

A Survey Study on the Motivations, Gender Roles and
Gender Perspectives of Elected Women Officials
in Iloilo Province from 1988-1992

An Undergraduate Thesis
Presented to the
Division of Social Sciences
University of the Philippines in the Visayas
Miag-ao, Iloilo

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Course
Social Science 199.2

by

NC C. BELLOGA

December 12, 1995

ABSTRACT

One hundred elected Ilonggas from 28 municipalities of Iloilo Province were interviewed to define their demographic profile, motivations in joining the electoral politics, gender roles and perspectives based on selected socio-political gender issues.

This study revealed that most of the respondents are married, age 40 to 74, have 4-5 average number of children. Majority of them acquired secondary education and only 28% are degree holders with female gender courses such as BS Nursing, BS Education and BS Commerce. Most these women entered politics in 1988 and most of them came from political clans in their municipalities. All of them joined civic or religious organizations in their municipality. Majority of the respondents supported or initiated government projects during their term of office in the areas of beautification, sanitation, health and environment and mostly are geared towards the upliftment of the standard of living in their areas.

This study established that most of the respondents performed traditionally female gender roles such as housekeepers, wives and mothers. They also assumed male gender roles such as elected public servant and farmer. Only few performed non-gender roles such as being a student and engaged in business. Majority of them assumed a triple role by simultaneously fulfilling their domestic reproduction, production and community management obligations.

Majority of these women officials were initially motivated to join politics by their desire to serve the people. Most of them are hesitant to join because they lack political knowledge and public service experience. However, despite of their hesitations, these women decided to run for public office because of the assured support given by their family and friends.

Majority of these women did not perceive that their being women marginalizes them in politics. Instead, they view such factor leading to their victory which proved that constituents preferred them over male candidates. Most of these women did not perceive that politics is a man's world with reference to the success of Cory Aquino and Miriam Santiago as female politicians. Majority of them qualified their opinion on woman's exclusive dominion of home arguing that women can only go beyond their household duties if they know they are capable to perform public functions. They define their gender role in Philippine society as helpers, assistants and character molders of the youth. Majority of these women also qualified their opinion on the equality of men and women, asserting that in terms of physical capabilities men are more superior and in areas such as home management and child bearing.

Majority of these women did not perceive that Filipino society is a male biased society. They view women as capable of occupying national political positions and has numeric advantage over men. However, majority agreed that Filipino women occupy subordinate roles to men in society because women are weak, less aggressive, receive insufficient support and have scarce opportunities. Most of the respondents, find politics difficult especially in settling disputes. They contend that once they gained the respect of their constituents they feel competent to tackle the tasks.

It is evident that women politicians still adhere to the patriarchal belief and have unresolved gender definition, which are contributory factors to the discrimination of women in politics.