists the independent variables tested, and the corresponding expected sign (or effect), whether positive or negative, to the

**Table 4.2 List Of Independent Variables And Expected Effect On Political Influence**

Variable	Expected Effect
Female	Negative
<i>Bayanihan</i>	Positive
Listens to Radio Frequently	Positive
Owns Gas Stove	Positive
Knows Village Leader	Positive
Has Political History	Positive
Years Residence	Positive
Years Education	Positive
Family Size	Positive
Distance to Road	Negative

<sup>3</sup> The exact question asked to the respondents can be found in the Appendix.

dependent variable. All of the independent variables are expected to have a positive effect to political influence, except the variable on gender and distance to road.

The first six variables are dummy variables (with values 0 and 1). Female, the primary explanatory variable captures the gender of the respondent and takes the value of 0 for female and 1 for male. *Bayanihan*, the proxy variable for good will, is also valued at 0 (did not participate in *bayanihan*) and 1 (participated in *bayanihan*), hence expected to show positive correlation to political influence. Listens to radio, is a proxy for access to media, with values 0 (do not listen to radio several times a week) and 1 (listens to radio several times a week). Owns gas stove, is the proxy for wealth, and indicates whether the respondent is relatively wealthy (1) through the ownership of gas stove and not wealthy (0). The variable “knows village leader” is the proxy for political knowledge and is presented as 1 (politically knowledgeable) and 0 (not knowledgeable). Meanwhile, the variable “has political history” shows if the respondent, respondent’s family or relatives had previous experience in a political office (1) or 0 if none.

The last four variables in the table are continuous variables. The number of years the respondent has lived in the municipality is captured by the variable “years residence.” Education is also measured in years, and indicates the number of years the respondent spent studying. The variable “family size” measures the number of members of the respondent’s family. Distance to road, measures the distance of the respondent’s house to the nearest road, in minutes, and indicates how accessible the respondent is, is expected to be negative: as distance of house to road increases, political influence decreases.

## 4.6 Summary Statistics

Table 4.3 presents the summary statistics of the main variables of interest in the study. The dependent variable, political influence, as measured by the number of people reporting a person to be politically influential, ranges from 0 to 11.

**Table 4.3 Summary Statistics Of The Main Variables Of Interest**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Political Influence	0.12	0.76	0	11
Female	0.49	0.50	0	1
Bayanihan	0.77	0.42	0	1
Listens to Radio Several Times a Week	0.70	0.46	0	1
Years Residence	40.4	19.0	1	95
Education	9.38	3.41	0	16
Owns Gas Stove	0.61	0.49	0	1
Family Size	5.11	2.04	1	15
Distance to Road	1.17	3.60	0.010	60
Knows Village Leader	0.99	0.097	0	1
Has Political History	0.44	0.50	0	1
Observations	1683			

From the summary statistics table, we can find that there is almost the same number of male and female respondents. The average residency in the municipality is 40 years. The average number of years in schooling is 9 years, which means the average respondent finished only until third year high school. The average family size is 5 and less than 50% of the respondents have held political or appointed office.

Three-fourths of the respondents helped in a *bayanihan* activity in their village. About 70% of the respondents listen to the radio several times a week as their source of information. For household asset ownership, more than half of the respondents reported having a gas stove. The houses of the respondents are very accessible, as it only takes about 70 seconds to reach the nearest road. Lastly, almost all of the respondents reported that they



know who their current village leader is.

## **Chapter 5: Results And Discussion**

This chapter presents and discusses the main findings of the study. It is subdivided into two sections; the determinants of political influence, which basically provide an analysis of the probable determinants of political influence; and second, the characteristics of politically influential women.

### **5.1 Determinants Of Political Influence**

Based on theory, several variables with strong possible relationships to political influence were identified and tested. These include acquiring information through media, participating in *bayanihan*, receiving remittances from abroad, and gender.

The first of these, access to media, is a traditional factor that shapes political influence. Broadcast, print and the emergence of the new media, are essential channels of information dissemination to the target audience. In the Philippines, candidates running for national posts are taking advantage of these types of media. Radio is also still widely used to advertise political candidates, especially in the local scene. It is no wonder that based on the analysis, media access significantly affects the degree of political influence.

Participation in *bayanihan*, a proxy for good will and involvement in collective action was identified since politics is a social concept. In addition to family and friends, people from the workplace and the residential community are also influencing one's political choices and behavior (Zuckerman, 2005). However, this analysis shows that it does not have a significant effect on political influence.

A great deal of anecdotal evidence refers to Overseas Filipino Workers as the new heroes due to their significant contribution to the Philippine economy. The third factor, receiving remittances from abroad, draws its inclusion in the possible explanatory variables to political influence from this fact. In a traditional Filipino community, people know almost all the details regarding a household, hence the presence of a family member working abroad and sending remittances back to the Philippines is very well-known by the community. In this context, it is treated as a depiction of affluence and influence. It shows a significant, positive relationship with political influence in the bivariate regression analysis, however, using the full model including the control variables, it shows otherwise.

This analysis is focused on gender and its effect on political influence. As Table 5.1 shows, the variable on gender, which is female, shows a significant negative effect on political influence, both in the bivariate and the full model specifications if estimated using the Ordinary Least Squares regression. Female respondents in the municipality are less likely

**Table 5.1 Gender And Political Influence (Estimated With OLS)**

Explanatory Variables	Bivariate	Full Model
	Political Influence	Political Influence
Female	-0.14*** (0.04)	-0.13*** (0.03)
Years Residence		0.0011 (0.00)
Education		0.016* (0.01)
Owns Gas Stove		0.12*** (0.03)
Family Size		0.019* (0.01)
Distance to Road		-0.0047** (0.00)
Knows Village Leader		0.075 (0.06)
Has Political History		0.17*** (0.04)
Constant	0.19** (0.07)	-0.38* (0.16)
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1704	1683
R <sup>2</sup>	0.014	0.046

Dependent variable is the number of individuals reporting the respondent as influential. OLS regression with municipal fixed effects. Standard errors, clustered by village, in parentheses.

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

to be named as politically influential. This finding is statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

Since the dependent variable is a count variable, the model is also estimated using negative binomial regression in order to discount the effect of over-dispersion. The results prove to be the same: women are less likely to be named as politically influential compared to men. The main finding in Table 5.2 (full model specification) can be interpreted as the odds of a female affecting political influence is 1.36 times lower compared to males, and is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Even controlling for years of residency in the municipality, years of education, affluence, family size, distance of house to the nearest road, political knowledge, and having political history, the results are the same for both OLS and negative binomial regression.

**Table 5.2 Gender And Political Influence (Estimated With Negative Binomial Regression)**

Explanatory Variables	Bivariate	Full Model
	Political Influence	Political Influence
Female	-1.42*** (0.29)	-1.36*** (0.28)
Years Residence		0.0096(0.01)
Education		0.14*** (0.04)
Owns Gas Stove		1.94*** (0.45)
Family Size		0.15*** (0.05)
Distance to Road		-0.12(0.08)
Knows Village Leader		0.61(0.80)
Has Political History		1.86*** (0.34)
Constant	-1.62*** (0.48)	-8.00*** (1.19)
Municipal Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1704	1683

Dependent variable is the number of individuals reporting the respondent as politically influential. Negative binomial regression with municipal fixed effects and exponentiated coefficients (odds ratios). Standard errors, clustered by village, in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## 5.2 Characterizing The Politically Influential Women

This section is divided in three parts in order to determine and better understand the characteristics of the politically influential women in a local scale, 1) who are they, which talks about the basic information about women covering their demographics, economic profile and political history, 2) what they do, which captures their social engagement and access to media, and 3) how they think, which discusses their proposed sectoral allocation of the Local Development Fund and their voting influences.

### 5.2.1 Who They Are?

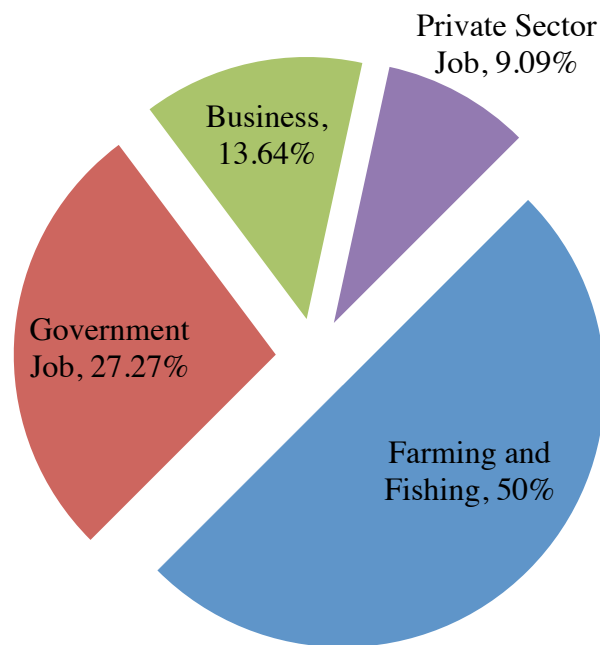
Table 5.3 shows the demographic information of politically influential women. Compared to the average respondent of the survey, politically influential women are those residing in the municipality for a longer time (two years longer). However, their male counterparts are living in the municipality five years longer than them. In terms of age, they are three years younger than the average. Both the family size (5.41) and household size (5) of politically influential women are also bigger than the average respondent. This finding is consistent with the 2008 National Demographic and Household Survey, which reports that the average household size of the Filipino household is ~5. The average number of years in

**Table 5.3 Demographic Information Of Politically Influential Women**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Years Residence	42.0	18.7	12	73
Age	54.3	12.2	27	73
Family Size	5.41	2.26	2	11
Household Size	5	2.76	2	12
Education	11.6	3.33	6	16

education is 11.6, meaning they have finished secondary school and have attended at least one year in college. This observation is two years more than the average respondent's years of schooling and one year more than politically influential males' education.

Agriculture is the predominant source of income of the households of politically influential women. Half of them reported farming and fishing as their main source of livelihood (Figure 5.1). They are part of the estimated 839 thousand women farmers, forestry



**Figure 5.1 Sources Of Income Of Politically Influential Women**

workers and fisherfolk in the 2010 national Labor Force Survey. Income from government jobs (27.27%), business (13.64%) and private sector jobs business (9.01%) come in next. They are more likely to hold jobs in the government compared to the politically influential males (only 7.41% reported working for the government).

The labor and employment figures in the data show a stark contrast from the national labor and employment statistics. In October 2010, out of the 14.2 million total employed women in the country, 53% were wage and salary workers, 28% were self-employed and 2% were employed in own family-operated farm or business. Appropriating it in the comparison, farming and fishing fall in the last two categories, which only comprise 30% of the women employment figures.

Moreover, one-fourth of politically influential women receive remittances from abroad while the great majority of them are not beneficiaries of the 4Ps, the government's conditional cash transfer program. From these results, it can be said that politically influential women are relatively well off compared to the average respondent.

More than 86% of the politically influential women claimed they or someone from their household have previously held political or government office (Table 5.4). This figure is double the proportion of women who were not reported as influential. Meanwhile, only 71% of politically influential males reported holding political or government office.

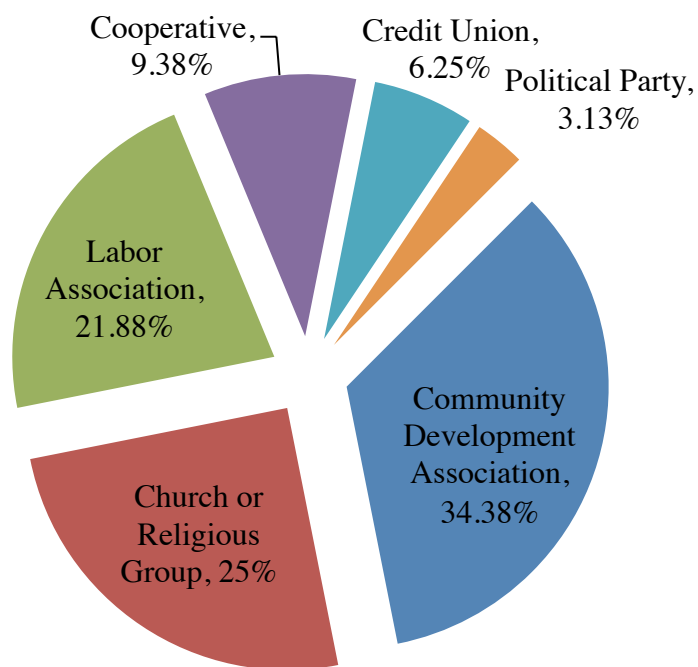
**Table 5.4 Women's Political History**

	<b>Has Political History (%)</b>
Influential	86.4
Not Influential	43.52

Specifically, almost half (47.93%) of the politically influential women were the ones who had previous experience in politics as Village Councilor (47.93%) and Village Leader (21.05%).

### 5.2.2 What They Do?

Politically influential women engage the members of the community. This is confirmed by the results in membership in organizations, wherein a great majority of the influential women reported to have at least one affiliation. Their major organizations include community development associations (34.38%), church or religious group (25%), and labor associations (21.88%). Others reported being affiliated to cooperatives, credit unions, and political parties (Figure 5.2).

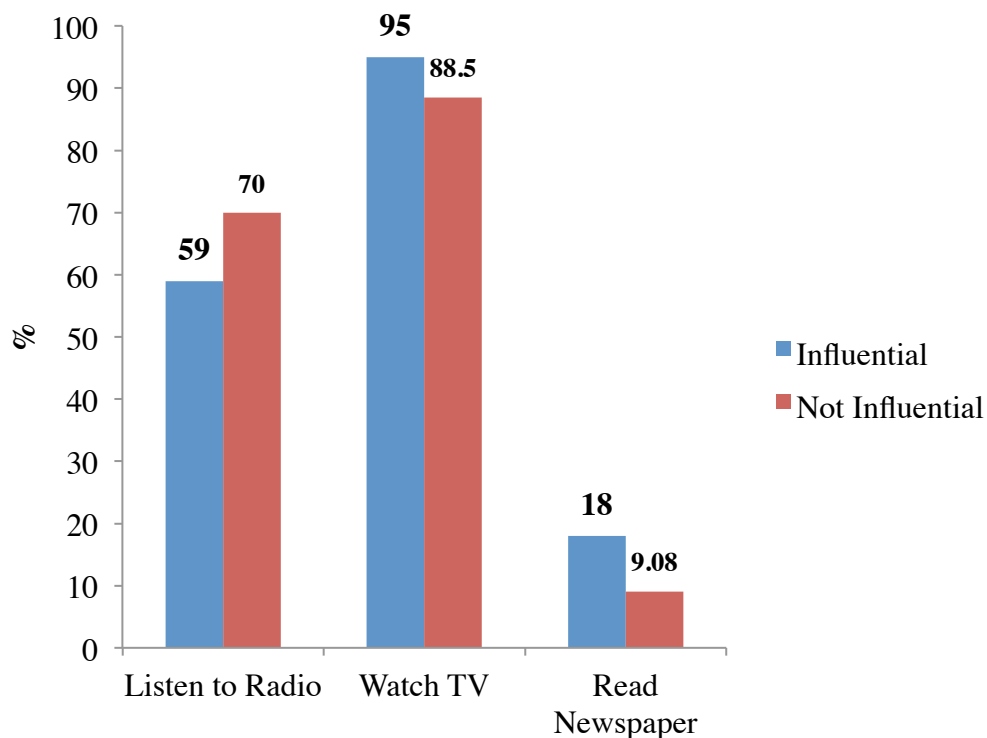


**Figure 5.2 Affiliations Of Politically Influential Women**

Next, politically influential women are unlikely to approach political leaders for help. In the year preceding the election, only 14% and 5% of politically influential women approached their village leaders and mayors for emergency assistance, respectively.



They choose to be informed (through access to media). 95% and 59% of politically influential women regularly watch television and listen to the radio, respectively, to gain access to information (Figure 5.3). On the other hand, reading newspapers seems not to be a popular information source among politically influential women. Politically influential women had higher access for both television and newspaper, however, they are 11 percentage points behind females who are not identified as influential in terms of listening to radio.



**Figure 5.3 Access To Media As Source Of Information Of Women**

The traditional tri-media – television, radio, and print media, is still widely used by Filipinos as sources of information. Results from the national psychographics survey held in February 2015 revealed that the television is still the most popular medium for advocating advertisements for political personalities. This finding is consistent with the original purpose

of how the television came to the Philippines that is, as an information medium for the re-election bid of the incumbent president then. Based on the 2013 Pulse Asia Survey, television advertisements are the voters' biggest source of information and news during that election year, as indicated by 85% of the respondents. No doubt that out of the 35 trillion pesos total spending on advertisements in the same year, 5.2% was accounted for by political advertisements (Cabacungan, 2013).

Also based on the Pulse Asia Survey, 22% of the respondents said that they get election-related information from radio advertisements (Fonbuena, 2013). Since majority of Filipinos owns a radio, it remains a relevant source of information especially in rural areas. Meanwhile, the readership of news through newspapers still reaches a fifth of the adult population, even during this age of the internet, as found out through the national psychographics survey in 2015. Print advertisements including newspapers and magazines were also cited as source of political information by 11% of the respondents in the Pulse Asia Survey. Pertierra (2012) noted that while print media is highly regarded, it is limited to middle class urban readers. Posters and other campaign paraphernalia were also important sources of information about the candidates, as claimed by 31% of the voters.

Politically influential women attend and speak up during meetings in their villages. Table 5.5 shows that all of the women named as politically influential have attended meetings in their villages. This finding shows that they are active in the locality and they

**Table 5.5 Women's Attendance To Meetings**

	<b>Attend Meetings (%)</b>
Influential	100%
Not Influential	93.5

choose to participate and be informed in important matters concerning their family and community's welfare.

Moreover, 73% of those who have attended have also spoken up at least once during these meetings. This figure is significantly higher than those who were not identified as influential; only 38% of them reported to have spoken up during a village meeting. Speaking up during a village meeting is an integral part of political influence. More than demonstrating a person's understanding of the basic issues, speaking up during a meeting is a sign of involvement and signifies the intention to participate.

Politically influential women regularly attend religious services. The Philippines is the largest Christian nation in Asia and fifth in the world (De Guzman, 2011). Since the Spanish colonial times, religion and politics were proven to be inseparable in the country. Even the installment of the two female presidents of the country was linked to support from the Catholic Church (Silvestre, 2001). Filipinos perceive that being religious or regularly attending church is associated with being righteous and possessing a good moral character. Therefore, it is unsurprising that females who were identified as politically influential attend religious services regularly: weekly (68.2%) and once a month (13.6%) (Table 5.6). Only 35.2% of females who were not recognized as influential attend church weekly. Meanwhile, about half of politically influential males reported attending church weekly.

**Table 5.6 Politically Influential Women's Attendance To Religious Services**

	<b>Frequency of Attending Religious Services (%)</b>
Others	4.5
Once a month	13.6
Twice a month	9.1
Weekly	68.2
Daily	4.5
Total	100.0

Politically influential women have also participated in *bayanihan* activities in their villages. *Bayanihan*, from the root word *bayan*, which refers to a community or a nation, is one of the longstanding Filipino traditions, which emphasizes voluntary and communal unity or effort to attain a particular objective. Examples of modern day *bayanihan* include supporting fire victims by donating clothing and other daily necessities, and the community teaming up to clean the classrooms and other grade school facilities after the summer vacation. This Filipino tradition highlights solidarity and the importance of helping in times of need without expecting anything in return.

Among the politically influential women reporting *bayanihan* activities in their villages, 77% said that they have participated at least once, in their village's *bayanihan* activities (Table 5.7). The figure for politically influential men was higher, at 98%.

**Table 5.7 Politically Influential Women's Participation In *Bayanihan* Activities**

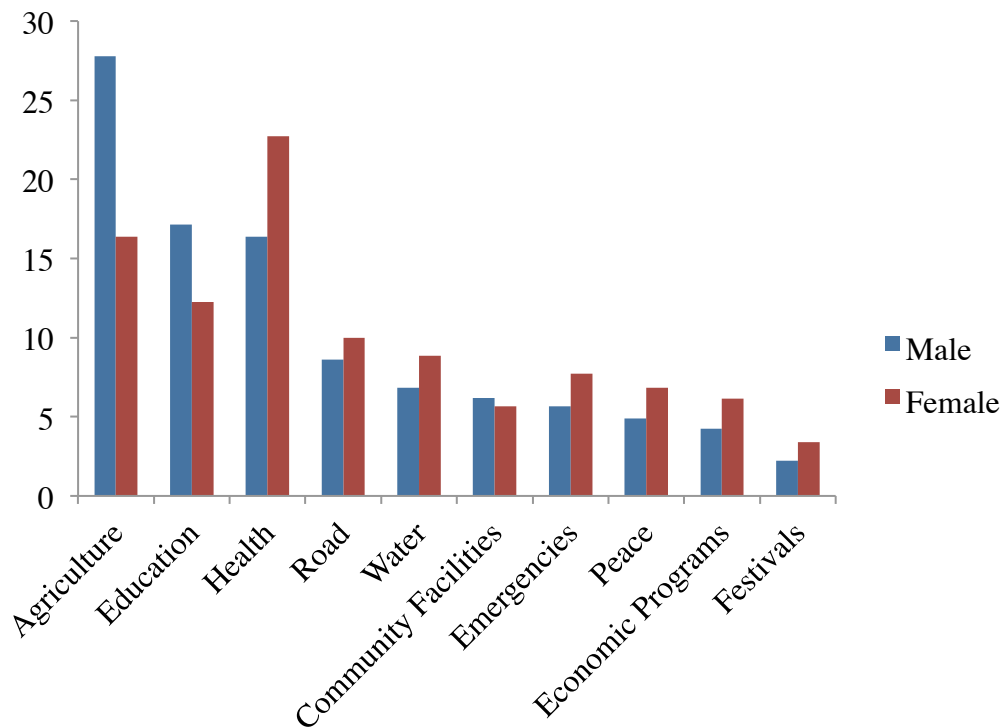
	<b>Participation in <i>Bayanihan</i> Activities (%)</b>
Influential Women	77.27
Influential Men	98.0

Politically influential women are very unlikely to discuss political information. None of the politically influential women discussed the PPCRV flyer containing political information. On the other hand, among their male counterparts, 40% discussed the flyer. This indicates that politically influential men can be targeted for the government's future information dissemination campaigns needing critical attention.

### **5.2.3 How They Think?**

When they were asked to allocate the Local Development Fund to the ten sectors: health, education, household emergencies, water and sanitation, road construction and

rehabilitation, business and economic programs, agriculture, peace and security, and community events, politically influential women indicated health, agriculture and education to be their top three sectors (Figure 5.4). Like the politically influential males, they allocate the least to festivals. Meanwhile, politically influential males prioritize their LDF allocation to the same three sectors females have chosen, however in a different order.



**Figure 5.4 Sectoral Allocation Of Politically Influential Females And Males**

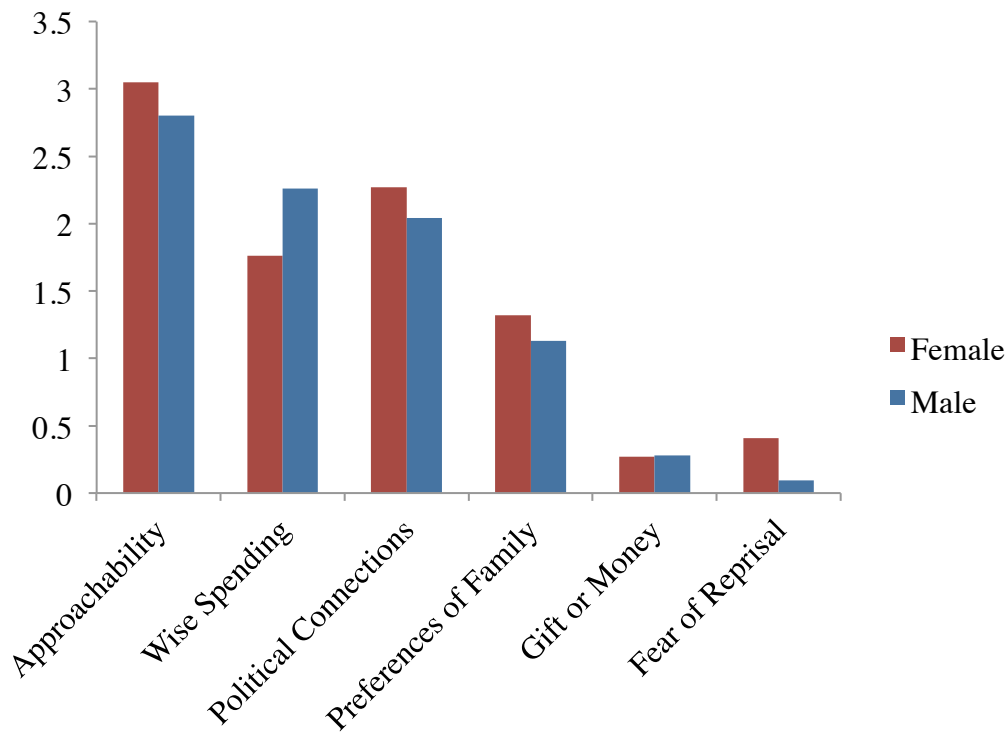
It can be noticed that the politically influential people tend to prioritize public goods. Women, being mothers, are more concerned on their family's health. According to Dr. William Norcross as cited by Kluger (2010), "women make the primary health care decisions in two-thirds of American households." He added that this has been the case for a long time now and is possibly true in all parts of the world. Giving agriculture a high regard in their answers can be directly linked to their source of income, being farming and fishing. This is

almost also the ranking for the average sectoral allocation of all the respondents, except that household emergencies and business loans and economic programs come very closely after education and health, with an average of 9.99% and 10.03%, respectively.

The sectors that were found to have significant differences between men and women include agriculture, economic programs and household emergencies. Men are more likely to allocate more on agriculture compared to women; whereas women allocate more to economic programs and household emergencies than men. Among politically influential men, more than 75% reported agriculture as their main source of income. As breadwinners, it is therefore not surprising that they would want to allocate more funding to the sector that gives them livelihood. Women's high allocation to economic programs and household emergencies is also understandable since they are the ones who run the household and notice what is lacking, and what needs to be done urgently.

In terms of voting influences, or the factors affecting voters' decision in choosing their candidates, politically influential people (both men and women) rated approachability or helpfulness of candidates as the most important factor influencing their choice of candidates (Figure 5.5). When they were asked to rank these influences from 0-4, 0 being not important and 4 being the most important, females reported that the ability to use political connections to get money and projects for the municipality comes second while for males, wise spending comes next to approachability. Females are most unlikely to base their votes on gift or money from candidates while males ranked fear of reprisal the least.

The candidate's political connection, as a voting influence, was found to have significant difference between men and women. Women placed more importance to this factor as having influence on their voting decision, compared to their male counterparts.



**Figure 5.5 Voting Influences Of Politically Influential Females And Males**

The opinion of family members on the choice of candidate to vote for during elections is a major voting influence in the Philippines. Further, it is customary to vote for one's family member, relative, friend, townmate, or even an acquaintance (Montiel, 2001). No matter how obscure the connection, Filipinos usually vote for someone who is associated to them. Among the poor, family has the second biggest influence to candidate choice during elections (Coronel & Chua, 2004). Meanwhile, the study of Capadocia, Gayosa, Rivera, Roselo, and Uichanco (2008) showed that personal networks are one of the two primary sources of election-related information for first-time Filipino voters. Family and social networks undoubtedly play a significant part in the spread of political information in the Philippines.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

In order to increase women's political participation in the national level and truly empower them, the key is to start from the bottom. This study aimed to determine the current status of women locally, and to identify and characterize women who were identified as politically influential. This is an important first step to identify who can be targeted in taking key roles in the local and national levels. Equipping them in leadership roles cannot only increase the number of female political leaders, but more importantly can make them influence and shape decisions of those in authority.

Previous studies have shown that the presence of women in leadership positions has brought new perspectives in policy-making, and substantial improvements in key sectors such as education, health and livelihoods. The importance of politically influential women taking active roles in politics and governance cannot be overemphasized by the President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, when she said, "When one woman is a leader, it changes her. When more women are leaders, it changes politics and policies."

At the same time, these benefits conferred by women's participation in politics are limited unless this participation reflects actual political influence. In the Philippines, the main problem is that the statistics on paper do not reflect the actual opportunities for women to participate in politics, much less the political influence that women have in the political sphere.

First of all, while the Philippines tends to do well in terms of cross-country comparisons within the region, these rankings focus entirely on holding national legislative office. Labonne, Parsa, and Querubin (2016) show that the women holding legislative office



in the Philippines entered politics as part of existing political dynasties, rather than through the expansion of opportunities for women to participate in politics.

Second, the focus on the national level also makes it more difficult to understand the broader dynamics of political influence. After all, while there are certainly many women in the Philippine legislature, because these women tend to reflect the policy preferences and political platforms of their relatives, they do not represent new voices in the decision-making process. This thesis reflects the first large-scale study of the dynamics of gender and political influence, by focusing on the fundamental mechanisms of influence at the local level.

Results of this study demonstrate that women are less politically influential than men. Hence, they are not quite expected to have the ability to shape and have a say in the decisions made by those in authority. This means that women are less likely to be tapped for political representation and awareness on political issues. COMELEC data show that compared to males, there is a smaller number of female nominees of the party-lists to the House of Representatives. Furthermore, they are unlikely to be asked for their opinions on issues on politics and governance. Lastly, women are less likely to be selected in leading positions of power, in a local-level setting, and in a national-level as well.

From a policy standpoint, this theses has three main contributions: 1) providing a methodology for identifying politically influential women at the local level; 2) analyzing the differences in policies and profiles between influential men and women; and 3) linking the determinants of political influence to policy recommendations for promoting and supporting these women to enable them to better participate in the political sphere. In order for women to have a voice in Philippine politics, it is not enough to have more women holding office on

paper, but to ensure that women are given the same opportunities and avenues for participation in politics.

Achieving this in a local-level setting in the Philippines can be made through increasing awareness and intensifying the visibility of groups promoting women empowerment. The government and non-government organizations can also take part by supporting these initiatives.

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## Appendix

### Question Used To Generate The Main Variable Of Interest

Maaari po bang magbigay kayo ng limang pangalan ng mga taong nandito sa inyong barangay na inyong **ginagalang ang opinyon** pagdating sa pulitika? Dapat po ay hindi nakatira sa inyong bahay ang mga taong ito. *[Please name the five individuals living in the barangay, but not living in your household, whose **opinions you respect** the most when it comes to **politics**.]*

No.	First Name	Last Name
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		