Gender and Electoral Behavior: A Scoping Review on the Influences of Gender to the Voting Decisions During Election

Amoncio Joven Caezar[1], Cerezo Melody[2], Paniamogan Sharmaine[3], Simbajon Princess Francel[4], Lumintao, Jornie[5]

[1,2,3,4,5]Political Science Program, Department of Social Sciences, Central Mindanao University, Bukidnon, Philippines

Abstract

This article explores the influence of gender on voting decisions during election. This article addresses the gap in current literature by conducting a scoping review of studies from the past five years. For this scoping review, the method is based on the five-stage framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), with updates from Levac et al. (2010), who added a sixth stage. The six stages include: (1) defining the research questions, (2) finding relevant studies, (3) selecting the studies, (4) organizing the data, (5) summarizing and reporting the results, and (6) consultation. This review explored the topic through the lens of Constructivist Theory, which posits that gender is socially and culturally constructed rather than biologically determined. This framework highlights the dynamic interaction between gender roles, societal norms, and electoral behavior, emphasizing the fluidity of gender in shaping voter perceptions and candidate evaluations. While the review identifies significant insights into how gender influences both political behavior and representation, it also underscores key gaps in the literature. Notably, there is a lack of comparative research on homophobic biases and their impact on the evaluation of non-binary candidates. Existing studies have not fully addressed the structural and cultural barriers LGBTQIA+ leaders face in political contexts. Another gap concerns the underexplored reasons why women and non-binary individuals may be less inclined to pursue political office. Despite the predominant focus on the positive impacts of gender in elections, the negative outcomes—such as the reinforcement of gender-based stereotypes and the marginalization of female and non-binary candidates—remain insufficiently studied. This review calls for future research to address these gaps, particularly regarding the unconscious biases voters may hold and the systemic barriers that affect perceptions of LGBTQIA+ leaders, in order to foster a more comprehensive understanding of gender's role in electoral decision-making.

Keywords: Gender's Influence, Voting Decision, Election, Stereotypes, Representation, Cultural Nuances, Gender bias, Gender Role, LGBTQ+, Men and Women, Constructivist, Positive and Negative Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Elections remain a critical element in sustaining democracy, as they provide citizens with the opportunity to choose their leaders and hold them accountable. In the Philippines, elections continue to shape the

nation's political landscape and governance (Teehankee, 2020). Voting during election is regarded as a significant democratic behavior where it is designed to express and uphold the core principles of representation, equality, and participation on which democracy is founded (Selepe and Mehlape, 2023). According to the study of Kulachai, Lerdtomornsakul and Homyamyen in 2023 about the factors influencing voting decisions, the decisions individuals make at the ballot box are shaped by a complex interplay of factors that significantly influence their thought processes and choices during election affairs. Exploring and understanding these factors is significant in penetrating the dynamics of voting decisions during electoral processes. **However, the issues on continuing barriers to the electoral success of women and non-binary candidates due to gender stereotypes and bias in voting decisions has received increasing attention and conflicting interest** (Tremmel and Wahl, 2023; Magni and Reynolds, 2020). While an old experimental research of Schwars and Coppock in 2016 about what we have learned on gender from candidates, shows that respondents are not more negative about women candidates and that they are also not less likely to vote for them. A study critically stressed that genders of political candidates significantly influences individuals' voting decisions, with distinct patterns observed between men and women (Kulachai et al., 2023). Traditional gender roles might dictate that male politicians/candidates are expected to be assertive and strong, while female politicians may be judged more harshly for similar behaviors because they are expected lowly in political leadership. This bias can shape how the voters perceive and react to political figures based on their gender, leading to a disparity in the way male and female politicians/candidates are evaluated and criticized during elections (Rohrbach, 2022). And that the fact that LGBTQ+ people remain underrepresented in public office is a prima facie case that there may be discrimination (Magni and Reynolds, 2020). **There is substantial research that presents the discrimination in law and society against LGBTQ+ people, but there has been very little comparative research into homophobic voting behavior that contributes to their decisions and evaluation of non-binary candidates during elections** (Magni and Reynolds, 2020). **To be specific, gender's influences as a factor to voting decisions and its outcomes encompasses a series of complex issues requiring the field to be approached by several scholars and researchers utilizing varied skills. It is necessary to understand and determine the influences of gender in voting decision patterns to distinguish its positive and negative outcomes during electoral processes.**

The purpose of this article is to explore gender and electoral behavior and to answer the overall research question of **what exists in the current research literature on the topic of** *Gender's Influences to the Voting Decisions during Election?*

Apart from studies showing how gender's influences to the voting decisions presents a series of complex issues, **there is no current scoping review on this topic.** This article employs the methodology of scoping review to map and analyze the research conducted over the past 5 years on How Gender Influence the Voting Decision Patterns and its Outcome during Election. **These include how voters perceive binary (men and women) and non-binary candidates and how their gender affects the voting decisions, preferences and biases of the voters. This will also include the factors relating to gender that influences voting decision. Finally, this paper also include the measurement of gender stereotypes and biases (positive and negative outcomes), and how this topic is explored through the lens of a Constructivist theory.** Colquhoun et al. (2014) offer a definition of a scoping review, building on the work of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and Daudt et al. (2013). According to Colquhoun et al. (2014), a scoping review is a form of knowledge synthesis that seeks to explore research questions by mapping key concepts, types of evidence, and research gaps in a specific area or field through systematic searching,

selection, and synthesis of existing knowledge (pp. 1292–1294). This review utilizes the method's strengths of synthesizing existing knowledge to provide answers to three sub-questions derived from the overall question of what exists in the current research literature on the topic of Gender Influences to the Voting Decisions and its Outcome during Election:

1. What characterizes studies about gender and voting decisions in terms of methodological and theoretical framework?
2. What are the factors relating to gender that influences voting decisions?
3. What are the identified positive and negative outcomes of gender's influence towards decision making during elections?

The remainder of this review in answering the sub-questions is structured as follows: **First, this article will look into the studies about gender and voting decisions in terms of methodological and theoretical framework. Specifically, this will explore the Constructivist theory,** which means that people actively create their conception of reality by drawing on their experiences, social interactions, and cultural surroundings. It contends that ideas like gender are socially and culturally produced, changing within certain historical and political contexts, rather than being permanent or innate. In the context of voting decisions of the voters, constructivism studies how gender roles are shaped by cultural narratives and societal conventions, impacting voter views and candidates' chances in elections. By emphasizing the fluidity of identity and the dynamic influence of social institutions on political attitudes and behaviors, this viewpoint opposes essentialist viewpoints. **Secondly, it will seek to examine the influences and this include how voters perceive binary (men and women) and non-binary candidates and how their gender affects the voting decisions, preferences and biases**. **Finally, this will investigate and understand the positive and negative outcomes of gender's influence towards decision making during elections.** The steps in the scoping review method are outlined, including a discussion of key decisions and limitations involved in analyzing the literature. This is followed by a presentation and summary of the analysis results, with each section addressing its respective research question. Lastly, the main findings and their implications are summarized and discussed in the conclusion.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Methods

For this scoping review, we are using a method based on the five-stage framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), with updates from Levac et al. (2010), who added a sixth stage. We're also incorporating suggestions from Colquhoun et al. (2014) to improve the process. The six stages include: (1) defining the research questions, (2) finding relevant studies, (3) selecting the studies, (4) organizing the data, (5) summarizing and reporting the results, and (6) consultation.

Search Strategy

First, before starting step 2, the research strategy began by searching for other scoping reviews related to gender and voting decisions during elections. **Apart from studies showing that gender's influence to the voting decisions presents a series of complex issues, there was no current scoping review on this topic.** The next step was to begin the searches related to the research questions. The paper had to be written in English from 2019 to the current year. **This period was chosen because research evolves continuously, and by citing up-to-date sources, it will ensure that the work reflects the latest developments and contributes meaningfully to the ongoing scholarly discussions.** The research questions guided the further inclusion of relevant studies, which are essential for justifying limitations and

exclusions of publications in scoping reviews (Colquhoun et al., 2014; Levac et al., 2010). For consultation, the sixth step, i.e., check-ups for the papers, will be carried out in a research group of political science students.

Arksey and O'Malley (2005) recommend doing broad literature searches and have specific inclusion and exclusion criteria that encompass a more valid collection of relevant articles than doing specific searches in databases. Searches started in September 2024 and is still ongoing mainly on Research Gate, Research Rabbit, Google Scholars, Frontiers in Political Sciences and JSTOR databases for literature containing the terms "Gender's Influence on Voting Decisions" and one or several of the following words in the title, abstract, or keywords: "Gender" or "Influence" or "Voting Decisions" or "Voting Pattern" or "Men and Women" or "LGBTQ+" The use of search terms is not identical in all database searches, as adding extra search terms did not yield any more relevant articles from some of the databases.

Identifying Relevant Studies

The initial search returned are from 41 publications. Figure A1 (See Appendix A) describes the screening process showing the criteria for the exclusion and inclusion of publications in three screening rounds. In the first round of the selection process, publications were filtered out based on specific criteria: this included removing duplicate studies and any literature that did not contain the main keywords and did not answer the (3) three sub-questions necessary for inclusion in the review was excluded. This initial screening helped narrow down the list to only the most relevant studies. As a result, the first round excluded (14) publications. The second round of screening is based on reading titles and abstracts. In about half of the cases, it was unnecessary to read more than the title to understand that the publication was clearly about topics other than the inclusion criteria. (17) publications were excluded, with the remaining (10) publications in the selection. In the third round, the focus shifted to inclusion of relevant publications for final analysis and full-text reading based on reading all of the abstract. When uncertain, the introductions and conclusions were also read. As a result, (10) remaining were included for full text reading and analysis. Furthermore, **in identifying relevant studies, we included articles outside the 5-years interval from 2019 to the present if they provided foundational definitions for terms specifically for the theoretical framework.** Older articles were considered if they were seminal works, offered unique insights critical to understanding the topic, or addressed gaps in the availability of recent studies on theories and other key definitions. This approach was necessary due to the challenge of finding more recent studies focused on these aspects.

Study of Selection and Delimitation

Step 3 of studying this literature was not linear. Upon reading the abstracts, it became clear that the search result included several books and book chapters. The content of these led to two issues that had to be addressed. First, most of the books did not meet the inclusion criteria of having empirical material with descriptions of methods, data, and theoretical approaches; rather, they were historical narratives, discussions, and opinion texts. The second step in the study's selection and delimitation emphasizes examining how women candidates impact voting behavior. Researchers, such as Dolan (2014), have explored whether a candidate's gender directly shapes voter preferences and choices. This step seeks to understand if and how female candidates alter voter perceptions and whether gender influences the weight of voters' decisions. The third step highlights a significant gap in research, noting that very few studies have examined how homophobic attitudes among voters might influence their decisions, particularly when it comes to supporting or opposing non-binary candidates. This lack of comparative research means that we know little about how biases against non-binary individuals play into voting behavior, such as whether

these candidates face unique challenges in gaining voter trust or positive evaluations due to prejudice. Addressing this gap could help to better understand how discriminatory attitudes impact electoral outcomes and whether these biases affect the fairness and inclusiveness of democratic representation.

Charting the Data

The (46) articles selected here were read in full text and analyzed by charting the data in a table form while filling in categories reflecting all parts of the research questions. The categories used were: title, journal, research field (journal and/or authors), year, country published, purpose/main theme, result, method and data, theoretical perspective, population/actors, political/social context and key drivers gender's influence on voting behavior during electoral. Table B1 in Appendix B shows a simplified version of this form. The results from this charting and analysis will be summarized and presented in the next section turning to the three sub-questions about theoretical and methodological anchoring, key actors, and contexts in the literature, and what the literature can say about drivers in animal welfare policy and governance. First, a brief numerical description of when and where the articles were published, types of journals, and disciplines are presented.

FINDINGS:

What exists in the current research literature on the topic of Gender's Influences to the Voting Decisions and its Outcome during Election?

SUB-QUESTION 1: What Characterizes Studies About Gender and Voting Decisions in Terms of Methodological and Theoretical Framework?

Methodological

A comprehensive review of 34 articles reveals the extensive use of constructivist theory in examining the influence of gender on voting behavior during elections. These studies primarily employ a constructivist lens to analyze how socially and culturally constructed gender roles shape both voter perceptions and candidates' electoral prospects. The constructivist framework underscores the fluidity and contextual nature of gender, enabling a nuanced exploration of how cultural norms and socialization processes inform political attitudes and behaviors. This highlights the dominance of constructivist theory in the literature while acknowledging the contributions of alternative frameworks in providing a multifaceted understanding of gender's impact on voting behavior. The integration of these diverse perspectives enriches the discourse, offering a comprehensive lens through which to examine the complex interplay between gender and electoral dynamics.

In addition to these constructivist-focused studies, other theoretical perspectives have also been utilized to examine the relationship between gender and voting behavior. For example, **essentialist theories** posit that gender-based differences in electoral preferences and behavior are biologically or inherently determined, offering a contrasting perspective to constructivist views. **Social role theory** is frequently applied to investigate the impact of traditional gender expectations on leadership evaluations and voting preferences. Similarly, **rational choice theory** examines how gendered economic incentives and cost-benefit analyses influence voter decision-making. Moreover, the adoption of **intersectionality frameworks** has provided critical insights into how intersecting identities, such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status, interact to shape electoral behavior and outcomes.

Constructivist Theory/Perspective

This scoping review will utilize constructivist perspective as its primary lens for analyzing how individuals

create meaning based on their experiences and how these societal and cultural norms determine gender roles, in turn, affects electoral behavior or voting decision. This perspective emphasizes that the role of gender is not a fixed category, however, it is socially and culturally constructed which impacts both voters perceptions and candidates electoral prospects.

Constructivism is a philosophical paradigm that ontologically emphasizes how an individual actively constructs their own notions of reality through their cognition (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 1997) resulting in the existence of multiple realities. Constructivism claims that participants' constructions, descriptions, and narrations of their lived experiences, as well as the belief that knowledge is co-constructed through social interactions and cultural contexts, are fundamental to how knowledge is created and understood (Tashakkori et al., 2021). In the context of political engagement, constructivism analyzes how these social systems and common cultural knowledge influence individual and collaborative efforts. Recent studies assert the constructivist perspective through presenting how gender roles, which are shaped by societal norms, can affect voting preferences and electoral dynamics (Cambridge Study, 2023).

Today, gender is acknowledged as an important factor in shaping individual political attitudes, preferences, and behaviours (Shorrocks, 2022). According to constructivist theory, individuals incorporate these societal and cultural norms and roles associated with gender through socialization processes, which consequently determine their behaviors, preferences, and perceptions. This perspective challenges essentialist views, which it believes that gender is a natural attribute, which maintains that gender is shifting and evolves within specific social and political contexts (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Additionally, the constructivist perspective connects with the view that political preferences, comprising those based on gender, are not stable but these are continually influenced by the political environment, social discourse, and historical conditions (Shorrocks, 2022). For example, during Kamala Hallis' campaign, research revealed that voters' perceptions are influenced by both her gender and color, which viewed Black women more negatively for reasons of preconceptions linked with social identities (Car-Glenn, 2024). Additionally, research indicates that voters, especially those with substantial levels of racial discrimination, show a tendency to hold fewer positive opinions of Black candidates compared to white ones, and that female candidates are in the same manner questioned about their purported leadership capabilities (Car-Glenn, 2024). Harris' political career serves as a paradigm of how these socially constructed identities impact both public perceptions and political outcomes. Also, being the first female, Black, and South Asian Vice President of the United States, Harris' identity has been subject to social and cultural structure that continuously influence and affect how she is evaluated by the general public and political elites.

SUB-QUESTION 2: What are the factors relating to gender that influences voting decisions?

Men and Women in Leadership (Stereotype and Representation)

Women may have broken the glass ceiling in terms of appointments or election to the highest courts but barriers still exist. In this study, we explore how men and women in leadership influences the voting decisions when deciding whether to support a male or female candidate. According to Solberg, R. S., & Stout, C. T. (2021), across both the real-world elections and experiments reveals that voters are not significantly affected by gender diversity on the court when deciding whether to support a judicial female candidate, even when those levels are at an extreme. However, it was counter argued by Tobias Rohrbach et.al (2022) that different measures of electability, likely Democratic primary voters consistently believed that women candidates are less electable than men candidates. It also showed in their study that on the US 2020 election wherein; First, 76% thought that it would be harder for a woman to win the 2020 election

against then-president Trump compared to a man, while 16% thought there was no difference, and just 8% thought it would be easier for a woman to win. Second, 42% thought that most Americans were not at all or only slightly ready for a woman president. Another 41% thought that most Americans were moderately ready for a woman president, and only 18% thought most Americans were very or extremely ready for a woman president. Third, 50% thought that Harris and Warren were less electable than Biden and Sanders, whereas 23% thought that the women candidates were equally electable, and 27% thought the women candidates were more electable. Suttie, J. (2022, February 18) found that perceptions of electability significantly influenced voting behavior. Specifically, individuals who believed that a woman was less electable were less likely to support a female candidate in the primaries, even when she was their personal preference. To address this pragmatic bias, the researchers conducted a series of experiments aimed at shifting these perceptions. In one experiment, Democratic voters were randomly assigned to receive different pieces of information. Participants in the "true information" group were informed, based on earlier polling, that 52.5% of voters were very or extremely ready for a woman president. In contrast, the "misperception" group was told that only 15.7% of voters held this view. This design aimed to test how correcting false beliefs about voter readiness might influence attitudes.

In another experiment, participants were presented with real-world data on the electability of women. They were informed that women candidates are just as likely as men to win general elections, often receive greater voter support, and are equally successful in becoming primary delegates. Some participants also received additional information highlighting that, despite these successes, women still face significant disadvantages due to persistent gender biases in electoral contexts. A control group, meanwhile, received unrelated information about the 2020 presidential election. After reviewing the information, participants were surveyed on their general attitudes toward female candidates and their intentions to vote for specific women, such as Elizabeth Warren or Amy Klobuchar. Hence, the experiments demonstrated that providing accurate information about voter readiness and women's electability could effectively challenge pragmatic bias, encouraging greater support for female candidates in political contests. Gender influences political behavior, voting patterns, and political participation in ways that reflect broader social and cultural dynamics. Research by Kittilson (2016) highlights how gender shapes both the experience of democracy and the manner in which individuals engage with the political process. While women vote at similar rates to men in many democracies, they are more likely to support left-leaning parties and generally show less engagement in other political activities, such as discussing political issues, attending protests, or participating in campaigns. This gap in political involvement can weaken the diversity of viewpoints within the democratic process, potentially undermining its representativeness. Several factors contribute to these gender differences in political engagement, including economic disparities, access to resources, and societal expectations that often position women in roles that prioritize domestic responsibilities over public engagement. The political climate, including the level of female representation in leadership roles, can further influence women's participation by either encouraging or discouraging their involvement.

Bauer (2019) stresses that understanding the dynamics of gender in politics is crucial for interpreting its broader implications on participation and representation. Gender differences in political behavior are not solely due to personal choices but are deeply rooted in structural factors, such as institutional biases and gender stereotypes, that either encourage or hinder participation. Additionally, the concept of male leadership bias, explored through role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), examines how gender stereotypes affect women in leadership positions. According to this theory, leadership is traditionally associated with masculine traits like assertiveness and decisiveness, while women are often perceived as

communal and nurturing, traits that are not typically seen as fitting for leadership roles. This mismatch creates a bias against women leaders, affecting how they are evaluated, promoted, and treated within predominantly male leadership environments. Bell's (2023) research reinforces that this bias is deeply embedded in cultural and societal norms, further perpetuating the notion that leadership is inherently masculine. This cultural bias influences how women are viewed in political contexts, often making it more difficult for them to succeed in leadership roles. Consequently, men are more likely to be seen as natural leaders, while women must prove themselves more rigorously, often facing harsher judgments when they do hold leadership positions. Addressing these biases and stereotypes is essential for creating more inclusive and equitable political systems where gender does not limit an individual's ability to participate or lead effectively, ensuring that all voices are equally represented in the democratic process.

LGBTQ+ in Leadership (Stereotype and Representation)

In the Philippines, the ongoing debate over the SOGIE Equality Bill serves as a powerful indicator of how political discourse shapes societal attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ individuals. Public discussions in legislative settings can either affirm the dignity and rights of LGBTQIA+ people or reinforce harmful stereotypes, which in turn influence public opinion and voter behavior (Gamalinda & Ofreneo, 2024). The stakes are high, as the outcomes of these debates affect not only legal protections but also societal acceptance. LGBTQIA+ leaders play a crucial role in these discussions, advocating for inclusive policies that address discrimination and promote equality. Their presence in leadership positions enables them to champion legislation that protects their community, such as anti-discrimination laws and equal opportunity measures (Gender and Elections, n.d.). These efforts often resonate with voters who value diversity and inclusivity, helping to shift public attitudes in favor of equality. Beyond legislative impact, LGBTQIA+ representation in politics challenges entrenched biases and fosters a more inclusive political culture. Their visibility in leadership positions disrupts harmful stereotypes, humanizing the LGBTQIA+ community and reshaping public perceptions. This normalization encourages voters to support candidates who prioritize human rights and equality, signaling a broader societal transformation (GoodParty.org Politics Team, 2023). Furthermore, the leadership of LGBTQIA+ individuals serves as an inspiration for other marginalized groups, demonstrating the importance of diverse voices in governance. By driving legislative change and reshaping societal norms, LGBTQIA+ leaders play a pivotal role in building a more equitable and inclusive society.

In contrast, in the Western country context the lack of successful LGBTQ Republican candidates signals challenges for the GOP or Grand Old Party. As its aging, predominantly white, conservative male base diminishes, the Party's exclusion of LGBTQ individuals risks alienating younger, more diverse, and educated voters. This mirrors existing struggles with candidates of color and, to a lesser extent, women (Ocampo and Ray 2019; Reingold 2019). To avoid long-term decline, the GOP must recruit LGBTQ candidates, especially in less-conservative districts. The GOP's continued exclusion of LGBTQ individuals sends a message of intolerance that risks alienating these younger, more diverse, and educated voters. This is a critical issue, as political survival depends on broadening the party's appeal beyond its traditional base. Similar challenges are evident in the GOP's struggles to support and elevate candidates of color, and to a lesser extent, women, who remain underrepresented in the party's leadership and candidate pools (Ocampo and Ray 2019; Reingold 2019).

Representation, Policy strategies, and Political socialization

The study by Bukari, C.I., Prah, D., & Mohammed, I. (2023) confirms this. The study focuses on the determinants of voters' behavior and voting intention, specifically the mediating role of social media.

Cogent Business & Management, 10(1), Article 2140492. Their research revealed that voting behavior and actions of voters are influenced by representation, policy strategies, and political socialization. The presence or absence of representation may lead to disparities in the engagement of men and women with political institutions, as well as their support for legislation. The research about the Fair Pay Act demonstrates how gender and societal perceptions of gender roles affect the outcomes of the electoral process, as noted by Bugari et al. (2023). The endorsement of initiatives designed to promote equality is significantly influenced by individual convictions regarding gender roles. The researcher presented quantitative data indicating that strict adherence to gender norms was linked to lower support for initiatives that promote equality. The author suggested that by integrating variables such as gender participants and incremental versus entity gender role theories into the model, it was found that the aforementioned trends persist, despite men demonstrating greater resistance to them. In sum of the findings, it was clear that dominant gender norms repeatedly replace the gender identity of individuals in honing the voting process decision-making, Bukari, C.I., Prah, D., & Mohammed, I. (2023). The case study in Ghana adheres to the tenets of democracy under its constitutional law, which encompasses freedom of the press and compliance to public opinion. In examining political decision-making on how the impacts of gender roles entrenched utilizing the incremental versus entity gender role theories approach shows that, despite the democratic advancements sphere, gender stereotypes continuously shape the politics representation in various societies, influencing participation and decisions in policy making.

Socialization, Gender identity, and the Role of media.

Mohammed 2023 et al., along with researchers Morar 2015 and Dabulah 2017, asserted in their study that social media significantly influences the political behavior of voters. They conducted a case study in Ghana, demonstrating how the interplay between societal norms and gender identity significantly influences their voting choices. People in Ghana have consistently used social media platforms to spread information about gender narratives, particularly during political campaigns. This has shaped the way individuals, particularly young voters, interact with political information. Based on the CODEO Post-Election Observation Statement 2020, which was released on December 7 during the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana, it is evident that key demographic trends, such as gender, significantly influence voter participation. The survey revealed a high level of female voter participation, with approximately 51% of voters being female. However, only 13.7% of parliamentary candidates were female, and out of the 12 candidates running for presidential positions, only three were women. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the results of 17,027,655 registered Ghanaian voters during the 2020 electoral process hold significant implications, highlighting the significant influence of socialization, gender identity, and media on voting decisions.

CULTURAL NUANCES

Beliefs related to Gender Roles and Preference

Research indicates that men and individuals who possess rigid entity perspectives regarding gender roles—viewing these roles as immutable—are more likely to resist initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality. This phenomenon is manifest in the voting patterns associated with the Fair Pay Act, wherein, despite substantial support (88.9%), males exhibited a markedly greater inclination to oppose the legislation. It was presented by Bukari et al. (2023) by means of utilizing the incremental versus entity gender role theories shows that, there were increased chances of males opposing the law of legislation. Hence, both proponents and men demonstrated an increasing level of confidence in their voting

preferences in election outcomes. Beliefs surrounding gender roles and preferences constitute a significant cultural nuance, as they are deeply embedded within societal norms and historical traditions, shaping attitudes and behaviors in both personal and political spheres. These beliefs reflect culturally ingrained perceptions of gender as either a socially constructed and dynamic concept or as a fixed and immutable attribute. Such distinctions play a critical role in influencing political actions, such as opposition to gender equality initiatives

Familial and Communal Expectations

The familial and communal expectations influence gendered voting behaviors in collectivist societies, where decisions often prioritize group reciprocity over individual preferences was asserted by Xiao, Y. 2021 in his research study entitled: What motivates the vote? He highlighted discrimination as a factor in political interest and his review of political psychology about voting behavior. It was shown that it indicates that cultures of collectivism opted to give privilege to the populace or culture and familial discourse in terms of shaping decisions in political discourse. It was found out that oftentimes women were encouraged to uphold such candidates that prioritize the welfare of family and community reciprocity, in contrast, men may opted to support candidates who charismatically uphold traditional roles that embody a hierarchical system of power and authority.

In addition to this, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a study that elucidated the collectivist perspectives that influenced behaviors and decision-making, which indicates that norms about culture guide such actions for the ascertained benefit of the collective. Xiao 2021, in collectivist societies perspectives imply impairing trends in decision-making, wherein, familial and communal expectations influence relatively such behaviors of individuals, including political inclinations. And was intensified by Kiffin-Petersen and Cordery (2020), the researchers examined the influence of trust and cultural values, specifically collectivism and individualism, on group-oriented behaviors, illustrating the intricate relationship between these cultural frameworks and decision-making processes in the electoral context.

SUB-QUESTION 3: What are the identified Positive and Negative Outcomes of Gender's Influence towards Decision-Making During Elections?

Measurement of Gender Stereotypes and Biases: Positive and Negative Outcomes

Political expression of social differences is possible and sometimes quite desirable in a democratic system **(Kurian, 2011).** These social differences include religion, caste, and gender [ibid]. In the context of "gender", the role of gender in decision-making process during elections can lead to both positive and negative outcomes depending on how gender dynamics influence the political process, the candidates, and voter behavior **(Krook, 2010).** These outcomes are can be assessed by various lenses and measures.

According to **Nazneen (2022)** gender explores a dimension of human life that has proven to be troublesome in understanding oneself and causing disturbances in social processes. **Manzano (2021)** provides a positive outcomes of gender influences as refer to a result where gender-related phenomenon is being explored and have provided significant and meaningful efforts on the issues arising within the gender-spectrum that is anchored in achieving gender equality. A positive outcomes of gender influences in decision-making process constitute a promotion and advancement of gender-rooted matters. It includes ending discrimination, violence, and harmful practices and enhancing equitable policy, opportunities and access to health, gender equality, feminism, enhanced acceptance of varied gender roles, uplift social and environmental awareness **(Manzano, 2021).**

On the other hand, according to **Frame (2020)** embedded gender bias continues to reinforce outmoded norms, notions, and assumptions about the role of female politician. **Leon (2023)** shows that people prefers to some extent, the gender stereotypical characteristics to women and men [as basis] and point to the existence of gender-based occupational stereotypes. Hence, the negative outcomes of how gender influences during decision-making process means a consequences wherein gender-related phenomenon are likely undermined and besides promotes gender unawareness and unconsciousness. The negative outcomes include tolerance and making gender-based issues intensifies (such as firmly leaning on embedded *sexual roles* prejudices and gender-biases – gender stereotyping) and leading to undermining democratic processes. It shows that the role of gender stereotyping plays in support for the acceptance of gender-based violence **(Leon, 2023).** Discrimination and unequal representation within electoral systems can perpetuate systemic barriers that hinder women's participation and leadership in politics, ultimately undermining the integrity of elections. By ensuring that measures to deal with electoral risks, threats and crises are gender-sensitive, we can advance both electoral integrity and societal progress towards gender equality **(Thalin, 2024)**

Conforming to the definition provided above on the matter of gender influences during decision-making process, the following data from reliable databases shows some of the positive outcomes of gender influences.

Promotion of Gender Equality

One positive outcomes of gender influences in decision-making process is the promotion of gender equality. This can be done by any organizational entity of the public or private sector nature according to Reena **(2023)** in order to minimize the widely expanding gender equality gap between men and women. It should be able to contribute substantively to greater gender equality by having the appropriate gender mainstreaming structures, policies and procedures in place **(Reena, 2023).** There is also a general tendency towards a strong institutionalization of gender in political life, particularly through the use of legally binding gender quotas (Devroe et al., 2020).

Recent systematic reviews have examined the effectiveness of interventions targeting violence against women and sexuality **(e.g. Karakurt et al., 2019; Bourey et al., 2015).** Electing women to council increased other women's access to councilors because women had greater hetero-social networks (i.e., comprising women and men), but did not affect men's access to councilors **(Benstead, 2019; Levy & Sakaiya, 2020)**. However, increasing the number of women in public office did not necessarily improve equality **(McLean & Maalsen, 2017).** A qualitative macro study using interviews and ethnography to explore the impact of political gender quotas in Mali **(Johnson, 2019)** found that savings groups, together with political gender quotas, were important for catalyzing the first steps towards social and political transformation especially in the promotion of gender equality. Leaders often prioritize social issues such as health care, education, and family welfare, which can lead to policies that better serve these communities **(Bauer, 2019).**

Enhanced Acceptance of Varied Gender Roles

Although gender roles have continued to evolve, stereotypical perceptions about men and women persist **(Leon, et al., 2023).** From a traditional perspective, men are viewed as aggressive, competitive, and dominant, whereas women are expected to be pretty, affectionate, and passive **(Leon, et al., 2023)**. Gender influences enhance acceptance of varied gender roles. This implies that regardless of gender, a person has still the ability to do things contrary or leaning to his/her first hand gender-associated roles. Moreover, according to **Bozkur (2022)** there is a positive relationship between gender ideology **(Levant et al., 2007)**,

which indicates the individual's internalization of cultural beliefs about gender roles, and the adoption of gender ideology perceived from parents **(Bishop, 2017; Jasser, 2008; Jones, 2014; Wenzel & LucasThompson, 2012).**

Yarchi and Samuel (2018) found that women tend to prioritize social welfare policies, healthcare, and education, while men often prioritize economic policies and national security. These differences can positively influence candidate evaluations and voting choices depending on the voter's preferences. Additionally, gender can shape the way individuals assess candidate attributes and qualities, such as leadership, empathy, and competence **(Kahn & Goldenberg, 2019).**

As defined above, while gender positively influence voting preferences, gender also has shown negative outcomes. These outcomes are shown below.

Intensification and Tolerance of Gender-based Issues

According to **Atim (2023)** there is a growing concern on the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence against women especially during electoral processes. Women's participation in electoral processes appear to be minimal, while electoral violence issues targeting women during elections appear to be alarmingly high **(Atim, et. al., 2023).** Hence, there are proliferation of negative outcomes of gender influences as it intensifies gender issues. Furthermore, Men scored higher on different types of sexism and stereotypes, on stereotypes related to motherhood, and romantic love generally attributed to women. Converse, no gender differences in the justification of violence were observed. Likewise, no significant differences were found for the educational level factor **(Gonzalez, 2023).** Moreover, it shows that when gender stereotypes are activated, respondents rate women candidates as less qualified **(Bauer, 2020).** Women candidates often face significant bias, including stereotypes and prejudices that can undermine their campaigns and influence voter perceptions negatively **(Lawless & Fox, 2010).** Despite some progress, women remain underrepresented in many political systems, leading to a lack of diversity in decision-making processes **(Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021).**

Undermining Democratic Processes

Unequal participation in certain types of political engagement creates unequal influence on political and civil matters **(Boulianne, 2022).** Hence, when gender becomes a sole criterion when voting, it clearly leads to undermining democratic processes same case to those with undemocratic political landscapes. **Nelson (2021)** provides evidence that racial resentment, hostile sexism, and modern sexism enhanced the assessments on several evaluative criteria of the white male candidate, while depressing the assessment of the black woman candidates during elections. It shows how race and gender attitudes affect the electoral processes particularly by shaping the ultimate choice of candidates in an election **(Nelson, 2021).**

Gender influences has become crucial especially in decision-making process during elections. It provides both positive and negative outcomes in various measures. For instance, gender biases such as gender stereotypes have found that voters ascribe certain beliefs and traits to candidates based on the candidate's sex. With this, it critically shows how gender shapes the political candidate's fate during elections.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article is to explore gender and electoral behavior and to answer the overall research question of what exists in the current research literature on the topic of Gender's Influences to the Voting Decisions during Election. Methodologically, the research field is dominated by qualitative studies—mostly document analysis of official papers, party programs, regulations, legislation processes, and previous gender's influence in electoral decision-making research. Some of these are combined with inter-

views or mixed-method approaches including quantitative data from public surveys or voting data.

A scoping review on gender's influence in voting decisions highlights a framework that analyzes how gender shapes political behavior. The **Constructivist Theory** offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing the dynamic interplay between gender roles, societal norms, and electoral behavior. By emphasizing the socially and culturally constructed nature of gender, this approach challenges essentialist views that regard gender as fixed or biologically determined. Instead, it highlights how individuals actively construct their realities through socialization processes and interactions within evolving cultural and political contexts. Constructivist theory provides valuable insights into how gender roles influence both voter perceptions and candidate evaluations, as evidenced by case studies like Kamala Harris' political career. This perspective underscores the importance of recognizing gender as a fluid and contextual factor in shaping political attitudes and behaviors. It also calls for further exploration of the ways in which historical, cultural, and political environments shape these dynamics, offering critical implications for advancing equitable practices and fostering inclusive political discourse. Additionally, **this review also reveals that while other research highlights that voters may not always explicitly factor gender into their decisions, persistent biases and stereotypes continue to influence perceptions of female candidates' electability and leadership capabilities.** Studies demonstrate that pragmatic biases, rooted in societal misperceptions about voter readiness and leadership suitability, disproportionately disadvantage women in political contests. Furthermore, structural barriers, such as economic disparities and institutional biases, exacerbate these challenges, limiting women's participation and leadership opportunities. LGBTQ+ representation in leadership also plays a crucial role in challenging societal stereotypes and advancing inclusive policies, particularly in the context of debates like the SOGIE Equality Bill in the Philippines. LGBTQ+ leaders drive legislative change and promote equality, reshaping public attitudes and inspiring marginalized communities. In contrast, **the exclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals from leadership positions in the GOP highlights the risks of alienating younger, more diverse voters, emphasizing the need for broader inclusion to ensure political relevance and growth**. Representation, the Role of Media, and Cultural Nuances further demonstrate that gender's influence on voting decision are shaped by a variety of factors. This scoping review finally reveals that **gender influences on electoral decision-making produce both positive and negative outcomes.** On the positive side, gender influences can promote gender equality, encourage acceptance of diverse gender roles, and help create policies addressing social welfare, healthcare, and education. However, negative outcomes include the intensification of gender-based issues, such as stereotypes and biases that can marginalize female and non-binary candidates, and the undermining of democratic processes through unequal participation. Overall, gender dynamics in elections shape candidate perception and voter behavior in ways that impact the quality and inclusiveness of representation in democratic systems.

Despite this outcome, studies by Solberg and Stout (2021) and Rohrbach et al. (2022) still highlight key gaps in understanding the role of gender, voter bias, and the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ leaders in politics. There has been very little comparative research exploring homophobic behavior that contributes to their decisions and evaluation of non-binary candidates during elections (Magni and Reynold, 2020). Moreover, these gaps include a lack of clarity as to the extent to which voters may hold conscious or unconscious biases, and the structural and cultural barriers that impact perceptions of LGBTQIA+ leaders. This review also found out that aside from the factors that contributes to the lack of representation for Women and Non-binary candidates; studies that have explored why women and non-binary candidates does not seek for political power has been very little. But more so, this scoping review found that many

studies have explored how gender positively influence voting decision during electoral, which underscores the lack of exploration for its negative outcomes. Addressing these gaps requires future research that dives deeper into these specific areas to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors shaping individual voting decisions.

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