

# Perspectives and Recommendations of Women in Politics of Conflict Resolution in Selected Barangays in Isabela City, Basilan

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**Abstract:** A Descriptive Method employing a Quantitative-Qualitative Design was used. The respondents were the nine (9) Barangay Chairpersons and eight (8) Barangay Councilors of the selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan who were identified as women leaders in their community. Findings revealed the different perspectives of women in politics of conflict resolution in selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan are important in the conflict resolution process; the level of accountability of different organizations in conflict resolution are not the same as perceived by the respondents; no significant difference on the effectiveness of the programs implemented of the different organizations according to positions that is respondents have the same assessment on how effective the different organizations in the government and private sectors; no significant difference on the respondent's satisfaction of the activities carried out by of the different organizations according to positions that is, the respondents have almost the same assessment on the satisfaction of the activities carried out by organizations in the government and private agencies; and the perspectives and recommendations are possible and existing to close the disputes and gaps of women in politics in selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan.

**Keywords:** Basilan, Conflict Resolution, Isabela City, Perspectives, Women in Politics.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The world has seen this through the rise in power of two women as Presidents of the country. Women's concerns were positioned at the heart of the government agenda with the integration of the gender equality principle in the 1987 Philippine Constitution [22]. It can be observed, nevertheless, that some women lawmakers stand out among their male counterparts with regard to media visibility and public approval like Senators Miriam Defensor Santiago, Pia Cayetano (principal sponsor of the Magna Carta for Women, which policy-makers dubbed as the local Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Bill of Rights for the women in the Philippines), and Jamby Madrigal (principal author of Magna Carta for Women) have served many terms in the Senate and activist-Representatives Risa Hontiveros and Liza Masa have also spearheaded several initiatives and bills in the lower house of the congress.

Many researchers claim that gender determines leadership styles (that is, men and women lead and manage differently) ([9], [7], [13], [16], [19] and [20]). According to Gold in [12], a body of research which supports this argument has been growing since the mid-1980s. Before this time, differences in the way men and women led were taken for granted probably because the scarcity of women leaders rendered them almost invisible. Evetts in [11] asserts that with regard to the way male and female leaders do their tasks and their respective leadership styles, "gender has been shown to be a differentiating variable" (p. 3). It is argued that gender decides leadership styles because of the socialization process which develops in women the values and characteristics that lead to leadership behaviors which are different from those traditionally associated with men ([13], [17], [18], [20], [23], and [24]). Moreover, women are constrained to behave in accordance with their stereotypes as dependent, compliant [18], emotional [19] and careful and prudent [21]. Early in [9] further argues that "expectation is a central aspect of the socialization process" (as cited in [20]). That women are

expected to be caring, supportive and cooperative can account for their different approaches to leadership from men. Evidence suggests that leaders who perform contrary to the stereotypical expectations of their gender are evaluated negatively [2]. It is concluded that gender influences human behavior [25] and therefore, can influence leadership styles.

In contrast to the idea that gender is a determinant of leadership styles, other researchers claim that leadership is gender-neutral ([1] and [2]). This argument is supported by some research showing that there is no or little difference between the way men and women lead ([5] and [11]). Studies of leadership behavior in non-educational settings find no distinction between male and female leaders ([13] and [15]). Further, men and women “cannot be regarded as two coherent groups” with “two distinctly different ways” of leading and management [5] as they are constrained, at least, by leadership roles. According to Weyer in [26], leadership roles have norms that guide their task performance. Therefore, when males and females are in the same leadership positions, they tend to behave similarly to fulfill their roles. Even if gender roles have an impact on their behaviors it will be modified by leadership roles, resulting in minimal differences in leadership styles. Gillet - Karam as cited in [7] argues that leadership practice is strongly situated, not gender determined. In addition, Eddy in [10] points out in her study of college presidents that even though the presidents were described in gendered terms by their campus members as authoritative for men and generative for women, they did not actually lead in strictly gendered ways. In [14], research had similar findings, indicating faculty members’ disagreement with the women presidents’ beliefs that they led more participative and collegially. The difference between the perception of a particular leader’s performance and his or her actual performance can be explained by stereotyping, which is claimed to be central to the rejection of gender as a determinant of leadership style [26].

Researchers claim that gender determines leadership styles like in the studies of Dean et al in [7], Shah in [23] and Qiang, Han & Niu in [21]. It is concluded that gender influences human behavior and therefore, can influence leadership styles. Other researchers also claim that leadership is gender-neutral [26]. Numerous studies have shown also that women employ a collaborative and participative leadership style [16]. In some research findings indicate women’s styles are associated with transformational leaders. Research on women’s leadership has also found that women face barriers on their way to the top jobs, and while in those positions they may experience unequal employment opportunities and role conflict as well as patriarchal attitudes towards women. Another barrier that hampers women accessing and practicing leadership is their multiple roles [21].

In this research, only the female barangays chairpersons and councilors were considered as the gender variable and their perspectives and recommendations as women leaders were gathered on conflict resolution in selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan which made it different from the above-mentioned researches.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a Descriptive Method employing a Quantitative-Qualitative Design to gather information about the perspectives and recommendations of women in politics of conflict resolution. It made use of qualitative method base on a first-hand interview and testimonies from the respondents. The instrument was a semi-structured and guided open-ended statement was provided as additional information relevant about women perspective of conflict resolution. The quantitative research instrument was devised from existing literature and was redesigned to suit to the current barangay scenario or situation in Isabela City, Basilan and was tested in the field before being applied by researcher.

The research targets were the chairpersons and councilors of the selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan. A purposive random sampling procedure was also used for the nine (9) barangay chairpersons since there are nine (9) women out of the forty - five (45) chairmen and a simple random sampling was being utilized to select the respondents for the eight (8) barangay councilors.

The researcher sent an official letter to the chairpersons and councilors in selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan through the Association of Barangay Council (ABC) and asked permission to conduct the research. Once the permission was granted, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire and interviews the respondents. Before the actual administration of questionnaires, a pre-test was conducted to establish whether the respondents correctly understood the items thus data collected were with correct skills and proper research ethics. After the pre-test, an extensive clarification of any issues, confusions and concerns on the contents of the survey were being discussed through a Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) by the researcher and the respondents.

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Eight (8) out of seventeen (17) respondents or 47.06% are secondary graduates while only seven (7) of them are with bachelor's degree with 41.18 %. Most of them are married with 64.71% and "Chavacano" tribe has the highest frequency of respondents with 76.46% while 91.12% or sixteen (16) respondents are in Age bracket of 41- 80. Nine (9) out of seventeen (17) respondents or 52.94% are chairpersons while eight (8) of them are councilors with 47.06%. On the Different Perspectives, the average weighted means of the different organizations on the perspectives of women in politics of conflict resolution, Statement 3 "Important Roles of Media in Conflict Resolution", Statement 4 "Whose Role is Important in Youth's Success" and Statement 6 "Role of the Organizations is Important to Build Effective Relationship among Political Parties" have the highest rank with equal weighted value of 4.10 in the Government Agencies. However, in the Private/Security Agencies, Statement 5 "Role of Women is Important in Women Collaboration's Success" with a weighted mean value of 4.04 and ranked first among the indicators. Furthermore, Statement 2 "Respondent's Satisfaction on the Activities Carried out by the Different Organizations" was being rated by the respondents of the two organizations with an average weighted mean of 3.65. This implies that they had the same evaluation of being satisfied on the activities carried out by these organizations on the perspectives of women in politics of conflict resolution in their barangays.

On the Accountability of Different Organizations in Conflict Resolution as Perceived by the Respondents, In the Government Agencies, the Local Peace Committee Indicator has six (6) respondents or 35.0% have rated "High Accountability" while the Local Community Indicator has four (4) respondents with a percentage of 23.5 has rated "High Accountability" also, thus the respondents in these two indicators considered "High Accountability" of different organizations as perceived by the respondents to resolve the conflict in the communities of Isabela City, Basilan. However, the Media Indicator has two (2) respondents or 12.0% rated "Less Accountability" of different organizations to resolve the conflicts in the community. The NGO's Indicator had the highest percentage of 53.0% which implies that the NGO's had "More Accountability" while the indicator shown only "Less Accountability", however, Media is not necessary on the accountability to resolve the conflict in their barangays as perceived by the respondents. In Private Agencies, Women's/Mother's Group Indicator got 53.0% which means that it has "High Accountability" to resolve the conflict in their barangays as perceived by the respondents and most of the indicators rated only with "Moderate Accountability". Lastly, only Indicator Civil Society was not considered accountable by the respondents to resolve the conflict in their barangays.

Statistically, the computed t- Value and probability value of 0.627 and 0.238 respectively showed that the p-Value is not within the rejection area at Alpha 0.05 level of significance. Thus, there is no significant difference on the effectiveness of the programs/activities being implemented by the government and private agencies had existed. Furthermore, the respondents have the same assessment on how effective the different organizations in the government and private sectors and the positions as chairperson or councilor did not make any difference on the implementation of the programs/activities carried out by the different organizations in the barangays.

Similarly, the computed t-Value and probability value of 0.796 and 0.549 respectively showed that the p-Value is not within the rejection area at Alpha 0.05 level of significance and hence shows no significant difference on the respondent's satisfaction of the different activities carried out by the government and private agencies had existed. Furthermore, the respondents have almost the same assessment on the satisfaction of the activities carried out by organizations in the government and private sectors and the positions did not make any difference on the respondents' satisfaction of the activities carried out by the different organizations in the Government and Private Agencies in the barangays.

On the Perspectives and Recommendations to Close Disparities and Gaps of Women in Politics of Conflict Resolution, the main barriers or problems that cause conflicts and disputes cultural difference, racial discrimination, financial problem, gambling, no permanent work, improper sanitation, promises made by politician and other agencies which were not fulfilled and drugs and an average of 80% from the fifteen (15) respondents recommended that the conflict and dispute occurred were "Being Resolved" but two (2) of the respondents, 70% and 90%, rated that the conflicts and disputes were "Not Resolved Even Effort Were Made Before". The ideas used even efforts were made for resolving the conflicts and disputes, were conducting supervision in the area and apply the neighborhood spirit, Barangay officials prepared some symposia on issues and concerns for dissemination; house to house meeting about drugs and visitation by the barangay officials and barangay Tanod/Civilian Volunteer Organization; good communication between parties;

conduct activities that would contribute to the peace and order; do counselling, conduct awareness, have consultation with the barangay members; and give lecture about drug addiction to all drug surrenders. The following were the recommendations on the reactions when misunderstanding or hard feelings with other people occur: Have dialogue, with the person(s) concern to settle the conflict; I would be angry; talk with them in a nice way; verify first the problems to find the truth of the matter; and resolve it patiently and conclusively in dealing with them.

On the Women in Politics' Perspectives on the Role of Youth (Men and Women) Conflict Resolution Process. The following are the support needed for Youth's success: Enroll in Alternative Learning System Literacy Program; Train them in the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority; Sponsor barangay sports to develop their skills in different games.; Invite other agency for skills training and livelihood programs for their survival; and Recommend for Education Programs like scholarships and grants from the National Government Organization and others. The following are the rules and regulations to enforce the youth in the process of conflict management: Conduct Civil Awareness Program; Meet them often to close misunderstanding; Curfew for all youth as mandated by the city; Do guidance and counselling to underneath their personality; and Form a group to assist them in their problems.

Women in Politics' Perspectives on their Role in Social Inclusion and Conflict Resolution Process. The following are some remarkable and creative work done by women in conflict resolution process in barangay: There is an active intervention on gender development.; Cleaning drive was conducted in different access of the barangay periodically; Senior Citizen's Group was formed to cater the needs of elderly; Women Organization was very active to support women's right.; and Provision of Supplemental Feeding was done.

The following are the kind of support needed to make women successful in conflict resolution process: There should be love and care from the family and society; Moral support from the barangay official may be given; Trainings and Livelihood programs from the local unit and National Government Organizations for them to survive financially; and Organize women group organization to support them as a group member in resolving their needs.

On the problems and challenges encountered by leaders in country in terms of leadership and management, the following were the response of the participants such as corruption practitioner among officials, no improvement due to different political parties' conflicts, adult women and small children who are girls were abused, peace and order problem, lack of support from neighbors and other government agencies, calamity problem, drugs and other related problems are experienced and hunger problem among non-member families of the government programs called on 4Ps.

In order to have effective leadership, the following supports are needed such as support from different civic societies who are ready to listen and to suggest for the improvement of the community and country as a whole, any kind of support from any agency in order to have effective leadership, orientation and training from Local Peace Committee may be conducted to support the barangay, and political support from Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) may be established to attain peace.

Conflict resolved according to the participants based on the information gathered from the media are conflict between husbands and wives, drug related problems were minimized by the help of the police officers with their different programs like operation TOKHANG and Gun Ban, land and house disputes were concluded, and investigations of any sort was conducted to settle disputes.

The following are the support needed to make peace education of conflict resolution process more effective such as moral and financial support from the leaders, implementation of the what is the allocation may be implemented, seminars may be conducted for depth understanding of conflict resolution, government support and proper channeling of communication is highly needed, all government officials down from their staff and members may consider rehabilitating their performance, and invite resource speakers to give lectures on peace education.

The following are the content(s) needed to disseminate women's role in peace education of conflict resolution process such as peace education dialogue and orientation may be done, community members play a vital role in gearing towards peace which may be strengthened, encourage and strengthen understanding because there is peace by having periodic meetings with barangay officials and members, to stress out the importance of peace not only in our lives but in our entire country as a whole by contrast and open communication, and good manner, values and different laws governing peace maybe practice through peace education conducted in the barangay.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The different perspectives of women in politics of conflict resolution in selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan are important in the conflict resolution process. The level of accountability of different organizations in conflict resolution is not the same as perceived by the respondents. No Significant difference on the effectiveness of the programs implemented of the different organizations according to positions. The respondents have the same assessment on how effective the different organizations in the government and private sectors. No significant difference on the respondent's satisfaction of the activities carried out by of the different organizations according to positions. The respondents have almost the same assessment on the satisfaction of the activities carried out by organizations in the government and private agencies. The perspectives and recommendations are possible and existing to close the disputes and gaps of women in politics in selected barangays in Isabela City, Basilan.

#### V. RECOMMENDATION

Public/Government and private officials should be given new trends of programs and other related projects for the conflict resolution process to upgrade and sustain the quality of and living conditions of the constituents of the different barangays. Higher Government officials should monitor the barangay officials on their personal development and training in management and continuous constructive support and fair benefits and promotions. Barangay officials should also hold regular contacts with various training programs that can help the constituents to have peace and resolve conflict in the barangay. A comprehensive assessment of the facilities and activities should continually be done to determine areas of need and adopt modern methods will be used to achieved the quality of peace and resolve conflict.

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