

**GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PHILIPPINES: THE CASE STUDY OF  
TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORK BY GABRIELA WOMEN'S  
PARTY IN THE PHILIPPINES (2017-2020)  
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**



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**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SCIENCES**

**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INDONESIA**

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**GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PHILIPPINES: CASE STUDY FROM  
GABRIELA WOMEN’S PARTY THE IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN  
COMMUNITY WELFARE (2017-2020)**

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Proposed to the Department of International Relations

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As a partial fulfillment of the requirements to earn

Bachelor’s Degree in International Relations



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## **Declaration of Academic Integrity**

I hereby certify that this undergraduate thesis proposal is the result of my independent scholarly work and that in all cases material from the work of others (in books, articles, essays, dissertations, and on the internet) is acknowledged, and quotations and paraphrases are indicated.

No material other than that listed has been used. I have read and understood the university's regulations and procedures concerning plagiarism.

Providing this declaration falsely is considered a breach of academic integrity.

*Monday, 11 Agustus 2025*



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*Fahriza Putra Permana*

## **Abstract**

This research examines gender equality in the Philippines through a case study of the Gabriela Women’s Party and its role within Transnational Advocacy Networks from 2017 to 2020. The study focuses on how Gabriela utilized international linkages, solidarity movements, and advocacy campaigns to advance women’s rights and improve community welfare. During this period, the Philippines experienced both progress and setbacks in gender equality, as reflected in its fluctuating rankings in the World Economic Forum’s *Global Gender Gap Index*—from 10th in 2017 to 17th in 2020. These shifts, alongside the enactment of gender-related legislation such as the Expanded Maternity Leave Act (2019) and the Safe Spaces Act (2019), provide a crucial backdrop for analyzing the influence of feminist advocacy.

Using the framework of Transnational Advocacy Networks, this research explores the strategies, contributions, and limitations of Gabriela Women’s Party in bridging local women’s struggles with global feminist movements. The findings highlight how Gabriela leveraged international solidarity to amplify women’s voices, strengthen grassroots mobilization, and pressure policymakers to address gender-based inequalities. At the same time, the study identifies the challenges faced by Gabriela, including political opposition, resource limitations, and shrinking civic spaces.

This research contributes to the understanding of how transnational advocacy can serve as a powerful tool for advancing gender equality and community welfare in the Philippines. It underscores the importance of linking local activism with global networks to ensure sustainable progress in women’s empowerment.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality, Gabriela Women’s Party, Transnational Advocacy Network, Philippines, Women’s Welfare

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **I.1 Background**

The Philippines is a developing country in Southeast Asia with a strong patriarchal culture. Despite the strong patriarchal culture that common in Asian countries, the Philippines is the country with the best gender equality in Asia (Ekonomi, n.d.). Gender equality cases often focus more on women than on men. Women are often faced with the fact that gender equality usually does not apply in the world of politics, society, culture, and work. It can be seen that more men than women are involved in a certain scope. The assessors conducted the WEF (World Economy Forum), which looked at gender gaps based on four sub-index categories, including education, health, opportunities, and participation in politics and being in government. The Philippines is a country that has succeeded in making changes to gender inequality, starting with changes in politics and then in various aspects.

Gender refers to the social construction of roles, habits, expressions, and identities for women, men, and people of various genders. It influences how people view themselves and each other, how they behave and communicate, and how power and resources are allocated in society. Gender identity itself is not limited to men or women but is also not static because it can change at any time. There is great diversity in how individuals or groups perceive, experience, and express gender through the roles they take on (Government of Canada 2014). One of the points of the Millennium Goals

Development (MDGs) is to promote gender equality and empower women (“United Nations Millennium Development Goals,” n.d.).

In Southeast Asia, after seeing the value of patriarchy, the ability to get rid of women is open after creating a dichotomy between the public and private spheres. The impact of that has made women increasingly marginalized in various ways. Rising sexism against women has contributed to mass protests in the name of feminism seeking equal treatment with men. The Philippines is no exception, initially, the gender situation in the Philippines was characterized by sharp inconsistencies, ranging from sending female workers overseas illegally, and human slavery to marriage to underage women. Besides that, they are only under 18 years of age such that their future is disturbed by the incorporation of themselves into marriage, have to be a mother and a wife that they have not had time to (“PressReader.Com - Your Favorite Newspapers and Magazines.,” n.d.). Various gender issues in the Philippines occurred from 2017-2020. Gender-based violence and inequality affects women are main issues in the Philippines. According to the data from 2017 National demographic and Health Survey,<sup>1</sup> 1 from 20 women and girls in the Philippines aged 15-49 have been victims of sexual and domestic violence (UNICEF 2025).

In 2015 and 2016 the Philippines managed to maintain the 7th rank in the gender gap released by the WEF (“PH Still among 10 Most Gender-Equal Nations,” n.d.). Meanwhile, the Philippines was in tenth place in 2017. Despite the decrease in levels, it cannot be denied that the Philippines can hold a role as a country that deserves to be exemplified by reducing inequality in Southeast Asia and even Asia (World Economic Forum, n.d.-a). The Philippines has an excellent reputation for equity

between men and women. According to the Global Gender Gap 2020 study issue by the WEF in 2019, the Philippines is ranked 16 out of 153 countries. The WEF observed that the Philippines has closed 78% of its total gender gap and is the country with the highest gender equity in Asia and has had that reputation since the 2006 study was released. Currently, many women's movements have been in the chair. It all started with the economic crisis that occurred in the Philippines. It aroused the mindset of society, which led women to change until they could reach a position on the political stage. This is certainly an achievement for the Philippines, where in the past women have also encountered multiple kinds of sexism and human rights abuses.

Moreover, the progress of the Philippines in establishing gender equity is also something new, provided that most countries in the Southeast Asian region still stick to the patriarchal structure. In the Philippines, there is a party movement called the Gabriela Party where women's movements fight for their oppressed people. In Philippine politics, the Gabriela Party is at the forefront of fighting for women and oppressed people. Gabriela wants a sovereign society that is free from domination and intervention with an independent economy directed at the needs of the people, giving equal value to the role of women in various aspects, a government in which people's rights - including women's rights - are respected, respected and guaranteed and guaranteed women's political participation and; a socio-cultural system that does not have patriarchal values, gender oppression, nationality, and violence (One Billion Rising Revolution 2013)

## **I.2 Research Question**

Based on this background, the writer uses the following problem formulations:

**How did Gabriela Women's Party's participation in transnational advocacy networks contribute to the improvement of women's community welfare in the Philippines from 2017 to 2020?**

## **I.3 Research Purpose**

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purposes of this paper are as follows:

1. To analyze the role of Gabriela Women's Party within transnational advocacy networks in promoting gender equality in the Philippines between 2017 and 2020.
2. To evaluate the contributions of transnational advocacy networks in enhancing women's community welfare and grassroots empowerment in the Philippines.

## **I.4 Research Scope**

The focus of this research is a factor of the Philippines's success in overcoming gender equality and the country's success in the 2017 to 2020 period. The background for taking this period is to be more focused in the last 3 years on how gender equality affects the welfare of women in the Philippines. The **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index** reveals notable ranking shifts in the Philippines has decreased from 2017 (10th) to 2020 (17th). This dramatic fluctuation provides a rich backdrop to analyze how interventions, policies, and political developments impacted

gender equality—and by extension, women's community welfare. This research focuses on the contributions of Gabriela Women's Party in strengthening women's community-based movements and grassroots participation in addressing welfare issues, the welfare condition of the women community in the Philippines, the strategy the government has adopted in addressing this issue, and how it can significantly influence women's welfare.

### **I.5 Literature Review**

In this paper, the author will provide something different from the research carried out before related to various issues in the Philippines. In gender issues, the author will analyze the existence of the Gabriela Women's Party as a body that can address a good transformation towards women's community conditions so that gender equality in the Philippines could be better. The Philippines is a country that is under the spotlight in the Southeast Asia region, which not common to discussed about the country makes this case quite interesting and worthy to be studied. The emerge of Gabriela Women's Party in the Philippines as a well-known movement and also a party that raises the issue of gender equality is huge factor for the welfare of women in the Philippines. Several countries in Southeast Asia still do not pay attention to gender equality in their society, but the Philippines can be seen as an early example of how gender issues can be addressed. Using the concept of gender and seeing the Gabriela carried out by Filipinos to conduct this research is one of my goals.

With the research to be carried out, the author wants to show the importance of voicing the issue of gender equality in any concept and scope. Thus, gender is not only seen as a differentiating view but rather the role and contribution made. By taking the

issue in the Philippines, the author wants to show that the success of gender in that country is a main factor for equality towards women community especially the welfare.

Gender equity is an important objective in most nations. As the author said earlier, the Philippines has the highest gender equality in Asia and ranks 7th in the World Economic Forum (WEF). This is not only equity in the roles of women and men in nature, but also politics, work, and all facets of welfare for all genders, particularly women. The success of gender in the Philippines cannot be differentiated from the efforts of the Philippine government and society itself, first with the advent of a gender revolution by feminists such as the Gabriela movement, which sparked demands for gender equality in the region. In this paper, the author will carry out previous studies on the issue of gender performance in the Philippines as well as in other countries that have accomplished the gender targets of their countries. This attempt to chart the study that has been carried out so that the authors can present a discussion that has not yet been addressed marginally in previous studies and then frame certain topics and trends in the author's research.

One of the studies on gender equality is discussed in a journal written by Jalil Roshandel, Fatemeh Sadeghi, and Shima Tadrissi, entitled "Gender Equality and Empowerment in Iran: A Comparison between Ahmadinejad's and Rouhani's Governments" (Roshandel et al. 2019), which explains the important role of government ideology in gender equality. The journal focuses on changing Iran's government from a conservative to a moderate government that does not have any impact on the success of gender equality there. In a journal written by Jalil Roshandel and his friends, the cause of the failure of gender equality in Iran is that although a

change of government with a different attitude does not have an impact on the elimination of gender discrimination as long as its government continues to pursue an ideology that views women through a narrow and conservative lens. The journal is more inclined to look at the UN regulations on gender implementation in Iran and does not explain the welfare conditions of women there. This research will therefore broaden the focus on the well-being of the women's community in the Philippines concerning gender success issues. The author's criticism of this literature is that it would be better if the previous author described in detail what feminism was happening in Iran until its government changed. It appears that it only emphasizes the change of government but there is no significant impact of the gender gap that remains the same.

Another literature that discussed about gender in the Philippines comes from Shabena Alqaseer and Joshua Carlo Tenorio Pile with the title, *The President's Monologues: Duterte's Rhetoric and Toxic Masculinities* (Alqaseer and Pile 2020). Alqaseer and Pile's research provides a textual analysis of President Rodrigo Duterte's public utterances during his presidential campaign and early term (approximately 2016-2019). The focus is on how his words shape masculinity, particularly toxic masculinity, through the perspectives of heteronormativity, gender and sexual scripts, homophobia, and gender policing. The approach is framed within masculinity studies, with the concept of "*precarious manhood*" serving as a key theoretical tool. Emphasizing Duterte's frequent use of strong, masculine language, the study contends that his discourse encourages traditional or orthodox masculinities and normalizes destructive forms of male dominance. It provides a rudimentary but intriguing foundation for investigating how political discourse influences culture and politics in

the Philippines. Alqaseer and Pile provide a current, theoretically informed examination of Duterte's masculinities that contributes to existing debates on populism, gender, and power in the Philippines. Their work, which sits alongside Navera's historical framing and Tanyag's populist symbolism, provides a new viewpoint by focusing on masculinity studies—specifically the precariousness and toxicity of masculine identity in political discourse. This research highlights the sensitivity of masculine perspectives in the Duterte era as something worthy of criticism and exclusion, leading to pressure on certain groups within their communities. Similarly, the author's focus in this paper is on the criticism, sentiment, and even categorization of women in the Philippines, leading to the achievement of gender well-being today.

This is different if the patriarchal culture in Iran is still very high so it is still difficult to achieve the goal of equality between women and men, Alaska faces the opposite case where women are more interested in education than men in Alaska. The journal Judith Kleinfeld and Justin J. Andrews, entitled "The Gender Gap in Higher Education in Alaska" (Kleinfeld and Andrews 2006), discusses the efforts and difficulties of Alaska universities in attracting students, especially boys. To achieve the goal of achieving gender equality, it is necessary to have good cooperation between women and men if one of them is unable to do so, it will be further away from achieving the goal of gender equality. The journal written by Judith Kleinfeld and Justin J. Andrews discusses how the increased interest in women's education in Alaska is relative to that of males. Women in Alaska are very interested in working with a high degree of skill development and interpreting the knowledge they collect, particularly if it concerns the economy. The low level of education for men makes the unemployment

rate strong even in the economic development of interest, low marriage rates, high social issues, and low involvement in the political climate. The newspaper is more involved in road improvement and the call for young men in Alaska to provide jobs and education to ensure the survival of rural communities. The author would also further extend the scope of working opportunities in the Philippines as a result of gender equality achieved. The focus on what Judith says about the imbalance in the educational interest of women and men in Alaska will be different from what will justify the equal job rate in the Philippines. It is because of this balance that gender equality is reached.

In the following literature, the author explores the gender gap in his contribution to the political involvement of Muslim-majority countries in a journal published by Hilde Coffe and Selin Dilli entitled "The Gender Gap in Political Participation in Muslim-majority Countries" (Coffé and Dilli 2015). The newspaper explains that the contribution and status of women in a predominantly Muslim country are much less physical, social, and political than that of men. Returning to conventional ideologies, since the status of women is far lower than that of men in both social and economic roles (based on the ideology and law applied in the Muslim majority of countries). In terms of political representation, the challenge of the gender divide for countries with a Muslim majority is very high, back in the old tradition where women have a lower role than men. The lack of significance of the modernization effect on the gender divide does not seem to have a bearing in a variety of contexts, such that there seems to be an Islamisation of the Muslim majority world. Don't forget that the writings provided by Hilde and Selin indicate that there is lobbying for female workers in several countries

such as Iran and Morocco, this is because the minimum number of female workers admitted in any place in Muslim-majority countries so that the gender disparity in the scope of work and politics that is still limited. Criticism of the newspaper should be that the previous writer had clarified the opportunities for the female workforce if they did not engage in politics, be it the acts of women there or campaigns that promote opposition to sexism, and so on. In writing this research the author will compare the issues raised by Hilde and Selin, where the coverage will be broadened and developed so that the gender gap in the Philippines can be overcome by the presence of multiculturalism and awareness of the equal position of men and women particularly in the political sphere and in the political sphere.

In recent literature, the views of the Philippines appear to be ready to set a goal of gender success. The Philippines' efforts and readiness to launch Sustainable Development Goals in Asia are described in Ella S. Antonio's journal "Starting Strong on the SDGs in Asia: Readiness in the Philippines"(Antonio 2016). In this journal, Ella describes some points that the Philippines is striving to meet one of the objectives of the SDGs, namely gender equality, for which the Philippines is ready to build a solid foundation to pursue and achieve the SDGs. Besides, the Philippine Government also has a strong commitment to the UN General Assembly to incorporate the SDGs into future planning and strategies. Also, the journal explains the national framework for implementation, which includes three scopes, starting at a national level, at the sector level, and finally at a local level. However, this study did not explain the situation of women in the Philippines concerning the objectives of gender success. How the welfare of the community is how social life works, and how gender success is achieved. In this

case, the author will carry out a more significant study of the condition and welfare of the Philippines community in particular, such as workers and the women's community, after the success of gender has been achieved.

Gender equality is one of the goals fought for by every country in the world. The Philippines is no exception, where the spirit of the community in fighting for gender equality can create gender success. But of course, behind all that some obstacles become a problem. The ideology of each country, the role of the government, and public awareness are very influential in achieving gender equality. In the literature that has been reviewed above, it can be concluded that one of the biggest challenges of a country in achieving gender success is the country's ideology and also the country's background. In reality, the patriarchal culture that persists in some countries is still a barrier so it is not so relevant in the fight for gender equality. Here, it is important to re-examine why the Philippines has been good in the battle for gender equality so that the country can win the issue. Among them, because of the country's history, the government is very supportive and does not neglect the plight of the people who are raising the issue. As it has to be stressed, the understanding that is fostered by the smallest part of the country is really important to accomplish the goals of gender itself.

## **I.6 Research Framework**

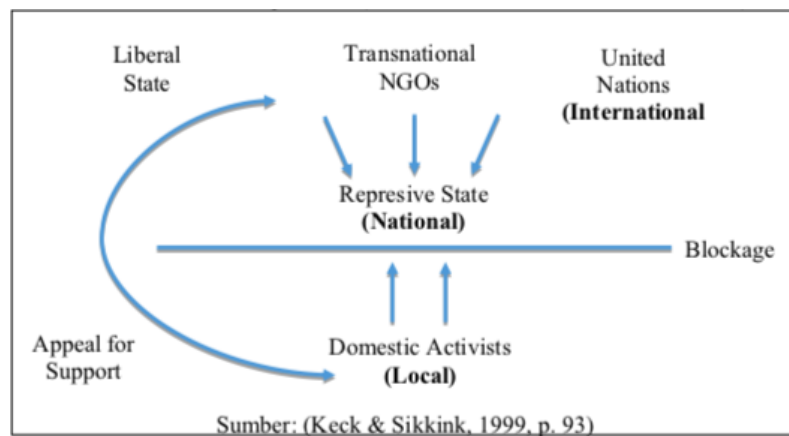
In this thesis, the authors will use the concept of TAN (*Transnational Advocacy Networks*) in analyzing and answering questions from the problem formulation in this research. The network in the TAN concept is a form of organization that has the characteristics of voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal communication and exchange patterns.

In the political world, the dynamics are varied by involving many actors, not only state actors but also non-state actors. The interactions carried out by these actors are not only limited to fellow actors. In practice, a non-state actor does not only interact with non-state actors but with state actors and International Organizations (IO). Transnational advocacy networks can also be viewed as political forums where participants from many contexts engage in formal or informal discussions about the political, cultural, and social significance of their common activities (Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink 1999a). In order to achieve its goals of fostering new relationships between civil society stakeholders, the government, and international organizations, TAN therefore serves as a pressure group on a policy or problem on a national and international level.

TAN frames issues to be more comprehensive to the target audience, to attract the audience's attention, and to encourage them to move. The aim of framing the issue as a strategic effort is for a group of people to have the same understanding and mutually motivate one another. This advocacy network comes with new ideas, norms, and discourses in policy discussions. They also promote and encourage the implementation of norms by pressuring targets or target actors to adopt new policies, as well as monitoring compliance with regional and international standards. The Networks in the context of TAN are communicative structures to influence discourse, procedures, and policies, so they can become part of a larger policy community that brings together actors from various institutional positions and values (Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink 1999a).

Keck and Sikkink see the government as the main actor in building relationships with other actors, especially the community. Seeing that the relationship between the government and the community is experiencing problems with restrictions or even closing access between the community and the government, this will lead to the creation of a relationship pattern known as the "*boomerang pattern*". This boomerang pattern occurs when local groups or individuals have claims on certain issues, but the government is not responsive to them, so they seek international connections (Keck and Sikkink 1999)

Picture 1. Boomerang Patter (Three Levels of Transnational Activism)



The illustration above shows that the role of state actors (Liberal State) and non-state actors (Transnational NGOs and United Nations) can assist in supporting the goals of advocacy networks and helping to put pressure on repressive governments. On a domestic scale, there are domestic activists who, when faced with restrictions or obstacles (*Blockage*) that will affect their agendas towards the government in the country they live in, can request from actors who have greater power. In the chart, we can see how domestic actors are (local scale social movements; foundations; media;

religious groups, trade groups, researchers; parts of regional organizations; and parts of the executive and parliamentary bodies in government). Actors can request appeal support, a service provided by NGOs outside of their nation when local blockages occur. In order to form alliances with other nations, they can seek assistance or support from NGOs and international organizations. As advocacy networks, they can then employ tactics to stifle an oppressive government

The following is a strategic effort from TAN to change state behavior which is described in several conceptual patterns as follows:

1. *Information Politics*, namely the ability to mobilize political information quickly and credibly. This information is very useful in terms of attracting some attention and directing targets by sending information to places that have strong influences.
2. *Symbolic Politics* is the ability to convey something through and using (symbolic) symbols, through actions or exposure to situations or conditions that are happening. In this way, it can attract the attention of people both inside and outside who travel long distances.
3. *Leverage Politics*, namely the ability to attract actors with a stronger power to influence certain situations and conditions, where weak members in this network cannot influence certain situations where weak members of the actor-network cannot influence.
4. *Accountability Politics* is an effort to encourage actors who have stronger abilities to take action under policies and principles that have been established and agreed upon. Networks work hard to persuade

governments and other institutions to change their positions on issues (Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink 1999b, 97).

The concept of TAN will be used to see the role of the Gabriela Women's Party and the success factors of the party movement in improving the welfare of women in the Philippines, especially within the scope of the country's work. Through this concept, we will see how the Gabriela Women's Party is framed in the form of informatics, symbolics, leverage and accountability to uphold politics also issues that is more participatory, pro-people, and democratic. Apart from that, we can also see the ability of the Gabriela Women's Party to fight for women's rights through the participation of its parliamentarians in the Philippine government and to attract the attention of stronger actors with greater influence, which then brings positive results in the welfare of the women's community. Besides that, economic factors also affect the welfare of women workers in the Philippines, which is in line with the goals of the Gabriela Women's Party to strive for the welfare of women there.

To assess the influence of an advocacy network, we must examine the achievement of objectives at several different levels. To identify the stages of network influence, there are five key stages that determine whether an advocacy network successfully achieves these five stages. These five stages are: issue creation and attention, influence on the discursive positions of states and regional and international organizations, influence on institutional procedures, influence on policy change in target actors, and, last but not least, influence on state behavior (Keck and Sikkink 1999).

The concept of TAN is the right concept to analyze in this research because in the efforts to empower women the Gabriela Women's Party is intensifying and it is closely side by side with the involvement of supporting actors such as the Liberal state, NGOs, and International Organizations themselves. As Keck and Sikkink said, TAN can be seen in how it appears, how TAN works, and what conditions are affected by TAN itself.

## **I.7 Research Methodology**

### **I.7.1 The Types of Research Methodology**

In this research, the writer will use the qualitative writing method to find research data. By using qualitative writing methods, it is expected that the results will be more optimal and realistic. Qualitative methods emphasize data analysis and the results sought so using this method can also make the discussion descriptive which should be understood and explained more clearly and focused on one thing. Through that type of method, the writer will compare the results of previous data or research that are still relevant to the issue that the author wants to research.

### **I.7.2 The Subject and Object of the Research**

In a study, determining the subject and object of research is an important thing that must be determined. The purpose of the subject and object of research is to facilitate understanding to understand the content of the research. In this study, the authors used the subject regarding the success of the Philippines in overcoming the gender gap. Meanwhile, the object of research is the improvement of the welfare of women in the Philippines through the existence and influences of the Gabriela Women's Party.

### I.7.3 Data Collection Methods

In conducting this research, the authors used two literature studies, namely primary and secondary sources. The primary source is that the author will conduct research independently through the official website and webpage of the Philippine government to obtain data on gender issues and the state of the women's community there. These primary sources, it is more focused on the author's analysis to be carried out. Secondary sources include books, journals, news, and mass media such as articles in newspapers or the internet that are relevant and reliable, where the contents contain topics that the writer will research.

### I.7.4 Research Process

The research process is a stage that includes planning on steps starting from previous research related to, and interpretation of research or research reports. This research process will be carried out by sorting data based on relevant sources such as journals, books, articles, and news in print and online media. The research process will also be rechecked to ensure whether the results contain clear citations or not. The author will choose research sources that follow the topic referred to in the study so that the expected results can answer the problem formulation and readers will find it easy to understand the content of this research.

## **1.8 Thesis Outline**

This study will analyze the role of the *Gabriela Women's Party* in the improvement of women's welfare in the Philippines from 2017 to 2020. This research consists of 4 chapters with several sub-chapters on the discussion:

### CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

The first chapter discussed a brief background of the problem and then formulated the problem to be more complex in the making of a research question. Then moving to the research purpose,

## CHAPTER II: THE IMPACT OF THE GABRIELA WOMEN'S PARTY ON WOMEN WELFARE IN THE PHILIPPINES

This chapter will discuss about gender equality case, in specific discussing gender problems/inequality, how the government is tackling the issue of gender inequality, and what Gabriela Women's Party brief as the main character that will be the main discussion in this paper.

## CHAPTER III: GABRIELA WOMEN'S PARTY IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN'S WELFARE

This chapter consists of analyzing what have Gabriela Women's Party has done to the condition of women in the Philippines. Moreover, will discuss the role of GWP as an intermediary between Filipinos (women community) who have been the victim of inequality and the Philippines Government.

## CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last chapter of the discussion, the researcher will give the conclusion that might have an impact on the case that has been upheld in this thesis. Then researcher gives some recommendations to the next researcher who brings this issue one day and hopefully gives an insight from a different point of view.

**CHAPTER II**  
**GABRIELA WOMEN'S PARTY ON WOMEN WELFARE IN THE**  
**PHILIPPINES**

**2.1 Problems of Gender Inequality in The Philippines**

Sexual violence is a serious issue that affects people all around the world. The Philippines, located in Southeast Asia and with a relatively high rate of sexual assault, is no exception. The Philippines remains one of the countries with a growing number of cases of sexual violence, particularly among women(Karen Anne C. Quing 2021, 51).

Sexual violence against women appears to be a belief or a fact for women in the Philippines. As is traditionally understood, Asian countries have long been notorious for their *patriarchal culture* (male supremacy), and the Philippines does too. The patriarchal culture believes that males have tremendous authority to govern and rule women and that women are not socially superior to men. According to history, before Spanish colonization, the Filipino people's socio-cultural system did not yet exist, and patriarchal thinking was also implemented in society. Women in the Philippines enjoyed equal rights and positions with males before Spanish colonization in the 16th century.

The Spanish brought patriarchal culture to the Philippines during colonization, from the 16th century AD until about the 19th century AD. By employing Roman Catholicism as a tool for colonization during the time, the Spanish established a patriarchal culture. Gender and sexuality are seen as being tied to one's biological destiny in Roman Catholicism, which is centered and ruled by males. This instruction

thus transformed Filipino society into a new social structure, and the Philippine social system became patriarchal at the same time.

Patriarchal culture is very deeply embedded in the strata of Filipino society today. This is reflected in the country's social, political, cultural, and economic situations, which are controlled by men. When such situations persist, it leads to acts of violence or prejudice against women. Sexual violence is one type of violence done because powerful males dominate the social and cultural structure. The portrait of sexual violence against women in the Philippines can be described in general terms as sexual violence, namely acts of rape committed by both attempted rape and incest rape, followed by verbal and nonverbal sexual harassment such as teasing, seduction, and statements smelling of sexuality/catcalling. Sexual violence against women in the Philippines occurs not only in the public sphere but also in the domestic/family sphere, where it takes the form of acts of sexual violence, as well as causing various types of physical injuries and psychological disturbances to women victims of violence in the Philippines.

The concept of the Philippines which adhered to Patriarchy in the past, influenced the behavior of its people who highly upheld gender strata in their society. This situation results in high rates of violence and acts of discrimination directed at women. As of 2021, the number of reported cases of violence against women and children in the Philippines reached around 8,399 of physical violence (Philippine Commission on Women, n.d.). Overall, the number of occurrences of such violence in the country has steadily reduced over the last six years. When gender problems emerge

in the Philippines, the majority of which include acts of violence against women, the victims suffer physical and psychological harm.

Violence is a harsh reality that women must face on a daily basis. For Filipino women living in poverty in a feudal patriarchal society, the burden is even higher. Women are becoming more vulnerable to gender-based violence as the country's economic and political crises worsens. Gruesome stories of violence against women and children have grown commonplace in television, radio, and print media. These are not just individual acts of violence; many include groups of women, such as sex trafficking, cybersex, pornography, and prostitution.

## **2.2 Philippines Government's Interventions of Gender Equality in The Philippines**

Southeast Asia is classified as a region that is quite diverse in various regional aspects. The Philippines, known as a patriarchal country in the colonial era, has now turned into a country with the best level of gender equality in Asia. The Philippine government's ongoing policy development provides equal access to men and women in the use of natural resources. Talking about gender cannot be separated from the role of gender itself, be it women, equality, or other related things. According to the Global Gap Gender Index released annually by the World Economic Forum, the Philippines is the only country in Southeast Asia that is in the top 10 (United Nations, n.d.)*The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, n.d.).

In 2016, the Philippines was ranked 7th out of 180 countries in the world. This is because women get almost the same rights as men. After all, they are given rights in

social, political, business, and educational structures (Yurika Suzuki 2012). Then 2 years later, the Philippines again became one of the countries in Southeast Asia with the best gender equality. According to the 2018 global gender gap, the Philippines is in the 8th position in Southeast Asia with the best gender equality in the world and the highest position in Asia two years after the identical achievement (World Economic Forum, n.d.-b). The Philippines addresses the gender gap in several ways. It's not without reason that the Philippines can achieve this position, the success of the Philippines in creating equality between men and women is due to the full awareness of the government in creating GAD as outlined in the Act, especially focused two major frameworks, Gender Roles and Social Relations Analysis (Department of Environment Biodiversity Management Bureau 2023). In 2009 when the Philippines was led by the Magna Carta, there was a separate quota for women to register for general elections. In addition, many women become leaders in both companies and organizations (The ASEAN Post Team 2019). The following rules are then implemented in various sectors including the economy, education, health, and politics as well as the main ingredients and indicators of the success of the Philippines' gender equality.

The country ranked 7th in the gender equality index of the World Economic Forum in 2015 as more women legislators and senior officials were elected/appointed into office, as well as the rise of more women professional and technical workers. But this number accounts for a minuscule percentage of Filipino women, an overwhelming majority of who belong to the grassroots, and who remain in a far disadvantaged position (World Economic Forum 2015, 7–8). The passage of the Magna Carta of

Women and other laws, however, has barely made a dent on women's political, economic and socio-cultural situation.

As time goes by, gender conditions in the Philippines are not only dominated by the role of men, women play a major role in managing and even take a vital place in aspects of work and the state. The Philippines provides access to various elements to ensure the welfare of their women's groups, including justice, education, economics, politics, and health.

The Philippines is Asia's first democracy and is a forerunner in promoting women's rights. Global measures on women's empowerment consistently rank the country high in key gender equality indicators. For example, despite falling one notch lower in 2021, the country is still the best among Asian countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (PCW 2021). This high ranking, along with the reputation of having approved key legislative measures promoting women's rights, gives the impression that the middle-income country is making headways in its gender equality goals. However, daunting challenges remain in Filipino women's political representation. The Philippines has not reached the international standard where women can meaningfully make a difference in decision-making institutions.

In understanding women's role in formal politics, the area this paper wishes to explore, scholars distinguish between descriptive representation and substantive representation. Descriptive representation refers to the numerical presence of women in politics, while substantive representation refers to "a process that implies a series of acts and actors: putting women's interests on the political agenda, translating women's interests, concerns and views into legislation" (Aie-Rie Lee and Hyun-chool Lee 2020,

40). While cognizant that there is no “*automatic*” correlation between descriptive and substantive representation because context and institutions matter (Devin K. JOSHI 2022) the paper focuses on descriptive representation of Filipino women in formal politics.

Research on women’s representation suggests that women in elective positions are important for democracy, development, and its symbolic value to future generations. Women’s participation in electoral politics is integral to strengthening democracy since they comprise half of the population and should be properly represented in political processes. If sustainable progress is to be made, it must include women’s meaningful participation in political sphere. Women’s meaningful participation in politics results in better social welfare outcomes in terms of an increased budget for social services, among others. Moreover, women in the political sphere create visibility for women leaders, serving as role models for future generations.

Filipino women are still very much a minority in the formal political sphere. It can also be observed that in executive positions such as the cabinet, few women are appointed, especially during President Fidel Ramos’s time, compared to Cory Aquino’s administration. As previously stated, the Philippines has made considerable strides in enacting legislation protecting women's rights. However, 35 years after re-democratization and 84 years since the grant of suffrage, participation of women in politics is still a work in progress, as in most countries (Jean Encinas-Franco and Elma Laguna 2023, 12).

In 2019, the overall percentage of women in all elected positions in the country was only about 20%, barely meeting the 30% international standard for women's political representation. Over the last 20 years, the House of Representatives and the Senate have grown significantly (Jean Encinas-Franco and Elma Laguna 2023, 12–13).

According to data from the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), women made up only 20% of all election candidates in 2019. Furthermore, despite an increase in women politicians at all levels of government, particularly in the mayoralty campaign, a substantial number come from political families (Labonne, Parsa, and Querubin 2019).

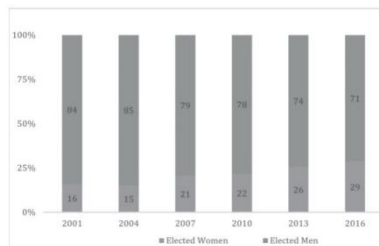


Figure 1: Members of the house of representatives by sex (2001-2019)

Source (PSA 2016 and COMELEC 2022)

The Party-List Law, which was approved in 1997, enabled Filipino women to emerge as the first party-list advocating women's problems (Jean Encinas-Franco and Elma Laguna 2023, 14). In 2019, 20 women from party lists contributed to an increase in female parliamentarians. However, the implementation of the Party-List Law has been

fraught with controversy due to the influx of political dynasties and established politicians. The idea of it serving as a conduit to political power for impoverished communities has been lost as a result of confusing language in the law and subsequent Supreme Court decisions. In other words, it has departed from the proportional representation concept used in other countries. Dynastic families exploited the system's faults, fielding relatives, including some women, to increase their political authority (Jean Encinas-Franco and Elma Laguna 2023, 15).

### **2.3 The Gabriela Women's Party**

Gabriela, a national alliance of women's organizations in the Philippines, was established. Gabriela's original goal was to use women's power to fight the Marcos dictatorship (Yujin Tao 2022, 16). The formation of Gabriela was based on their efforts to broaden the scope of social movements, as well as emphasizing the importance of the struggle for women's liberation. Gabriela and other women's organizations contributed to a shift in Philippine left politics, where prominent organizations went from opposing any mention of gendered violence to adopting agendas centered on the latter and women's status as valid political concerns (Yujin Tao 2022, 16).

Gabriela Women's Party is a social alliance dedicated to promoting the rights and well-being of marginalized and under-represented Filipino women through participation in the country's electoral system and organs of government. The emergence of the Gabriela Women's Party stems from a coalition of women's movements called GABRIELA (*General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity Equality Leadership and Action*). Against the background of dictatorial leadership, women's groups in the Philippines began to move against the existing

system which never cared about marginalized groups including women it (Jean Encinas-Franco and Elma Laguna 2023, 14).

On April 28, 1984, motivated by Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship and the need for economic and political change, women from all walks of life in the Philippines (workers, farmers, urban poor, middle class, artists, religious leaders, and others) formed a national women's coalition with GABRIELA. At the time, GABRIELA consisted of 42 groups and 50,000 members who hailed from urban and educated women, but today has a nationwide grassroots base alliance of 250 organizations, institutions, and programs (Bernadette P, n.d.). The name of the GABRIELA group itself is taken to honor the character "*Gabriela Silang*" the name was derived from the Filipina revolutionary (Nicole Reyes 2024, 18). GABRIELA, in addition to the movement, focuses not only on social but also on practical political concerns. This expansion into politics was highlighted with the formation of GABRIELA as a political party on October 28, 2000, under the name Gabriela Women's Party.

Gabriela Women's Party makes a significant change to the welfare of the women's community, guided by meeting societal standards, including society's constitutionality. Not spared from the role of the government ranks in it, GWP plays a significant role in terms of the portrayal of government structures and the success of the gender movement in highlighting women in their participation in the political sphere and other stages on an ongoing basis.

In the campaign carried out by Gabriela Women's Party, it focuses on 7 important points. First, sex trafficking and prostitution. Twenty-one years of assisting victims of sex trafficking has given us a greater grasp of how it occurs. One approach

is through the mail-order-bride system, which, despite the passage of an Anti-Mail-Order Bride (MOB) Law in 1990, continues to grow as the country's poverty increases. The Internet has enabled unlimited advertising for MOBs under the pretense of Dating Services. According to estimates, there are 50,000 to 100,000 Filipinas advertised on such websites. The Philippines is a hub for MOBs, with 70% of South East Asian women listed as Filipinas. According to a US Immigration report, marriages between Filipinas and American men have increased in the last decade, reaching 6,000 every year (United Nations, n.d.).

According to one prominent website, the Philippines boasts the second largest list of prospective sex partners among Asia's 35 countries, with 212,257. India has the largest listing. In 1999, GABRIELA began the Purple Rose Campaign Against Sex Trafficking of Filipino Women and Children. Through the Purple Rose, we have built platforms to raise awareness and mobilize opposition to the use of sex trade and forced labor to prop up the collapsing economy. This initiative also acted as a gateway for our worldwide chapters and women's networks to assist trafficked Filipino women. Our campaign was successful in passing the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, which was co-sponsored by Liza Maza, a representative from the GABRIELA Women's Party list in the Philippine Congress. GABRIELA's party list, Gabriela Women's Party, is leading the charge to propose a prostitution law in Congress (United Nations, n.d.).

The second point that carried out by Gabriela Women's Party is Domestic violence or abuse of women in intimate relationships. From January 2002 to August 2005, 61% (532) of GABRIELA's 872 VAW cases involved domestic violence. According to statistics from the Department of Social Welfare and Development

(DSWD) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), 47% of VAW cases received between 2001 and 2004 involved domestic violence. GABRIELA has been instrumental in bringing domestic abuse to light and transforming it from a private to a public issue. The passing of the Anti-violence against Women and Children Act of 2004 on March 8, 2004, is a tangible result of ongoing popular campaign. GABRIELA has found this law useful in giving protection to women victims though there is still a difficulty in its implementation due to gender sensitivity of law enforcers from the village to the police level (United Nations, n.d.).

The third point is Rape, incest and sexual abuse. One woman was raped every six hours in 1994. In 2004, there was already one rape occurrence per two hours, more than tripling the number of documented incidents in a decade. Rape or sexual abuse accounted for 14% (125 instances) of the total VAW cases treated by GABRIELA. GABRIELA also strongly supports Lila-Pilipina's struggle for justice, which is led by survivors of sexual slavery during WW II (United Nations, n.d.).

Another issue of concern is sexual violence. Sexual violence exposes the uneven connection between men and women. It can happen anywhere and to anyone, particularly women who have had sexual abuse experiences (United Nations, n.d.). The current Anti-Sexual Harassment Law only acknowledges incidents in which males use their influence over women to obtain sexual favors in exchange for something. An advertising executive of a large telecoms firm was sexually harassed by an executive owner.

They are also focusing their campaign on violence caused by political repression. Torture of female political prisoners is still a form of violence against

women. Military men utilized this under Martial Law, and while the number of female victims has decreased, this method of torture is being used today. Gabriela is currently pushing for the release of a 60-year-old Mindanao peace campaigner who was abducted and sexually abused by her military captors. We have already filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission against her military assailants. Our Cordillera chapter initiated a campaign against military rape three years ago after recording multiple women who had been victimized by military personnel and police. Women are now direct targets of political violence through summary execution. Since the reign of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, 16 women have become victims of summary killings by alleged military personnel and their assets (United Nations, n.d.).

Sexual discrimination and exploitation are being targeted in order to reduce women's exploitation and discrimination. Even as more women enter the workforce in both rural and urban regions, sexual prejudice and exploitation persist. Women's agricultural wages remain 14% lower than those of their male counterparts. When family work is performed, mothers and children are not reimbursed. Some factories require even single female job seekers to undergo a pregnancy test (United Nations, n.d.). Gabriela Women's Party's recent campaign against sexual discrimination and exploitation was intended at a liquor industry with the tagline: *Nakatikim ka na ba ng Quince Anos?* (Have you tried a 15-year-old?) in an advertisement for their 15-year-old brandy. Because of the campaign's widespread public support, the liquor firm and its advertising agency were forced to remove their large billboards and pull its radio broadcast.

The last concern GABRIELA makes is about poor access to reproductive health care. GABRIELA sees women's limited access to reproductive healthcare as a kind of violence. The rising number of maternal mortality due to unattended childbirth is a major concern. This can be ascribed to the low health budget allocation, which is why many government hospitals are forced to close, and the ongoing exodus of health workers abroad because they continue to receive inadequate remuneration (United Nations, n.d.). According to the National Demographic and Health Survey, barely 60% of pregnant Filipino women received professional health care in 2003, with just 38% giving birth in clinics or hospitals (MA Fenny C Tatad and Prof. Leonor Briones, n.d.).

**CHAPTER III**  
**ANALYSIS OF TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORKS IN GABRIELA**  
**WOMEN'S PARTY ROLE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN**  
**WELFARE**

In this chapter the author will discuss about Gabriela Women's Party in becoming a pillar for Filipino women in fighting for their equality and welfare there by using the concept of Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN). In carrying out its actions, the TAN concept offers four strategies that can be used by Gabriela Women's Party to achieve its goals. The four strategies offered by TAN include; Information Politics, Symbolic Politics, Leverage Politics, and Accountability Politics.

The success of the Philippines in delivering gender equality in the country cannot be separated from the contribution of state officials and the Filipino people themselves. In the case that occurred in the Philippines regarding gender, sexual violence experienced by many women made them try to change the perspective where women are considered weak and less highlighted, play a role, and take over in any field to the contrary.

The Philippine government and stakeholders include gender equality in sustainable development policies and programs. It can be interpreted that the Philippines can become a country in Asia with the highest gender equality among other countries, due to the awareness of the Philippine government on the importance of gender in the country's development. In regulating and promoting gender equality, the government stipulates these rules in the laws that have been made, including The

Magna Carta of Women (MCW), The Philippines Plan for Gender Responsive Development (PPGD) from 1995-2025, and the implementation of the GAD in various sectors namely economy, politics, education and equality.

The Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) plays an important role in fighting for global issues such as gender and women's issues in the Philippines. TAN is a network or group of actors who have the same values, norms, and discussions that exchange information and other resources to work together on issues that have an international dimension (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). TAN is a non-governmental network that works across countries to promote social and policy change through campaigns, advocacy, and collaboration.

One form of Transnational Advocacy Networks is the Boomerang Pattern concept which is used in analyzing the role of Gabriela Women's Party in achieving increased welfare for Filipino women. The boomerang pattern in Transnational Advocacy Networks occurs when domestic NGOs/groups meet challenges in advocating for reforms at home. Because the government is ineffective or even repressive, they throw their advocacy outside, seeking supporters overseas like NGO's, UN agencies, and feminist networks. These friends then exert "*boomerang*" pressure on the home state through lobbying, sanctions, reports, or international humiliation mechanisms. Here is the explanation of boomerang pattern for explaining how Gabriela's worked of this issue. Gabriela Women's Party as a domestic NGO, they blocked by Duterte gov't and they send advocacy outward. There are some of transnational network such as UN, NGOs, and feminist coalitions, but after they

sending advocacy outward, they apply pressure back with the aim of the Philippines government forced to respond laws, policies, and also global security.

Through Transnational Advocacy Networks, Gabriela Women's Party has achieved several stages in TAN which are outlined in the following points;

### **3.I Gabriela Women's Party as Political Entrepreneur in Fighting for Gender Equality in The Philippines**

GWP decided to participate in the elections but under the Bayan Muna Party, because the GWP was not yet an independent party at that time and had only just been established, it did not yet have an adequate bargaining position politically. The GWP's actions were motivated by two purposes: to learn and gain experience in the arena of electoral politics, and to consolidate the progressive bloc, which undertook a discourse consolidation process within it, specifically by discussing women's issues in other political parties. GWP is the major organization in the anti-violence against women movement, fighting various types of violence against women and campaigning for changes to the country's feudal patriarchal society. (Myra Flor A. Rafal, n.d.).

In 2004, after the GWP became an independent political party, they moved even more massively in fighting for laws that defended women. The step taken by GWP is to continue to consolidate the discourse on violence against women with other parties in parliament. The alliance formed from the beginning with the Bayan Muna Party served as a starting point for the GWP's advancement of its coalition partners. GWP also spoke to a significant number of female members in parliament on the urgency of addressing the very high prevalence of sexual assault against women in the Philippines.

In order to induce discourse regarding sexual violence against women, GWP initiated the creation of laws that accommodate women's interests, namely the Anti-violence Law against women and children and the Magna Carta of Women which was signed directly by former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on March 2 2004. This law recognizes the need to protect families and their members, especially women and children's victims, from threats to personal security.

### **3.2 Typology of Tactics of Gabriela Women's Party**

#### **1. Information Politics**

Information become the tools which binds network members together. They provide information that would not otherwise be available, heard and make it comprehensible and useful to public (Margaret E. Keck & Kathryn Sikkink, 1999). The form of information carried out by the Gabriela Women's Party as a campaign to show their goals and missions, one of their platforms to campaign through published blogs such as *Wordpress* & official social media *@gabrielapartylist* as a form to voicing their voice to the public. There are some actions as the result of public engagement through the content that Gabriela Women's Party shared as a campaign or daily content in their platforms. In the Philippines, linked feminist groups, student organizations, and labor unions widely disseminated their material. These narratives were picked up by transnational networks, who included Gabriela in worldwide feminist movements and human rights reports. The hashtags and digital activism sparked solidarity online, making Gabriela's voice more difficult to mute at home.

## 2. Symbolics Politics

Political symbols are strategies used as an effort to persuade the public with the aim of raising awareness of an issue. In this case, Gabriela Women's Party often uses pink and purple clothes as their identity when campaigning. This is as used as the official colors in the GWP logo itself, which is dominated by pink and purple. In this aim, Gabriela Women's Party succeeded in framing the issues they voiced by wearing pink and purple patterned clothing by the Filipino women's alliance and GWP members whenever they campaigned.

The purple core of Gabriela Women's Party's visual identity reinforces the organization's feminist, creative, and revolutionary mission, which is strongly founded in both local and global symbols of women's liberation. Pink is occasionally used to provide warmth, sympathy, and possibly an ideological nod to social-democratic feminism, expanding the visual narrative even more (Benli 2025).

## 3. Leverage Politics

Leverage politics is a strategy that encourages the involvement of actors who have strong aim of influencing a state policy or playing a role in strengthening the advocacy network movement. In this strategy Sarah Elago as the house of representatives in the Philippines as a person who involved in any GWP's campaign with her commitment to uphold the rights of women, childrens and marginalized communities. According to Robert C Blitt, the effective use of leverage politics depends on the network's ability to pressure and persuade targeted actors to change their behavior. Leverage politics is classified into two types: material and moral. Material can take the shape of money, goods, or several other rewards. While Moral

refers to the mobilization of shame which places the action of the targeted actor as the center of international attention (Robert Charles Blitt, 2004). In the transnational advocacy of the Gabriela Women's Party, both material and moral networks are essential to attract the attention of international organizations. In this strategy, the Gabriela Women's Party has been fully successful in its efforts to pressure institutional actors to pressure the government. The Gabriela Women's Party has succeeded in gaining global involvement through collaboration with the International Women's Alliance (IWA), then voicing their campaign through One Billion Rising. Gabriela has also raised cases of human rights violations and military violence against Filipino women to the UN (United Nations, n.d.). There are some mechanisms achieved in the political leverage of the Gabriela Women's Party starting from legislative power with the results achieved being writing/co-writing major laws that improve maternity rights, safety, and economic welfare (Resources 2025). They have structural advocacy with the outcome Integrated welfare with broader policy reforms health, safety, and labor rights (Representative Emmi De Jesus 2015). International forum such as presented cases at UN CEDAW and internationalized women human rights issues also being some outcome from leverage politics of Gabriela Women's Party in addressing their campaigns (Umil 2023).

#### 4. Accountability Politics

According to Keck and Sikkink accountability politics or the effort to oblige more powerful actors to act on vaguer policies or principles they formally endorsed (Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink 1999b, 95). Since 2001, the Gabriela Women's Party has succeeded in placing its representatives in the Philippine House of

Representatives through the party-list system. Figures such as Liza Maza, Emmi de Jesus, and Arlene Brosas are examples of political actors who played a significant role in fighting for pro-women legislation. This shows their success in integrating women's issues into the formal arena of national politics. Gabriela also works with celebrities or public figures who are sympathetic to women's issues. For example, they have worked with actresses or public figures for anti-violence against women campaigns. This helps to expand the reach of their message to a wider audience.

In the context of success, it is closely related to seeing significant growth that is moving towards getting better. This also underlies progress in achieving the goals for Gabriela Women's Party in carrying out the vision and mission that has been created. Gabriela Women's Party aims to be formed as a forum for Filipino women to grow and become better, it shows the result of what they're fighting for.

### **3.3 The Influence of Gabriela Women's Party Towards Women Improvement in The Philippines**

Gabriela Women's Party as a tools and also main actor who bring the huge influence to make an improvement in the Philippines have five main stages to identify the influence of advocacy networks;

1. Issue creation, and attention/agenda setting

Gabriela Women's Party success to create a issue in the Philippines, which bring their advocacy which concern about gender empowerment. The issue makes a big influence in the global stage through Gabriela campaign voicing about gender and women inequality. As the first stage in establishing

the group, Gabriela raised the gender issue, which ultimately helped them become one of the Philippines' women's political parties.

## 2. Influence on discursive position of states and regional and international organizations

During this phase, Gabriela successfully established as a solid political party. Gabriela Women's Party garnered regional and even international support for their campaigns. The Gabriela Women's Party conducted an anti-violence campaign against women, involving community leaders both directly and through social media, demonstrating its significant impact.

## 3. Influence on Institutional Procedures

The Gabriela Women's Party, initially began as a women's rights movement, has evolved into a women's political party dedicated to empowering, equalizing, and addressing the discrimination faced by women in the Philippines. It certainly has a broader purpose. In this context, the Gabriela Women's Party, as a representative of women, is marginalized in Congress. Its mandate is to sponsor legislation on gender-based issues, human trafficking, and labor rights, not on constitutional issues. Therefore, its influence at this stage is limited to providing a vote in the House of Representatives on lawmaking in the Philippines.

## 4. Influence on Policy Change

The Gabriela Women's Party assists in efforts but does not act as a decision-maker in the Philippine parliamentary system. At this stage, GWP's involvement in Congress only impacts the proposal-making process, although

not a single bill proposed by GWP has been enacted into law (a bill that has not yet been passed). Therefore, at this stage, the Gabriela Women's Party cannot yet make any changes to legislation or similar regulations.

#### 5. Influence on State Behaviour

The Gabriela Women's Party, with their advocacy focused on women's empowerment, social justice, and labor issues, has influenced state behavior. Gabriela's direct involvement as a political party in the congress has brought about significant change. Within a period of 3 years from 2017 to 2020, Gabriela Women's Party has carried out the following actions and outcomes.

In 2017 GWP focus on *Anti-VAW* (Violence Against Women) campaign, The campaign approach is to make people understand VAW from the point of view of victim-survivors. It is hoped that such deeper understanding would ignite compassion from stakeholders, so that they would not commit, condone, or remain silent about VAW (GOV.PH, n.d.). The action was led by Led One Billion Rising Nationwide, which generated awareness and educated the public about violence against women (Christine Megrino 2017).

In 2017-2019, Gabriela Women's Party focused on maternity leave by campaigning for a bill extending the leave period from 60 days to 105 days, leading to Republic Act No. 11210 (Roy Enrico C. Santos and Raya Grace T. Tan 2020). *Anti-Harassment Advocacy* in 2019 became the focus of GWP, the anti-harassment in question was focused on public catcalling which refers to President Rodrigo Duterte's behavior during his campaign which harassed women in public spaces (Roel Tibay 2019). In 2020, Gabriela Women's Party with its campaign focused on labor rights &

*LGBTQ+* equality through the representation of Arlene Brosas (Stacy Ang 2020). Arlene Duran Brosas is a women's and children's rights advocate and politician. She has been a representative of the Gabriela Women's Party in the House of Representatives since 2016. In Congress, she co-authored the *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression* (SOGIE) Equality Bill, which aims to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation (Rappler, n.d.).

The influence of the Gabriela Women's Party on the actions of the Philippine government continues to this day and has led to the public's participation in efforts to reduce discrimination and violence against women. With the campaign conducted by the Gabriela Women's Party, women's movement in the Philippines has become more open and secure, protected by law and solid community support. Women's marginalized groups in the Philippines are more courageous in voicing their rights thanks to the platform established by the Gabriela Women's Party, so that the inequalities are slowly beginning to improve and gain ground.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

The Philippines, as a country with the highest level of gender equality in Asia, is inseparable from the strong patriarchal background there, where marginalized women's groups thrive and struggle to gain their place. Amidst the dominant patriarchal issues, moral and material support is certainly a vital option, especially for women in the Philippines who are affected. The Gabriela Women's Party, a political party representing Filipino women's groups that advocates for women's empowerment, exerted significant influence during the three years from 2017 to 2020. Inequality for women in the Philippines is not only based on gender aspects alone, but also on the existence of acts of discrimination that lead to verbal violence in the government sphere. Due to the discrimination that occurs in the region, the Philippine government has made various efforts by issuing laws to reduce the number of crimes and violated against women.

However, gender inequality remains a serious issue that must be addressed. Amidst this issue, a women's movement emerged in 1984, led by GABRIELA, during the struggle against the Ferdinand Marcos regime, to combat gender inequality. In 2000, GABRIELA established itself as a political party, the Gabriela Women's Party, representing Filipino women in the parliament and stand for women community in the political sector has aim to fight for the rights of women who have been deprived, marginalized, and degraded due to the prevailing patriarchal ideology in that country. Today Gabriela Women's Party is active in campaigns, voicing women's voiceless and

minority group that not only fight patriarchal injustice but also defend for women's rights, reduce discrimination against women and marginalized groups and equalize positions between men and women in various aspects of the environment in the Philippines.

The Gabriela Women's Party's success has led to women in the Philippines achieving prosperity in various spheres, including social, employment, domestic, and political spheres. Within three years, the Philippines was recognized as the country with the best gender success in Asia, the achievement is inseparable from the efforts and contributions of the Gabriela Women's Party.

To analyze the success of the GWP (Gabriela Women's Party) in achieving women's welfare in the Philippines, it can be identified using the theory proposed by Keck & Sikkink, namely Transnational Advocacy Networks (TAN) with four strategies, including information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics.

On the first strategy, information politics, the Gabriela Women's Party successfully implemented its approach and campaign through social media channels and the GWP's official blog, aiming to spread awareness and raise awareness about discrimination against women. In the second strategy, symbolic politics, Gabriela consistently displays its distinctive style in every campaign, whether in person or through posts on its official platforms, with attributes dominated by pink and purple. With this strategy, the Gabriela Women's Party successfully achieved its goal of making the party more recognizable to the public.

The third strategy, political leverage, involves encouraging the involvement of actors with strong goals to influence state policy or strengthen advocacy networks. Gabriela Women's Party successfully implemented this strategy by involving influential figures in every campaign.

Last but not least, Accountability Politics. This strategy was also successfully implemented by the Gabriela Women's Party in achieving their goals by forcing more powerful actors to act on the policies they created. This was marked by the participation of prominent figures in Philippine representative bodies in creating policies, particularly policies related to marginalized women's groups in the Philippines. Through the implementation of the four TAN strategies by the Gabriela Women's Party, the Gabriela Women's Party succeeded in changing the conditions that perpetuated gender inequality in the Philippines. It can be seen from what happened, from gender inequality, that gender equality was created that prospered women's groups and marginalized groups. Women in the Philippines are more assured of their rights. The presence and dominance of men is slowly being balanced by the participation of women in parliament, the public sphere, and academic circles. The situation of marginalized women in the Philippines has improved significantly, thanks to the hard work of the Gabriela Women's Party in fighting for the rights of women who have long been sidelined, even to this day.

The Gabriela Women's Party's influence on the well-being of women in the Philippines has been significant. Since its founding, the Gabriela Women's Party has brought to the forefront issues that must be upheld in the Philippines: gender equality, specifically the fight against violence against women. As a result of the Gabriela

Women's Party's hard work, women in the Philippines are now able to experience their previously unfulfilled rights. This applies not only to the domestic sphere, but also to various spheres, from family and work to the social sphere where women interact daily. This has become a safe and prosperous place thanks to the Gabriela Women's Party's success in championing the well-being of Filipino women. With this, the Gabriela Women's Party has succeeded in playing a major role in the welfare of Filipino women through various campaigns and movements that have been voiced since its three-year existence.

#### **4.2 Recommendation**

This study explains the role of the Gabriela Women's Party in achieving women community welfare in the Philippines, examining the strategies of the Transnational Advocacy Networks (TAN). Based on the above explanation, this study certainly has many shortcomings. The author recommends that future research explore the contributions of international actors in helping the Gabriela Women's Party achieve success in gender equality in the Philippines.

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