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Kinship ties and female political participation: the case of Philippine mayors

Charles Irvin S. Siriban*

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Abstract

Recent years have seen improvements in gender representation in the political sphere. One important contributor is the female politicians' kinship ties to incumbent or previous politicians. There are concerns, however, that such improvements are merely nominal. I quantify the extent to which female politicians with kinship ties are more likely to serve as placeholders. I utilize the transitory nature of term limits among local Philippine officials and focus on Philippine mayors and their kinship ties to their predecessors. Using the universe of mayors that followed term-limited incumbents from 2004 to 2013, I find that female mayors are less likely to stand for reelection after one term than males. Further investigation reveals that the gender gap is primarily explained by the gap among mayors with kinship ties to their predecessors. The estimated gender gap is more than one-fourth of the average likelihood of running for reelection in the sample. I also find that the predecessors of female mayors with kinship ties are more likely to run for mayor after their gap term and win. The results are consistent with political clans disproportionately using their female members as placeholders. In addition, female incumbents with kinship ties are more likely to exit politics after one term than their male counterparts. This result suggests that the political participation of female kins of term-limited mayors is more transitory than males.

Keywords: Female political representation, kinship ties, placeholders, benchwarmers, the Philippines

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1 Introduction

Recent years have seen improvements in gender representation in the political sphere. For instance, women account for almost one-fourth of national legislators worldwide in 2019. This is almost twice as large as the proportion (around 13 percent) in 1999 (Folke et al., 2021). Among the factors that drove recent improvements in female political representation is the kinship ties to incumbent or former politicians. Eighty (80) percent of women political chief executives in Latin America who served from 2000 to 2017 and 69 percent in Asia have kinship ties to previous or current political officials (Jalalzai & Rincker, 2018). These are significantly higher than the corresponding figures for male chief executives: 8 percent in Latin America and 7 percent in Asia (Jalalzai & Rincker, 2018).

Some scholars argue that kinship ties help overcome the higher threshold in politics faced by women (Jalalzai & Rincker, 2018). When voters and party elites are less capable of screening the qualifications of a female politician, they may use as a signal the performance of the official to whom the latter has kinship ties (Folke et al., 2021). There are concerns that female politicians with kinship ties merely serve as placeholders. Fielding a female clan member can be a strategy to maintain the political clan's hold of a position in response to institutional constraints, including rules that prevent an individual from permanently holding an elective position. Such is the case in countries that allow term-limited politicians to run again after sitting out for one or two terms. These include Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and other Central and South American countries for the presidential position, and Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and the Philippines for legislators and local chief executives (see Table (A1) for further details). To the extent that the constraint is transitory, a female clan member can serve until the previous incumbent is eligible to run for the same position.¹

I investigate and measure the extent to which female politicians with kinship ties to other politicians are more likely to serve as placeholders. I consider a politician as a placeholder if they succeeded term-limited kin and served for only one term, after which the former ran again for the same position. I examine this research question in the context of municipal mayors in the Philippines. Mayors serve as the political chief executives of Philippine municipalities, which are local government sub-units equivalent to US cities or towns (Querubin, 2012). Adjoining municipalities form a province which is the highest local government

sub-division in the Philippines. Mayors and other local officials can only serve for three consecutive terms. The term limits were introduced as part of the 1987 Philippine constitution. Politicians adapted to the term limits by fielding relatives to run for the term-limited positions (Querubin, 2012). Term-limited incumbents can run for the same place after a gap term.

Using data on Philippine elections from 1998 to 2010, Labonne et al. (2021) estimate that around two-thirds of the increase in female mayors in the Philippines is due to term limits. This is mainly driven by female kins of term-limited incumbents running for and winning as mayors. They argue that one salient mechanism explaining their results is the disproportionate use of female relatives as placeholders. This strategy is anchored on societal norms that prioritize the careers of males.² To support their claim, they note that the proportion of female mayors with kinship ties to term-limited predecessors who served for only one term (57.7 percent) is much higher than the corresponding proportion (44.5 percent) for women without kinship ties. Furthermore, among the 114 mayors in their sample identified as “benchwarmers”, the Filipino term for placeholders (Coronel et al., 2004), 70 percent are female.³

I further investigate this argument by quantifying the extent to which female mayors with kinship ties to their term-limited predecessors are more likely to serve as placeholders. Following the definition of a placeholder, I measure the gap in their likelihood of serving for only one term and not standing for reelection. Serving for only one term does not automatically mean that a mayor is merely a placeholder; the predecessor must contest the mayoral race. As such, I examine how much the term-limited predecessors of female mayors with kinship ties are more likely to run for mayor and win the election. I also include in my analysis mayors without kinship ties to previous term-limited incumbents. This allows me to compare the gender gap among mayors with kinship ties to that of other mayors.

I focus on the universe of municipalities with mayors that followed term-limited incumbents. They were elected from 2004 to 2013, covering four electoral cycles. The estimates do not provide a causal interpretation given the non-random nature of a mayor’s gender and kinship ties to his or her predecessor. I mitigate the endogeneity concerns by controlling for province-by-election year fixed effects and pre-sample municipal characteristics. I find that female incumbents are 18 percentage points less likely to stand for reelection after one term

compared to male ones. The observed gender gap is mainly explained by the gap among mayors with kinship ties to their predecessors. Female mayors with kinship ties are 22.7 percentage points less likely to stand for reelection compared to their male counterparts. This is more than one-fourth of the average likelihood of running for reelection in my sample. In contrast, I find a statistically and economically insignificant difference in the likelihood of not running for reelection between female and male incumbents without kinship ties. Among mayors with kinship ties, I find that the predecessors of female incumbents are 23 percentage points more likely to run as mayor and 22 percentage points more likely to win than that of males.

While female incumbents with kinship ties are more likely to serve for only one term as mayor, they may continue to influence policymaking by running for a lower position in the municipal government or a higher position at the provincial or national levels. I do not find evidence that they are more likely to pursue a lower or higher position compared to their male counterparts. My results show instead that they disproportionately exit politics. The estimated gender gap is around 18.8 percentage points. This is 1.7 times as large as the proportion of incumbents who left politics after serving for one term. This suggests that the political participation of female kins of term-limited predecessors is more transitory than males. The results are robust to controlling for politician characteristics and the use of logit model. Furthermore, I do not find evidence that selection on unobservables accounts for much of the estimated gender gap in serving as placeholders and in exiting politics.

This chapter is arranged as follows. Section 1.1 discusses the chapter's contribution to the relevant literature. Section 2 provides institutional background on local politics in the Philippines. Section 3 discusses the data used in the analysis and relevant descriptive statistics. Section 4 lays out the empirical strategy and results. Section 5 provides a conclusion of the analysis.

1.1 Related literature

My research contributes to the nascent literature exploring how kinship ties between politicians influence female political participation. Folke et al. (2021) find that incumbent politicians in Sweden and Ireland with better qualifications are more likely to have female relatives

elected subsequently. They argue that an incumbent's track record provides voters and political party leaders with information that will help gauge the future performance of a female politician. They do not find evidence of a similar relationship for a junior male relative. On the other hand, Labonne et al. (2021) find that the link between kinship ties and female political representation depends on the institutional context.

I mainly build on Labonne et al. (2021)'s work which, while also leveraging the same institutional feature and context, focus largely about term limits and its effect on women's political representation. They touch on the political clans' preference to field female members as placeholders as a possible explanation of their main results. They provide summary statistics consistent with the said hypothesis. I formally test their claim through the following. I first quantify the gender gap in serving as placeholders among Philippine mayors with term-limited predecessors. I find that female mayors with kinship ties to their term-limited predecessors are less likely to run for reelection than their male counterparts. In addition, predecessors of female mayors with kinship ties are more likely to run for and win reelection after their gap term. I do not find that such a gap exists among mayors without kinship ties. My results also show that female mayors with kinship ties to their predecessors are more likely to exit politics after one term relative to their male counterparts.

As such, my analysis complements existing studies on the gender gap in serving as placeholders in different contexts. Qualitative studies document such phenomenon in historically patriarchal institutions, such as the management of Catholic parishes (Ecklund, 2006) and of family-owned farmlands (Carter, 2017). Relatedly, some political parties field female candidates to circumvent gender quotas and other legal requirements. Such is the case for Mexican political parties having female politicians run for federal deputy positions in response to gender quotas, only for them to resign immediately after the election and be replaced by their male alternates (Beer & Camp, 2016). Richter (1990) documents a similar event in Thailand, whereby political parties fielded female candidates from Bangkok to rural parliamentary seats to satisfy the rules requiring them to have candidates for at least half of constituencies. My results provide quantitative evidence to further understand how such a strategy works- whereby an entity (such as political clans, Catholic churches, or political families) prefers to utilize its female member to maintain or improve its current position- using the case of political clans in the Philippines.⁴

I also contribute to the literature that investigates how political clans *de facto* work as political organizations to maintain their members' influence in politics. The literature highlights the salience of understanding the influential role of actors other than political parties in policymaking in the Philippines and other contexts. George and Ponattu (2020) find that Members of Parliament (MPs) in India with kinship ties to future representatives are associated with better economic development outcomes. They argue that their results can be explained by bequest motives, with ancestors' policies boosting their descendants' future election outcomes. Siriban (2022), on the other hand, finds that a Philippine governor with kinship ties to a congressperson responds better to close-to-election typhoon shocks. My research provides insights into the disproportionate use of female relatives as placeholders by mayors in the Philippines in response to the term limits.

2 Institutional Background

The sub-national unit considered in the analysis is the municipality. There are 1,634 municipalities in the Philippines as of 2018. A cluster of municipalities is called the province, considered the largest government subdivision in the Philippines. The political officials of a municipality include its mayor, vice-mayor, and councilors. The mayor serves as the chief executive of a municipality, while the vice-mayor and the municipal councilors comprise its legislative branch. The vice-mayor presides over the municipal council. Furthermore, the vice-mayor is in line to succeed the mayor in case a vacancy occurs due to health and other reasons. As the chief executive of the municipality, the mayor implements the laws and regulations passed by the municipal council (Dulay & Go, 2021).

The mayor has the exclusive prerogative to introduce legislation in areas such as fiscal policy and public service employment (Abellera, 2011). The mayor also enjoys wide discretionary powers in regulating local economic activities. These include awarding of building permits, regulation of land use, and allocation of municipal public works projects, among others (Sidel & Hedman, 2000). Municipal mayors, along with other local government officials, play an important role in different policy areas. These include disaster response and management. The municipal mayor chairs the municipal disaster council. The council manages the disaster response efforts when a natural disaster affects multiple villages within the

municipality. The council works with provincial and national councils if the disaster shock affects municipalities across different areas (see Table (1)).

Table 1: Disaster councils in the Philippines and their respective jurisdictions

Disaster council	Jurisdictions affected by disaster
National DRRMC	≥ 2 regions
Regional DRRMC	≥ 2 provinces
Provincial DRRMC	≥ 2 cities or municipalities
City/Municipal DRRMC	≥ 2 barangays
Barangay disaster council	barangay is affected

Source: Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, Section 15.

Voters elect all local officials and members of the House of Representatives in the country simultaneously. Elections are held every second Monday of May of the election year as stipulated in the 1987 Constitution. Each official's term spans three years. Local officials and members of the Philippine Congress can run for a maximum of three consecutive terms. The term limit was implemented in 1987 and applied to the first local government elections in 1988. A local official who was first elected in 1988 and won three consecutive terms would be term-limited in 1998.⁵

Since the term limit is temporary, term-limited politicians may run after the gap term if they wish so. Politicians have devised strategies to maintain their power. These include fielding relatives to run for the same public office and/or politicians running for a different public office (Querubin, 2012). In the first case, some relatives merely serve as "benchwarmers"- they hold the position for one term after which their term-limited relatives run for the same position again (Labonne et al., 2021; Querubin, 2012).

Coinciding with the introduction of term limits is the increase in female political participation in the Philippines. In 1988, when term limits have been introduced and all mayors were first-termers, only 9 percent of mayors were female.⁶ This jumped to 16 percent in 1998 when the mayors elected in 1988 became term-limited. Using data on Philippine municipal elections from 1988 to 2010, Labonne et al. (2021) find that municipalities with term-limited mayors are 17 percent more likely to have a female candidate for mayor next election. They are also more likely to have a female mayor. They estimate that term limits account for two-thirds of the increase in the share of female mayors from 1995 to 1998. They find that the

increase in female political participation is primarily driven by female relatives of term-limited mayors.

3 Data

I measure the gender gap among Philippine mayors in serving as a placeholder. My estimating sample consists of the universe of municipalities where the mayors succeeded term-limited predecessors in 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2013. I focus on their “first” term, i.e., the electoral term after their predecessor became term-limited. This ensures that the mayors in the sample were all eligible for reelection. I also include municipalities whose mayors had no kinship ties with their predecessors. I do so to quantify the gender gap among mayors with kinship ties relative to other mayors.

I use two administrative datasets from the Philippine Commission on Elections (COM-ELEC) to determine the municipalities included in the sample. The first dataset consists of the names of elected municipal mayors and vice-mayors in 2004, along with their electoral terms. The second dataset contains the names of the candidates, their respective political party affiliations and votes, and an indicator of whether a candidate was the recognized winner. I use the first dataset to identify mayors elected in 2004 who did not serve during the previous term. I then use the information from the second dataset for the 1995, 1998, and 2001 electoral cycles to determine those who succeeded term-limited mayors. I also use both the first and second datasets to code the electoral terms of mayors elected in 2004 and following electoral cycles. I use this information to determine mayors elected from 2007 to 2013 who satisfied the sample criterion.

I consider a politician as a placeholder if they are elected for the same office as their term-limited kin and serve for a single term, following which the previous officeholder seeks reelection for the same position. I use the following variables to determine if a mayor serves as a placeholder: an indicator variable equal to one if the mayor stood for reelection after one term; an indicator of whether the term-limited predecessor ran for election; and an indicator of whether the predecessor won the election. I code these variables based on the mayor’s and his or her predecessor’s participation in the next election.⁷ The independent variables of interest are indicator variables equal to one if the mayor is female and has kinship ties to the

term-limited predecessor, respectively. Similar to Labonne et al. (2021), I use the first names of the politicians to determine their gender. In some cases, I refer to an array of online sources, including municipal audit reports and news articles.⁸ I follow the literature on kinship ties in Philippine politics (e.g., Mendoza et al., 2016; Querubin, 2016) and refer to politicians' last and middle names in determining whether the mayor and his or her predecessor have kinship ties.

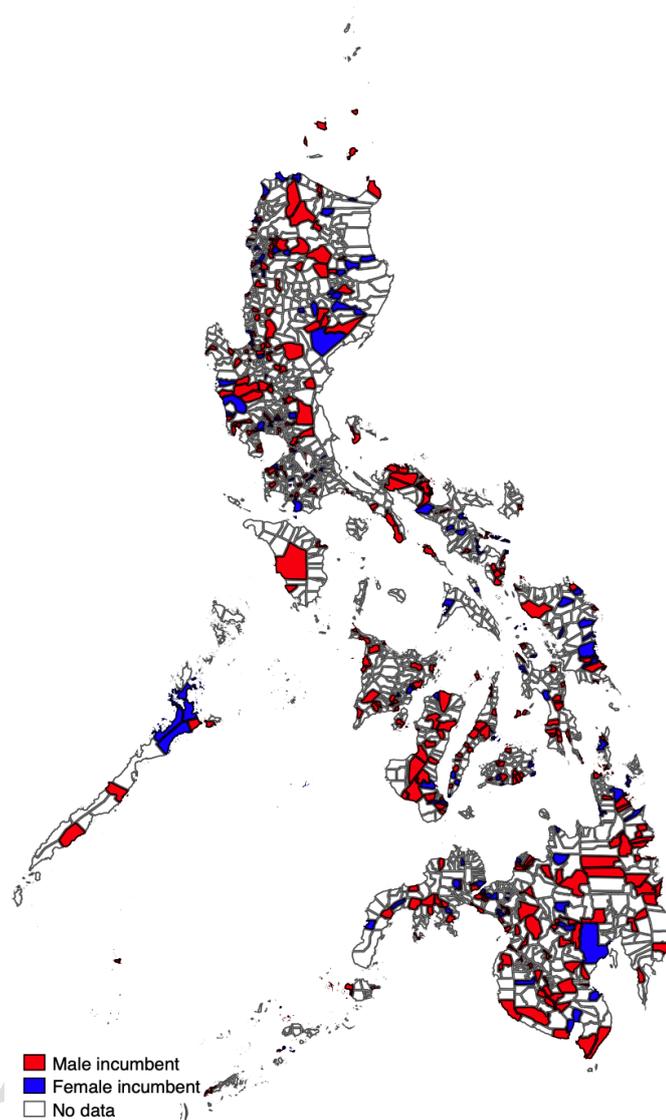
Table 2: Summary statistics

	No. of obs	Mean	Std dev.	Min.	Max.
Ran for reelection	1379	0.83	0.37	0	1
Prev. incumbent ran for mayor	1379	0.37	0.48	0	1
Prev. incumbent won mayor	1379	0.15	0.36	0	1
Ran for lower position	1379	0.040	0.20	0	1
Ran for higher position	1379	0.017	0.13	0	1
Exited politics	1379	0.11	0.31	0	1
Female	1372	0.26	0.44	0	1
Kinship ties to predecessor	1378	0.42	0.49	0	1
Predecessor is female	1376	0.13	0.34	0	1

Notes: The sample includes municipalities where the incumbent mayors followed term-limited predecessors. The sample includes four electoral cycles- 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2013. Ran for reelection is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor ran for reelection in the next election cycle. Prev. incumbent ran for mayor is an indicator variable equal to one if the term-limited predecessor ran for mayor in the next election cycle, i.e., after his or her gap term. Prev. incumbent won mayor is an indicator variable equal to one if the term-limited predecessor won as mayor in the next election cycle. Ran for lower position is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor ran for a lower political position in the municipal government. Ran for higher position is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor ran for a higher political position at the provincial and national levels. Exited politics is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor did not run for any political position. Female is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the incumbent mayor is female. Kinship ties to predecessor is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the incumbent mayor has kinship ties to his or her term-limited predecessor. Predecessor is female is an indicator variable equal to one if the term-limited predecessor is female.

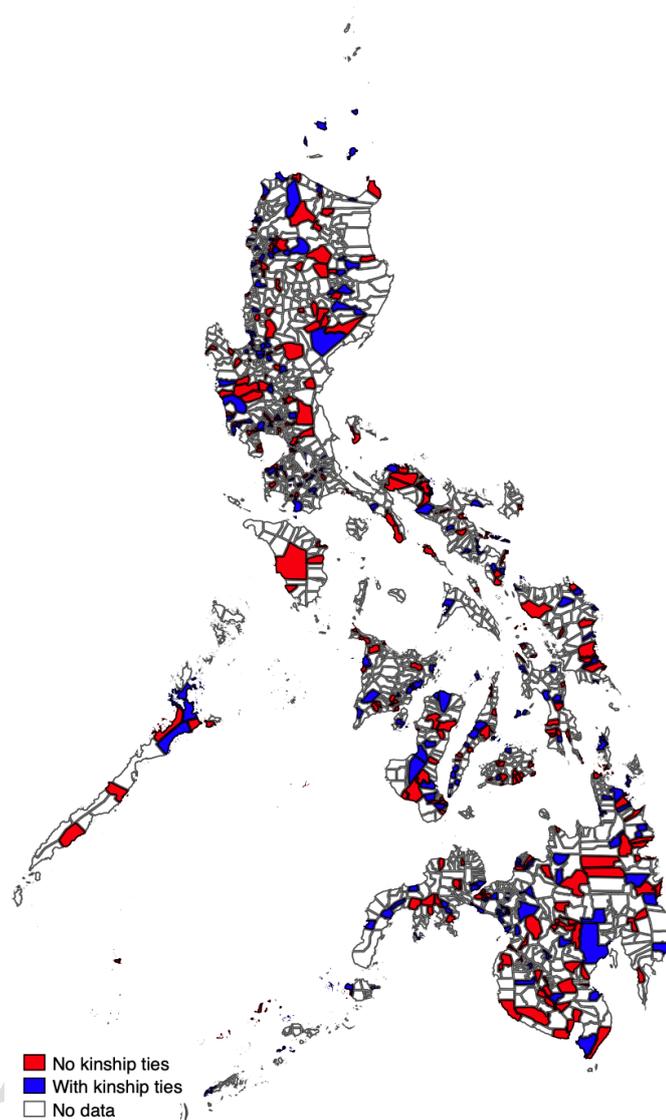
The sample includes 1,379 municipality-election years: 212 municipalities in 2004 where the mayor followed a term-limited incumbent; 465 municipalities in 2007; 413 in 2010; and 289 in 2013. There are 1,271 unique municipalities. Table (2) contains relevant summary statistics. More than four out of five mayors in the sample ran for reelection. The term-limited predecessor ran for mayor after taking a gap term in almost two out of five municipality-election years. However, only fifteen percent of the predecessors were successfully elected. More than two out of five municipality-election years have mayors with kinship ties to their predecessors. Only 13 percent have mayors with female term-limited predecessors. This is half of the proportion of municipality-election years that have female mayors. Figure (1) shows that municipalities with female mayors who had term-limited predecessors and were elected in 2010 are spread throughout the country. There is also spatial variation in having a mayor with kinship ties to his or her predecessor (see Figure (2)).⁹

Figure 1: Spatial variation in gender of incumbent mayor, municipalities in the 2010 election cycle



Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-termer that followed a term-limited incumbent.

Figure 2: Spatial variation in kinship ties to predecessor, municipalities in the 2010 election cycle



Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-termer that followed a term-limited incumbent.

Table 3: Mean outcomes, by kinship ties and incumbent gender

Variable	(1)		(2)	
	Male incumbent N	Mean	Female incumbent N	Mean
<i>Panel A: Overall sample</i>				
Stood for reelection	1015	0.882	356	0.697
Prev. incumbent ran for mayor	1015	0.354	356	0.410
Prev. incumbent won mayor	1015	0.110	356	0.261
<i>Panel B: With kinship ties</i>				
Stood for reelection	331	0.810	241	0.589
Prev. incumbent ran for mayor	331	0.205	241	0.407
Prev. incumbent won mayor	331	0.109	241	0.303
<i>Panel C: Without kinship ties</i>				
Ran for reelection	684	0.917	115	0.922
Prev. incumbent ran for mayor	684	0.427	115	0.417
Prev. incumbent won mayor	684	0.111	115	0.173

Notes: This table reports the sample averages of decision to stand for reelection between male and female mayors after one term. The table also reports the sample averages of the term-limited predecessor's decision to run for mayor after the gap term, and his or her likelihood of winning the election. Panel A includes all mayors in the sample. Panel B (Panel C) includes mayors without (with) kinship ties to their predecessors.

I also compare the average values of the outcome variables between municipality-election years with female and male mayors (see Table (3)). The proportion of mayors who ran for reelection among municipality-election years with female incumbents (69.7 percent) is almost four-fifths of the corresponding proportion for those with male mayors (88.2 percent). The term-limited predecessor is more likely to run for mayor in municipality-election years with female mayors (41.0 percent) compared to the male ones (35.4 percent). A much wider gender gap exists in the proportion of term-limited predecessors who won the mayoralty race.

I explore the gender gaps between those with kinship ties and those without kinship ties. There is a large gender gap in the proportion of mayors who ran for reelection among those with kinship ties. Furthermore, the proportion of predecessors running for election in municipalities with female mayors is twice as large as the corresponding figure for males (see Panel B of Table (3)). In contrast, more than 90 percent of male and female mayors without kinship ties ran for reelection. The proportions of predecessors running for mayor are also roughly the same for municipalities headed by male and female mayors without kinship ties (see Panel C of Table (3)).

4 Empirical strategy and results

My analysis proceeds in two parts. Firstly, I measure the gender gap in serving as a placeholder. I do so by first calculating the disparity in their likelihood of serving for only one term and not standing for reelection. Serving for just one term does not necessarily imply that a female mayor is merely a temporary substitute. Therefore, I also assess the extent to which their predecessor is more likely to run as mayor and emerge victorious compared to their male counterpart's predecessor. Lastly, I investigate their political trajectories by examining if female mayors with kinship ties are more likely to run for a higher or lower position or exit politics.

4.1 Gender gap in serving as placeholder

I quantify the gender gap in serving as a placeholder. I use the following estimating equation:

$$\begin{aligned} Placeholder_{mpt} = & \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Female_{mpt} + \alpha_2 Kinshipties_{mpt} + \alpha_3 Female_{mpt} \\ & \times Kinshipties_{mpt} + \alpha X + \alpha_{pt} + \epsilon_{mpt} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where m denotes municipality, p denotes province, and t denotes election year. The outcome variables, $Placeholder_{mpt}$, are the measures of serving as placeholder. These include whether the mayor stood for reelection after one term, whether the term-limited predecessor ran for mayor, and whether the predecessor won the mayoralty race. $Female_{mpt}$ is an indicator of whether the mayor in the municipality m elected in (election) year t is female. $KinshipTies_{mpt}$ is a binary variable equal to one if the mayor has kinship ties with his or her term-limited predecessor.

X includes pre-sample period municipality characteristics. These include a municipality's population, female-male ratio, and proportion of Muslims in the population. The proportion of Muslims variable accounts for cultural differences between Muslim-majority and other Philippine municipalities. Muslim-majority electorates may, on average, have different views on women political leadership compared to other parts of the Philippines.¹⁰ Not controlling for the said variable may induce omitted variable bias if mayors in Muslim-majority areas have greater incumbency advantage and are more likely to run for reelection.¹¹ I use

the information on municipality controls from the 2000 census and interact them with the election year fixed effects.

I do not control for municipality fixed effects as the sample consists of first-term mayors whose predecessor is term-limited from four electoral cycles. Given that the term limit is three consecutive terms, the sample is an unbalanced panel of 1,271 municipalities with $n = 1,379$. Thus, most of the municipalities appear only once in the sample. Alternatively, I include a vector of province-by-election year fixed effects, denoted by α_{pt} . They control for provincial time-invariant determinants of a mayor's decision to seek reelection and shocks that affect all mayors during a specific election year. In addition, province-by-election year fixed effects control for differential time effects across provinces. These include decisions by province-specific alliances among mayors and other local officials on local candidates to support. Standard errors are clustered at the province level to account for the possible serial correlation among municipalities within the same province.¹²

The parameter of interest is $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3$. It measures the gender gap as a placeholder among mayors with kinship ties. If female politicians with kinship ties disproportionately serve as placeholders compared to their male counterparts, $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3 < 0$ when the outcome variable is the mayor's decision to stand for reelection. Furthermore, I expect the predecessor to be more likely to run for mayor. This suggests that $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3 > 0$ when the dependent variables are indicators of whether the predecessor ran and won for mayor.

The estimates in (1) cannot be interpreted causally given that $KinshipTies_{mpt}$ and $Female_{mpt}$ are not exogenously determined. There are potential endogeneity concerns arising from unobserved municipal and politician characteristics that may be correlated to the politicians' attributes and their likelihood of running for reelection. For instance, some localities may have political institutions historically dominated by male politicians and political clans. These institutions may also be conducive to low political competition and strong incumbency advantage. I mitigate this concern by controlling for province-by-election year fixed effects and pre-sample municipal characteristics. However, they do not control for within-province differences in institutions and other time-invariant attributes that may influence the likelihood that a municipality will have a female mayor and a mayor with kinship ties to the previous one. The estimating equations do not also control for time-varying unobserved municipal and politician characteristics that are correlated to having a female mayor or a

mayor with kinship ties to his or her predecessor.

Non-random measurement errors may also exist in generating the placeholder variables. Their accuracy depends on correctly identifying (i) if the incumbent mayor and his or her predecessor ran for election in the next cycle; and (ii) if the mayor has kinship ties with the predecessor. Measurement error may arise in (i) given that some politicians' names are reported differently across different cycles.¹³ Measurement error in (ii) is possible given that politicians who share the same last names or middle names may not necessarily be related by blood or marriage. My estimator would be inconsistent if more false positive matches are identified in municipalities headed by female mayors or mayors with kinship ties to their predecessors.

I mitigate the concern in (i) by using the same matching procedure for all mayors in the sample.¹⁴ For most electoral cycles, the election results report the politicians' full names, including their middle names. I use a politician's middle name, along with his or her last name and first name, in performing the matches.¹⁵ I address the concern in (ii) by applying the same procedure, i.e., last name and middle name matching, for all mayors in the sample.¹⁶

Table 4: Gender gap in serving as placeholder

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Stood reelection	Stood reelection	Prev. incumbent ran	Prev. incumbent won
Female (α_1)	-0.183*** (0.029)	0.012 (0.029)	0.025 (0.053)	0.060 (0.050)
Kinship ties		-0.107*** (0.028)	-0.219*** (0.047)	-0.011 (0.024)
Female×Kinship ties (α_3)		-0.239*** (0.046)	0.204*** (0.073)	0.157*** (0.058)
Observations	1,371	1,371	1,371	1,371
R-squared	0.258	0.305	0.278	0.263
Municipal characteristics	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province-by-election year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mean dep.var.	0.833	0.833	0.370	0.150
Est. $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3$		-0.227	0.229	0.217
p-value ($H_0: \alpha_1 + \alpha_3 = 0$)		0.000	0.000	0.000

Notes: All regressions control for province-by-election year fixed effects, and pre-sample municipality controls interacted with election year fixed-effects. The sample includes all municipalities with mayors that followed term-limited predecessors. Municipal characteristics include a municipality's population, proportion of Muslims and female-to-male ratio. Stood reelection is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor ran for reelection in the next election cycle. Prev. incumbent ran is an indicator variable equal to one if the term-limited predecessor ran for mayor in the next election cycle, i.e., after his or her gap term. Prev. incumbent won is an indicator variable equal to one if the term-limited predecessor won as mayor in the next election cycle. Female is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the incumbent mayor is female. Kinship ties is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the incumbent mayor has kinship ties to his or her term-limited predecessor. Est. $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3$ is the sum of coefficients of Female and the interaction term. It measures the gender gap among mayors with kinship ties. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent critical level.

Table (4) reports the regression estimates of specification (1). I first document the presence of a gender gap in standing for reelection. Female mayors are 18 percentage points less likely to stand for reelection after one term compared to their male counterparts (see column (1)). This is equivalent to 22 percent of the proportion of municipality-election years in the sample where the mayor stood for reelection. Distinguishing between politicians with and without kinship ties paints a more nuanced picture. Female mayors with kinship ties are 22.7 percentage points less likely to stand for reelection compared to their male counterparts, which is more than one-fourth of the sample mean. While the estimated gender gap among politicians without kinship ties has a positive sign, its magnitude is small and is imprecisely estimated (see column (2)).

I then investigate if the immediate predecessors of female mayors are more likely to run after their gap term. Among mayors with kinship ties, the likelihood that their predecessor runs for election is 23 percentage points higher for female mayors. The magnitude of the

estimated gender gap is more than three-fifths of the sample mean of the outcome variable. I do not find evidence that predecessors of female mayors without kinship ties are more likely to run than males (see column (3)). I also find that the predecessors of female mayors are more likely to win the mayoralty race. Consistent with the placeholder hypothesis, this finding only holds for mayors with kinship ties (see column (4)).

4.2 Political participation trajectory

Consistent with the argument made in Labonne et al. (2021), I find evidence that female mayors with kinship ties are less likely to stand for reelection. Furthermore, I do not find evidence that such a dynamic exists among mayors without kinship ties to their predecessors. Not running for reelection does not mean the end of a person's participation in politics. Politicians can continue to influence policymaking by pursuing a lower position in the municipal government or a higher position in provincial or national politics.

I investigate whether female politicians with kinship ties are more likely to pursue a different political office or exit politics altogether. I use the following outcome variables: an indicator variable equal to one if the mayor does not run for any political position; an indicator of whether the mayor runs for a lower position; and an indicator of whether the mayor runs for a higher position. Lower position includes the other political offices in the municipality, i.e., municipal vice-mayor or municipal councilor. Higher position includes positions in the provincial and national governments.¹⁷ Out of the 17 percent of mayors who did not stand for reelection, most of them (11 percent) did not run for any political position (see Table (2)).

Table 5: Gender gap in political participation trajectory

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Stood reelection	Ran lower position	Ran higher position	Exit politics	Rank
Female (α_1)	0.012 (0.029)	-0.012 (0.016)	-0.004 (0.009)	0.006 (0.029)	-0.004 (0.053)
Kinship ties	-0.107*** (0.028)	0.003 (0.016)	0.027** (0.012)	0.081*** (0.026)	-0.138** (0.056)
Female×Kinship ties (α_3)	-0.239*** (0.046)	0.052 (0.037)	0.005 (0.017)	0.182*** (0.046)	-0.412*** (0.086)
Observations	1,371	1,371	1,371	1,371	1,371
R-squared	0.305	0.308	0.310	0.273	0.286
Municipal characteristics	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province-by-election year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mean dep.var.	0.833	0.040	0.017	0.109	1.758
Est. $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3$	-0.227	0.040	0.001	0.188	-0.416
p-value ($H_0 : \alpha_1 + \alpha_3 = 0$)	0.000	0.164	0.973	0.000	0.000

Notes: All regressions control for province-by-election year fixed effects, and pre-sample municipality controls interacted with election year fixed-effects. Ran lower position is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor ran for a lower political position in the municipal government. Ran higher position is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor ran for a higher political position at the provincial and national levels. Exit politics is an indicator variable equal to one if the incumbent mayor did not run for any political position. Rank is equal to 0 if the mayor exits politics; 1 if the mayor runs for a lower position; 2 if the mayor runs for reelection; and 3 if the mayor runs for a higher position. Est. $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3$ is the sum of coefficients of Female incumbent and the interaction term. It measures the gender gap in the outcome measure among mayors with kinship ties. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent critical level.

Table (5) shows the regression results. Column (1) displays the same results as column (2) of Table (4) for reference. Female mayors with kinship ties are more likely to run for a lower position than their male counterparts. However, the difference is imprecisely estimated (see column (2)). Similarly, there is no evidence of a gender gap in running for higher positions. The estimated gender gap is close to zero (see column (3)). In contrast, female mayors with kinship ties are 18.8 percentage points more likely to exit politics than males. This is 1.7 times as large as the proportion of mayors in the sample who exited politics (see column (4)). The results suggest that the gender gap in exiting politics mainly explains the gap in standing for reelection among mayors with kinship ties. There is no evidence of a gender gap in moving up or down the political ladder and exiting politics among politicians without kinship ties. Furthermore, the estimated coefficients are all close to zero.

I also construct a variable that ranks the political position pursued by the mayor. It is equal to 0 if the mayor exits politics; 1 if the mayor runs for a lower position; 2 if the mayor

runs for reelection; and 3 if the mayor runs for a higher position. I find that, on average, female mayors with kinship ties pursue a lower political position than males. There is no evidence of the presence of a gender gap among mayors without kinship ties (see column (5)).

4.3 Robustness checks

I test the sensitivity of the results to controlling for politician-level characteristics. These include indicators of partisan and kinship ties with the provincial governor and membership with the ruling party, i.e., the party of the Philippine president. I find that the results are robust to the inclusion of such controls (see Tables (A2) and (A3)).¹⁸ I also check if the results are robust to using an alternative estimator. I find that the results are qualitatively similar when estimated using the logit model (see Table (A4)).¹⁹

Table 6: Assessing the relative magnitude of selection on unobservables

Outcome	Coefficient	$\hat{\beta}_R$	$\hat{\beta}_F$	$\hat{\beta}_F/(\hat{\beta}_R - \hat{\beta}_F)$
Stood reelection	$\hat{\alpha}_1$	0.015	0.012	3.476
	$\hat{\alpha}_3$	-0.24	-0.239	149.232
Prev. incumbent ran	$\hat{\alpha}_1$	0.026	0.025	45.91
	$\hat{\alpha}_3$	0.201	0.204	-74.375
Prev. incumbent won	$\hat{\alpha}_1$	0.06	0.06	-3,339.95
	$\hat{\alpha}_3$	0.156	0.157	-114.174
Exit politics	$\hat{\alpha}_1$	0.003	0.006	-2.306
	$\hat{\alpha}_3$	0.182	0.182	-406.28

Notes: I consider the following outcomes: (i) whether the mayor stood for reelection after one term (Stood reelection), (ii) whether the term-limited predecessor ran for mayor (Prev. incumbent ran), (iii) whether the predecessor won the mayoralty race (Prev. incumbent won), and (iv) whether the first term mayor decided to not run for any electoral position (Exit politics). $\hat{\alpha}_1$ is the estimate of coefficient of $Female_{mpt}$ in equation (3.1), while $\hat{\alpha}_3$ is the corresponding estimate for $Female_{mpt} \times Kinshipties_{mpt}$. $\hat{\beta}_R$ denotes the coefficient estimates using the restricted model, i.e., without pre-sample municipality controls, while $\hat{\beta}_F$ are the estimates for the unrestricted model, i.e., with the full set of controls. Both the restricted and full models control for province-by-election year fixed effects.

I also examine the relative importance of selection on unobservables by estimating two types of models: (i) one without any municipality controls (labeled as R for restricted), and (ii) one with municipality controls used in the baseline estimating equation (labeled as F for full).²⁰ Similar to Nunn and Wantchekon (2011), I control for the same fixed effects as baseline results on both models. I compare the estimates of α_1 and α_3 , the sum of which measures the gender gap in serving as a placeholder, for the restricted and full models. In addition,

following Altonji et al. (2005) and Bellows and Miguel (2009), I calculate $S \equiv \hat{\beta}_F / (\hat{\beta}_R - \hat{\beta}_F)$ for each coefficient of interest. A high magnitude of S , i.e., $S > 1$, means that selection on unobservables must be high, relative to selection on observables, to attribute the estimated gender gap entirely to selection effects.

Table (6) displays the results of the analysis. In general, $\hat{\alpha}_1$ and $\hat{\alpha}_3$ have similar magnitudes in restricted and full models. The estimates of S are positive and greater than 1 when the outcome measure is a first-term mayor's decision to stand for reelection. This suggests that selection on unobservables must be relatively large for the observed gender gap among mayors with kinship ties to be entirely driven by selection effects. For other outcomes, while the magnitude of S is large, it is mostly negative. This is driven by $\hat{\alpha}_1$ or $\hat{\alpha}_3$ moving away from zero after controlling for municipal characteristics. As such, it is likely that the estimates using the full set of municipal controls are lower bounds and controlling for more unobserved variables leads to larger coefficient magnitudes (Sterck, 2020).

4.4 Discussion

The results point to a substantial gender gap in standing for reelection among mayors that followed term-limited incumbents. The estimated gender gap is robust to controlling for the municipality and mayor characteristics and province-by-election year fixed effects. Results further show that the gender gap is primarily explained by the gap among mayors with kinship ties to their term-limited predecessors. There is no evidence that such a gap exists for mayors without kinship ties. Among politicians with kinship ties, gender gaps also exist for the predecessor's decision to run as mayor after the gap term and the likelihood of winning. These results are consistent with the argument made by Labonne et al. (2021) regarding female politicians disproportionately serving as placeholders to their term-limited relatives.

I further investigate the implication of the results above for the political participation of female politicians with kinship ties. I do not find evidence that female politicians with kinship ties are more likely to pursue a lower or higher position than male politicians. Instead, female politicians are more likely to exit politics than their male counterparts. These results suggest that female kins of term-limited predecessors' political participation is more transitory than their male counterparts. This is a salient issue given the role of kinship ties in increasing

female political representation in the Philippines and other countries. In my sample, more than two-thirds of female mayors have kinship ties with their term-limited predecessors. In contrast, less than a third of male mayors have kinship ties. The kinds of policies that female politicians pursue may differ when they merely serve as placeholders.²¹

5 Conclusion

This chapter investigates if female Philippine mayors with kinship ties to their term-limited predecessors are more likely to serve as placeholders. I utilize the fact that the term limits are temporary. I find that female mayors with kinship ties are 22.7 percentage points less likely to stand for reelection after one term. I do not find evidence that such a gender gap exists among incumbents without kinship ties. Among incumbents with kinship ties, I find that the predecessors of female incumbents are more likely to run and win as mayor after their gap term. These support the arguments made in Labonne et al. (2021) regarding political clans' preference to use their female members as placeholders.

Moreover, I find that the gender gap among politicians with kinship ties in standing for reelection is explained primarily by female incumbents disproportionately exiting politics. This implies that their political participation is more transitory than their male counterparts. Future studies can shed more light on the salience of gender bias and societal norms on political clans' preference to field their female members as placeholders. This includes investigating the implications of having a female successor on a term-limited incumbent's electoral outcome should the latter stand for election after the gap term. The jump in the share of female politicians in the Philippines due to term limits increases voters' exposure to female politicians. It will be of interest to investigate its implications on voters' perceptions of female leadership and how it affects the gender gap in political clans' placeholder strategy.

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Notes

¹Even when the term limit is final, the term-limited predecessor can continue to exert significant influence on policymaking if the successor kin appoints the former to a non-elective major administrative role. Alternatively, the predecessor can play an influential role behind the scene, as was allegedly the case with former Argentinian President Nestor Kirchner during his wife Cristina's first presidential term (Barrionuevo, 2010).

²An alternative mechanism relates to the age profile of the term-limited incumbents, who are younger than those who retired voluntarily. They may not have sons who are old enough to be eligible to run for mayor and they end up fielding their wife as the candidate (Labonne et al., 2021).

³Their definition limits the set to politicians who served for only one term and are followed immediately by the (previous) term-limited incumbent.

⁴I would like to thank Cesi Cruz for raising this point.

⁵The term of a local official elected in 1988 is until the last day of June 1992. Thereafter, each local official is elected for a three-year term.

⁶The 1988 elections were the first local elections held after the restoration of democracy in the Philippines in 1987.

⁷In particular, I code the placeholder measures for a mayor elected in 2004 using information from 2007 elections, for a mayor elected in 2007 using information from 2010 elections, etc.

⁸The municipal audit reports typically contain letters by the audit authority addressed to the municipal mayors. Male mayors are usually addressed as "Sir" and female ones as "Madam."

⁹See the Appendix for the spatial variation of the variables in other electoral cycles.

¹⁰See Brecht-Drouart (2013) for a discussion of debates about women's eligibility to occupy leading political positions in Islam and how they play out among Muslims in the Philippines.

¹¹For instance, Querubin and Robinson (2014) find that municipalities with larger share of Muslims in the population are more likely to elect descendants of pre-colonial rulers. They posit that their results reflect greater and persistent animosity in those areas to the Philippine central government.

¹²On average, there are 16 municipalities within a province in the sample. The minimum number of municipalities within a province is three, while the maximum is 41.

¹³For instance, a female mayor may marry before the next electoral cycle and adopt her husband's surname.

¹⁴I use the `matchit` command in Stata. See Raffo (2020) for further details.

¹⁵The election results in 1998 and 2001 only report a politician's middle initial. There may be some measurement errors in the identification of mayors elected in 2004 that followed term-limited incumbents.

¹⁶It is also possible that more male mayors with kinship ties have predecessors who initially field their successor as a placeholder, only to change their mind later on. I do not have information to identify such cases.

¹⁷At the national level, mayors primarily run as members of the Philippine House of Representatives. One mayor during the sample period was eligible to reelection but ran for the Philippine presidency- Rodrigo Duterte- who eventually won. Duterte followed a non-term limited incumbent, so he is not included in the sample.

¹⁸The National Capital Region, composed of Manila City and 16 other municipalities, does not have a provincial governor. Hence, these municipalities were not included in the estimating sample that controls for partisan and kinship ties with the provincial governor.

¹⁹Because of perfect prediction issues, Stata drops many observations when controlling for province-by-election year fixed effects. I control for region-by-election year fixed effects for most of the logit specifications. Running for lower or higher position suffers from the same perfect prediction issues when controlling for region-by-election year fixed effects. Such is the case because more than 90 percent of observations in the sample have values equal to zero for the two variables. I do not control any fixed effect in the logit model estimates for the said variables.

²⁰I thank Johanna Rickne and Umair Khalil for their suggestions.

²¹Labonne et al. (2021) use a difference-in-difference strategy to compare if female mayors with kinship ties to male term-limited predecessors implement different policies from male successors. They do not find evidence that female mayors differ in their education and health policy spending.

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Appendix

Table A1: Countries with gap-years in term limits

Country	Position	Years per term	Cons. terms	Gap term
<i>Panel A: Chief executive positions</i>				
Argentina	President	4	2	1
Brazil	President	4	2	1
Costa Rica	President	4	1	1
Panama	President	5	1	2
Peru	President	5	1	1
Uruguay	President	5	1	1
<i>Panel B: Legislators and local chief executives</i>				
Brazil	Prov. governor	4	2	1
Colombia	Prov. governor	4	2	1
Mexico	House of Rep.	3	4	1
Mexico	Senate	6	2	1
Peru	Prov. mayor	4	1	1
Peru	Federal parliament	5	1	1
Philippines	Prov. governor	3	3	1
Philippines	Municipal mayor	3	3	1
Philippines	House of Rep.	3	3	1
Philippines	Senate	6	2	1

Table notes: Years per term pertains to the number of years an official can hold office for each term. Cons. term refers to the number of consecutive terms the official can be elected, while gap term refers to the number of term a term-limited politician can sit out before running again for the same position. Data sources include Georgetown University (n.d.), Elkins et al. (n.d.), Venice Commission (n.d.) and Motolinia (2021).

Table A2: Gender gap in serving as placeholder

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Stood reelection	Stood reelection	Prev. incumbent ran	Prev. incumbent won
Female (α_1)	-0.177*** (0.030)	0.012 (0.031)	0.027 (0.054)	0.055 (0.051)
Kinship ties		-0.104*** (0.028)	-0.221*** (0.049)	-0.016 (0.024)
Female \times Kinship ties (α_3)		-0.236*** (0.047)	0.199*** (0.073)	0.156*** (0.057)
Observations	1,352	1,352	1,352	1,352
R-squared	0.261	0.305	0.280	0.265
Municipal and politician characteristics	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province-by-election year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mean dep.var.	0.833	0.833	0.370	0.150
Est. $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3$		-0.223	0.226	0.212
p-value ($H_0 : \alpha_1 + \alpha_3 = 0$)		0.000	0.000	0.000

Notes: All regressions control for province-by-election year fixed effects, and pre-sample municipality controls interacted with election year fixed-effects. The regressions also control for politician characteristics. Politician controls include indicators of whether the mayor has kinship ties with the governor; mayor has the same political party as the governor; and mayor has the same political party as the Philippine president. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent critical level.

Table A3: Gender gap in political participation trajectory

	(1) Stood reelection	(2) Ran lower position	(3) Ran higher position	(4) Exit politics
Female (α_1)	0.012 (0.031)	-0.010 (0.017)	-0.004 (0.010)	0.003 (0.030)
Kinship ties	-0.104*** (0.028)	0.003 (0.017)	0.027** (0.012)	0.078*** (0.027)
Female×Kinship ties (α_3)	-0.236*** (0.047)	0.052 (0.037)	0.004 (0.017)	0.180*** (0.046)
Observations	1,352	1,352	1,352	1,352
R-squared	0.305	0.309	0.312	0.277
Municipal and politician characteristics	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province-by-election year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mean dep.var.	0.833	0.040	0.017	0.109
Est. $\alpha_1 + \alpha_3$	-0.223	0.041	0.000	0.184
p-value ($H_0 : \alpha_1 + \alpha_3 = 0$)	0.000	0.150	0.978	0.000

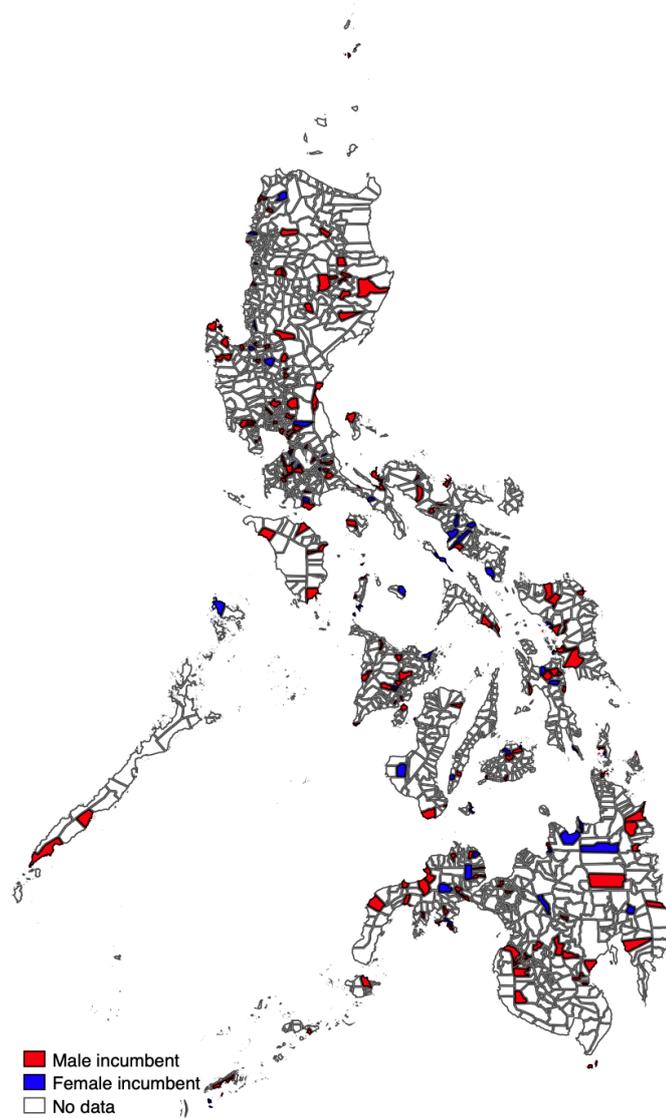
Notes: All regressions control for province-by-election year fixed effects, and pre-sample municipality controls interacted with election year fixed-effects. The regressions also control for politician characteristics. Politician controls include indicators of whether the mayor has kinship ties with the governor; mayor has the same political party as the governor; and mayor has the same political party as the Philippine president. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent critical level.

Table A4: Robustness check: logit estimates

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Stood reelection	Prev. incumbent ran	Prev. incumbent won	Exit politics	Ran lower position	Ran higher position
Female	-0.059 (0.316)	-0.013 (0.205)	0.620* (0.331)	-0.022 (0.478)	-0.170 (0.670)	0.706 (0.696)
Kinship ties	-1.036*** (0.172)	-1.051*** (0.202)	-0.025 (0.211)	1.001*** (0.239)	0.826** (0.358)	1.281** (0.586)
Female×Kinship ties	-1.142*** (0.364)	1.047*** (0.286)	0.822** (0.360)	1.266** (0.505)	0.739 (0.807)	-0.343 (0.881)
Observations	1,329	1,365	1,294	1,283	1,371	1,371
Municipal characteristics	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Region-by-election year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Mean dep.var.	0.828	0.369	0.158	0.116	0.040	0.017

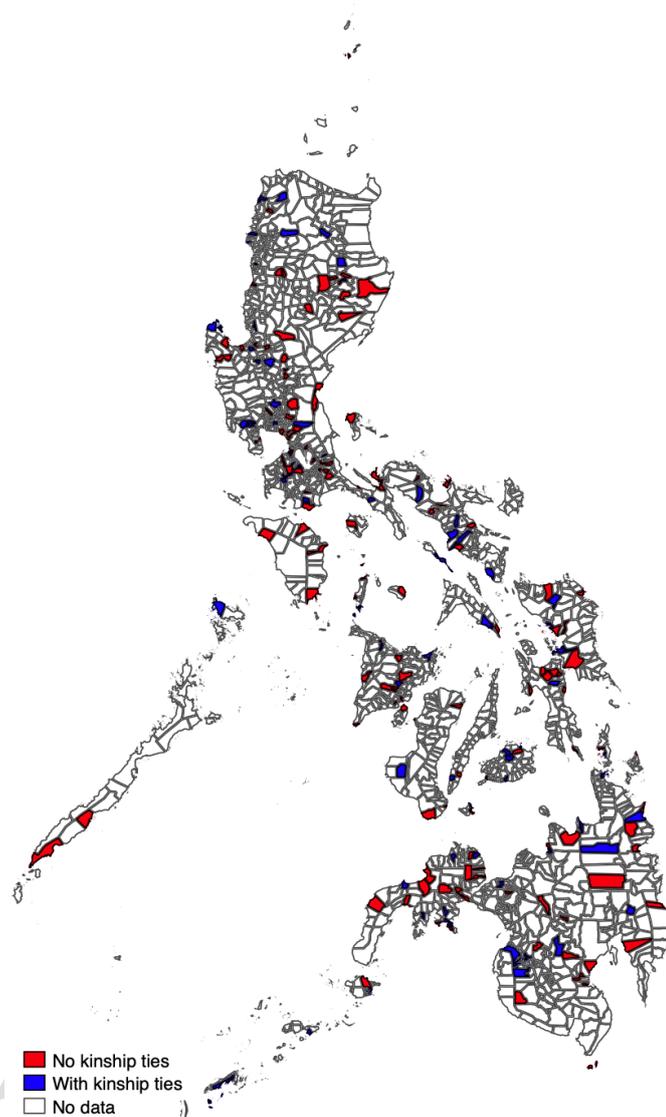
Notes: The table shows the coefficients for the variables of interest estimated using the logit model. All regressions control for pre-sample municipality controls interacted with election year fixed-effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent critical level.

Figure 3: Spatial variation in gender of incumbent mayor, municipalities in the 2004 election cycle



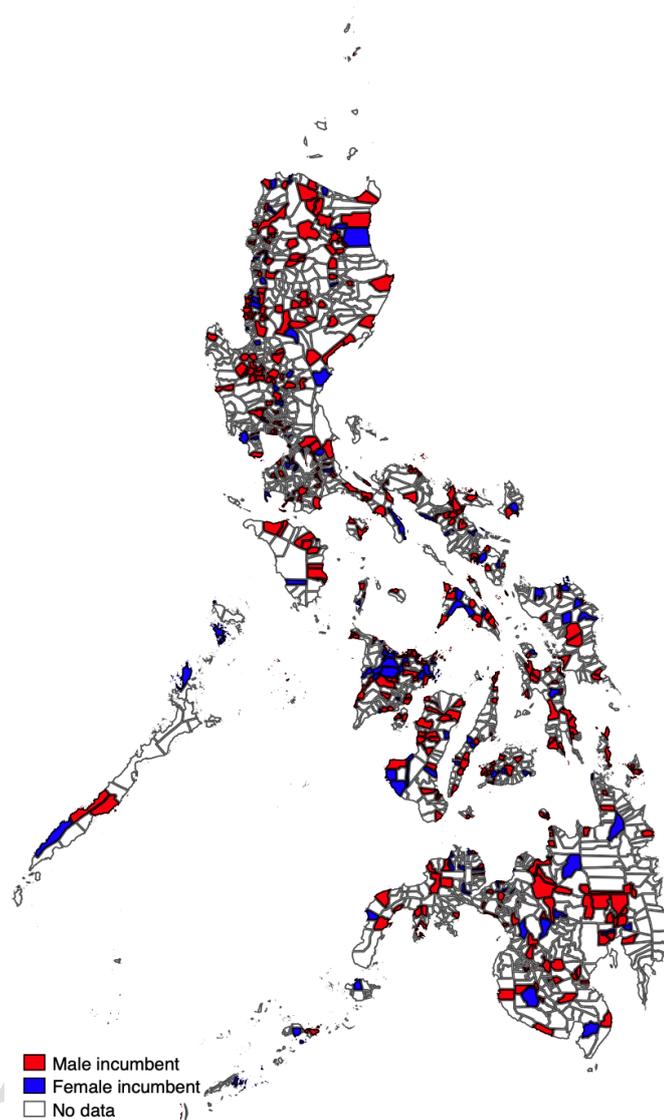
Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-termer that followed a term-limited incumbent.

Figure 4: Spatial variation in kinship ties to predecessor, municipalities in the 2004 election cycle



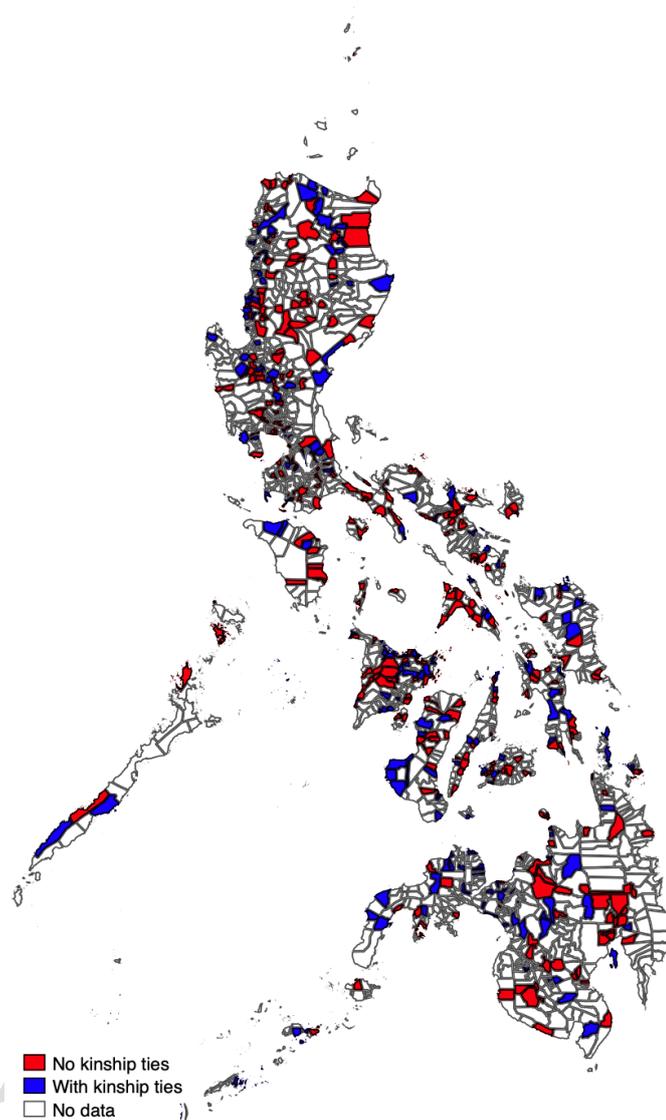
Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-termer that followed a term-limited incumbent.

Figure 5: Spatial variation in gender of incumbent mayor, municipalities in the 2007 election cycle



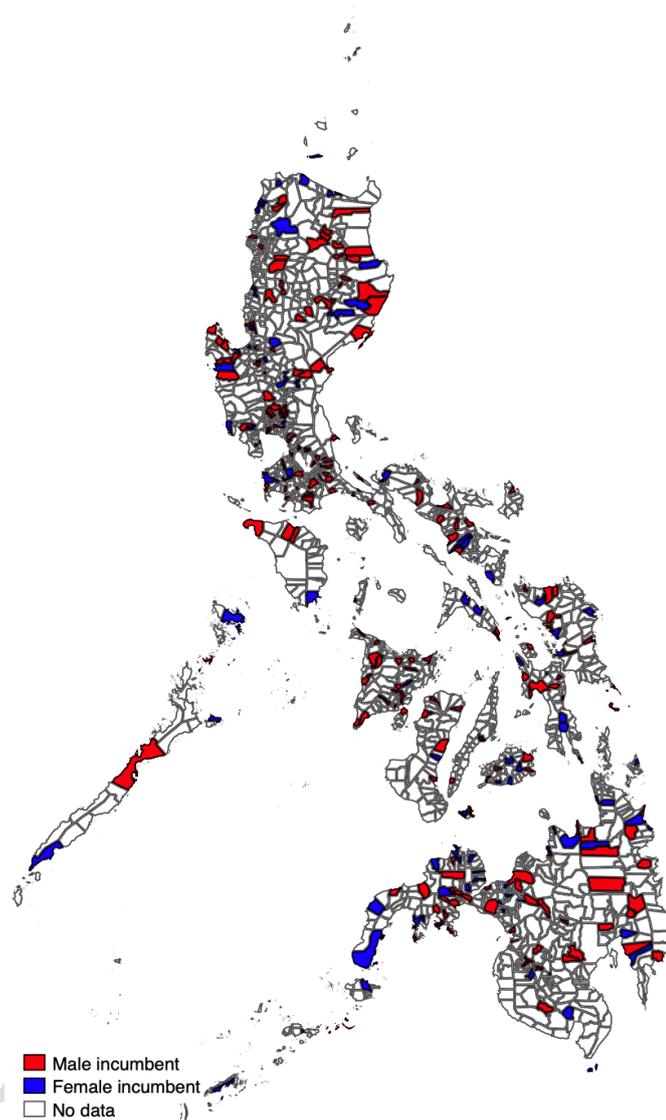
Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-termer that followed a term-limited incumbent.

Figure 6: Spatial variation in kinship ties to predecessor, municipalities in the 2007 election cycle



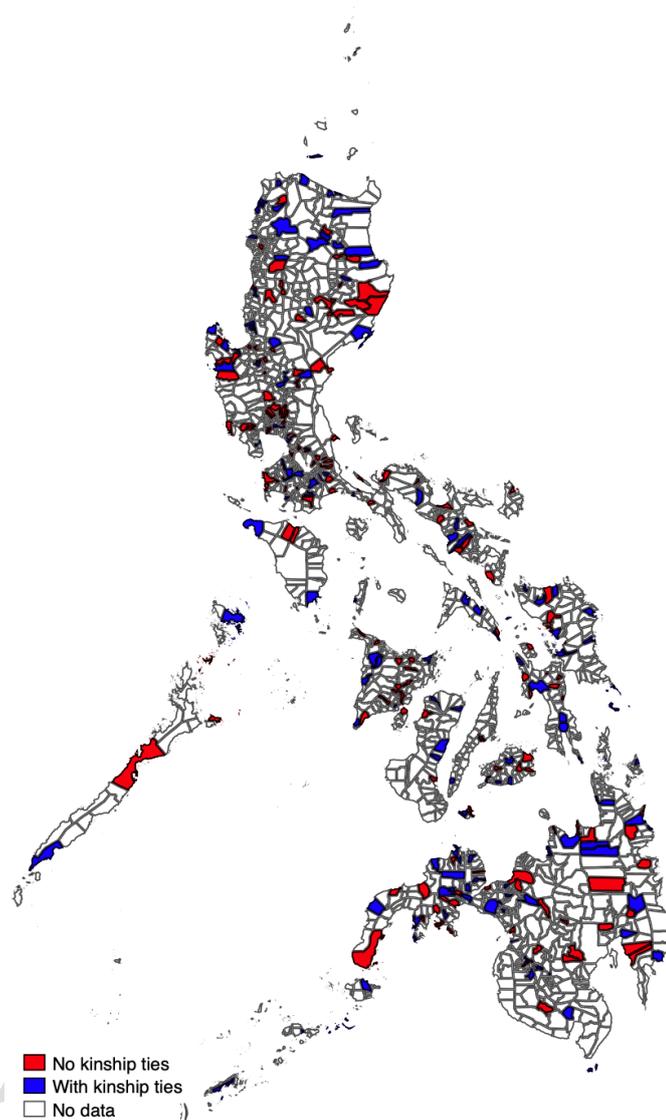
Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-termer that followed a term-limited incumbent.

Figure 7: Spatial variation in gender of incumbent mayor, municipalities in the 2013 election cycle



Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-termer that followed a term-limited incumbent.

Figure 8: Spatial variation in kinship ties to predecessor, municipalities in the 2013 election cycle



Notes: Unshaded municipalities are those not included in the sample, i.e., mayor is not a first-term incumbent that followed a term-limited incumbent.

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

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University of Melbourne
University of Queensland

2. Each interested party from whom I have received significant financial support, summing to at least \$10,000.00 in the past three years, in the form of consultant fees, retainers, grants, and the like (also including in kind support such as access to data).

University of Melbourne Faculty of Business and Economics Doctoral Program Scholarship (February 2017- June 2022)
University of Melbourne Salary (as university tutor and research assistant) (February 2018 to June 2020; February 2022 to December 2022)
University of Queensland Salary (January 2022 to present)

3. Paid and unpaid positions as officer, director, or board member of non-profit or profit-making entities.

Officer, Filipino-Australian Student Council of Victoria, Inc. (2018 to 2020) [unpaid]

4. Potential conflicts of close relatives or partner.

None

5. Additional affiliations:

Member, Canadian Economic Association

Member, Economic Society of Australia

6. Asset Disclosure:

I hold share in companies through my Unisuper fund at The University of Queensland. I also have shares in some companies registered at the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) and in some companies registered at the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE)

7. Political Activity:

I am not now, nor have I ever been a member of a political party at any level of government.