Voices of Change: How Women in Peace Processes Increase Women's Political Empowerment in Post-Conflict States

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Abstract

In the aftermath of conflict, women's political empowerment is an important determinant of measures of peace and stability. Recent literature identifies the end of conflict itself – particularly conflict ending in a peace agreement – as an important pathway to expanding women's political empowerment (Bakken and Buhaug 2021; Hughes 2009; Hughes and Tripp 2015; Tripp 2015; Webster et al. 2019). However, there remains significant variation in women's political empowerment between states that emerged from conflict with a peace agreement. This paper argues that local women's participation in both formal and informal components of peace processes is the missing variable that determines the extent of women's political empowerment in post-conflict states. Using the 2014 Bangsamoro (Philippines) Peace Agreement, this paper inductively identifies several possible mechanisms and tactics through which local women affect women's political empowerment after the peace agreement. Future research will test these proposed mechanisms against a range of other cases.

Introduction

"Give women equal rights, and entire nations are more stable and secure. Deny women equal rights, and the instability of nations is almost certain." – Hillary Clinton, 2010.

Women's political empowerment and peace are undeniably connected. Greater women's political empowerment is associated with multiple measures of both negative peace and broader human security. In post-conflict environments, women's political empowerment is critical to ensuring durable, lasting peace that addresses the needs of the entire population. Yet, the factors determining levels of women's political empowerment in post-conflict states remain understudied. Recent literature has identified the end of conflict itself – particularly conflict ending in a peace agreement – as an important pathway to expanding women's political empowerment (Bakken and Buhaug 2021; Hughes 2009; Hughes and Tripp 2015; Tripp 2015; Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019). However, there is still significant variation in levels of women's political empowerment even between states that emerged from conflict with a peace agreement.

One opportunity structure identified in the existing literature connecting conflict and women's political empowerment is the peace process. Now more than ever, peace processes often aim to reshape the political system of the post-conflict state, generally with the goal of expanding access to politics. These processes, then, have the potential to be steered in a direction that supports and leads to greater women's political empowerment. It is clear from the variegated levels of women's political empowerment following peace processes in the last few decades, however, that this potential is no guarantee of success. What determines whether peace processes

will empower women politically? To answer that question, we must first repeat Enloe's (1993) common refrain – Where are the women? Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) scholars have highlighted numerous benefits from including women in peace processes (e.g. Anderson 2015; Christien and Mukhtarova 2020; Dayal and Christien 2020; Paffenholz et al. 2016), and these results hint at possible implications for women's political empowerment in the longer-term in post-conflict states. This dissertation therefore addresses the research question: *How do different types of women's participation in peace processes affect women's political empowerment in post-conflict states?* I argue that local women's participation in both formal and informal components of peace processes is the missing variable that determines the extent of women's political empowerment in post-conflict states.

This study aims to inductively identify the mechanisms through which different types of women's participation in peace processes affects women's political empowerment in post-conflict states. Using the Bangsamoro Peace Process as a case study, I examine international and local women's participation in both formal peace negotiations and informal Track II processes to analyze which *type* of women's participation in peace processes is most effective in increasing women's political empowerment after the final peace agreement is signed. From these results, I induce a new theory of the pathways and mechanisms through which women in peace processes are able to affect women's political empowerment in post-conflict states. This study contributes to the existing literature on women's political empowerment and women, peace, and security in several ways. First, it develops a new theory of the connections between women in formal negotiations and women in Track II processes. Second, it identifies mechanisms for increasing women's political empowerment through the structure and participation of a peace process. Future research will build on this theory by testing the mechanisms in other cases, and quantitatively analyzing the correlations between different types of women's participation in peace processes and women's political empowerment in post-conflict states.

Women's Political Empowerment in Post-Conflict States

In focusing on women's political empowerment, I define this key concept as *the enhancement of women's access to positions of political authority in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.* By contrast, I define women's *disempowerment* as a decline in women's access to these positions. Such a definition narrowly focuses on one subcomponent of Alexander, Bolzendahl, and Jalalzai's (2017) broader understanding of women's political empowerment as "the enhancement of assets, capabilities, and achievements of women to gain equality to men in influencing and exercising political authority worldwide." This broad conceptualization of political empowerment is useful for understanding the full range of access and tools necessary to the ongoing process of empowering women; however, many of these assets, capabilities, and achievements are outside the scope of this study.

I concentrate specifically on the empowerment of one of the three categories of politically-empowered actors outlined by Alexander et al. (2017) – elite actors who hold positions in which they can exert political authority. This is not intended to discount other forms of women's political empowerment; expanding women's access to influence politics as individual citizens, members of civil-society, elite-challenging actors, and media are all vitally important, especially in post-conflict states. Marie Berry (2018), for example, discusses these forms of empowerment and their relationship to conflict in depth, and they should be further studied in connection with women's participation in peace processes in future works. As Berry points out, there is considerable overlap between women's political empowerment in formal

positions of power and women's political empowerment outside of government offices. Thus, I expect that by starting with formal positions of power this study will have broader implications for other forms of women's political empowerment.

The Puzzle of Women's Political Empowerment Across Post-Conflict States

In post-conflict societies, the empirical reality of women's political empowerment in post-conflict societies is particularly puzzling because – despite often concerted and even coordinated efforts by local and international NGOs alike – outcomes for countries continue to vary widely. In some countries, such as in South Africa, Nepal, or Rwanda, the aftermath of war has resulted in women enjoying increased access to political representation; elsewhere, war's aftermath has led to women experiencing disempowerment or stagnation, as can be seen in Afghanistan, Libya, and Chad. In addition to this oddity of variation, the current and impressive body of research on women's political empowerment (to name a few, Arostegui 2013; Berry and Lake 2021; García-Ponce 2017; Hughes and Tripp 2015; O'Brien and Piscopo 2018; Paulson-Smith and Tripp 2021; Tripp 2015) has largely left out some important determinants that may be affecting the likelihood of whether such empowerment is achieved or not.

Previously, much of the literature on women's political empowerment assumed that the masculinization of war and its diversion of resources away from women's needs and towards the military result in a crowding out of women in political spaces (e.g. Elshtain 1987; Enloe 1993, 2000; Goldstein 2003; Hartsock 1984; Moran 2010; Pankhurst 2003; Schroeder 2017). More recently, however, studies have shown that the end of conflict in many cases precedes the expansion of women's political empowerment (e.g. Berry 2018; Hughes 2009; Hughes and Tripp 2015; Tripp 2015; Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019). As Webster et al. (2019) point out, these two theories are not necessarily in contradiction with one another. Indeed, Webster et al.'s findings indicate that the effect of conflict on women's political empowerment varies over time, suggesting that *in* conflict the gendered nature of war reduces women's access to politics, immediately *after* conflict the opportunities for political change open doors for more women's roles in politics, and in the *longer-term* following conflict the solidification of these gains varies greatly. The effects also seem to differ depending on location – many of the greatest success stories of expanded political empowerment for women after conflict come from Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, while states in the Middle East, Central and South Asia, and South America have more varied results. With mixed outcomes depending on time frame and region, it is clear that conflict alone cannot provide the answer to this remaining puzzle – what missing variable determines *when* the opportunity presented by conflict will be converted into concrete, long-term political empowerment for women?

To identify the missing variable, it is important to first understand the mechanisms through which conflict can create new opportunities for women's political empowerment. Upon emerging from conflict, levels of women's political empowerment vary widely across countries, and local gender norms and barriers undoubtedly shape the landscape. However, during the unique circumstances of the post-conflict period, states face a window of opportunity to change the structures of government and remove barriers to entry for women. Conflict often leads to a complete overhaul of the government and its component institutions. Such restructuring can open doors for women seeking to increase their options for political engagement.

The existing literature highlights several important structural and social changes that pave the way for greater women's political empowerment after conflict ends. First, conflict precipitates disruptions to existing gender norms and roles in societies. Women frequently

become the primary breadwinners in their households, and gain access to new rights and responsibilities within their communities due to their economic status (Tripp 2015, 35). Women also take part in the conflict, as combatants, leaders of peace movements, or suppliers of resources and medical care in war-torn areas (Tripp 2015, 36; Anderson 2015; Ellerby 2013; Webster et al. 2019; Hughes 2009, 178; Abdullah et al. 2010; Nakaya 2003, 467). Both as a response to conflict and as a result of new roles women take on in conflict, women often begin to demand more voice and recognition in the political arena (Tripp 2015, 35; Chingono 2015). Yet, in many cases these disruptions are fleeting, and after conflict women are relegated back to traditional roles and restrictions. For example, Mark Chingono (2015) describes how women's economic and political gains during the conflict in Mozambique were not sufficiently entrenched to present a long-term challenge to the existing patriarchy. Instead, after the conflict ended women were again marginalized and oppressed. Likewise, neither Hughes' (2009) nor Webster, Chen, and Beardsley's (2019, 274-6) quantitative analyses of the effects of conflict on women's political empowerment found evidence of long-term changes to women's social and political roles. It is clear that an additional variable is necessary to understand when conflict leads to *lasting* increases in women's political empowerment.

Second, conflict often results in an overhaul of the existing political system. These structural changes can open the door to new candidates, including women, and to new political systems and laws that facilitate women's entry into politics. Many conflicts result in an overall regime change, which removes incumbency advantages that primarily benefit men (Hughes 2009, 178-9) and broadens the candidate pool for all political offices. Changes in candidate pools and candidate selection processes often result in more women's appointments and elections (e.g. Arrington et al. 2017 on judicial appointments; Krook and O'Brien 2012 on cabinet appointments). If the electoral laws are rewritten following conflict, it becomes possible to transition to systems that are more advantageous to women candidates, such as proportional representation systems (Hughes and Tripp 2015, 1514-5; Krook 2010). It also becomes possible to advocate for new electoral laws that explicitly promote women's political empowerment, such as quotas. Proposed gender quotas face less opposition in the context of an entirely new political system than in a system where men would be pushed out of existing seats to make way for women (Hughes and Tripp 2015, 1517). Conflict often introduces political competition and new political parties, presenting the opportunity for new entrants into the political scene. Left-leaning and socialist parties in particular usually espouse gender equality as part of their platforms. However, some studies have found that the actual influence of left-leaning parties has diminished over time (Hughes and Tripp 2015) and many times results in more tokenism than substantive representation (O'Brien and Piscopo 2018; Bjarnegård and Melander 2013). All of these political changes are *possibilities*, but not guaranteed outcomes of conflict. As a result, there is much uncertainty that remains in the scholarship about the process of how women take advantage of the opportunities created by conflict and turn these possibilities into realities of increased representation.

In summary, the existing literature has shown that, despite the masculinizing effects of conflict, the end of conflict *can* open doors to greater women's political empowerment. Tripp (2015, 34) identifies four opportunity structures in which women in post-conflict states can leverage greater political empowerment: peace agreements, constitutional changes, electoral reforms, and truth and reconciliation processes. However, even amongst states with most or all of these opportunity structures, we continue to see variation in the outcomes for women's political empowerment. This study aims to identify the variables within these opportunity

structures that determine when states emerging from conflict are likely to empower women politically, and when women remain disempowered.

Women's Political Empowerment: Critical for Peace

Beyond being a puzzling phenomenon, why else study women's political empowerment? Women's political empowerment is a key determinant of peace across a range of measures and definitions of peace. First, women's political empowerment has tangible consequences for negative peace, defined as the absence of war (Galtung 1985). Numerous studies have found that domestic gender equality and the proportion of women in parliament are associated with lower levels of armed conflict and state militarism (e.g. Caprioli 2000; Melander 2005a; Koch and Fulton 2011). In fact, the role of women in legislatures is so crucial to peace that democracy *only* facilitates peace when interacted with the proportion of women in parliament (Bjarnegård and Melander 2011; Melander 2005a). Some mechanisms through which gender equality and women in legislature may reduce state militarism include a more tolerant and equal worldview (Caprioli 2000), acting as veto players toward more bellicose policy proposals, and reducing overall defense spending (Koch and Fulton 2011). Although women heads of state and cabinet ministers have not been found to have the same effects on state militarism (Melander 2005a) – and indeed in some cases were found to have the opposite effect (Koch and Fulton 2011) – these effects were mediated by larger proportions of women in the legislature, demonstrating the importance of looking at women's political empowerment holistically rather than just in one role or function. Since higher proportions of women in the legislature facilitates more women in executive positions, these two forms of political empowerment go hand-in-hand (Barnes and O'Brien 2018; Bashevkin 2014).

Second, beyond negative peace, women's political empowerment improves broader measures of human security and positive peace, according to a growing body of research. Higher proportions of women in legislatures are consistently associated with increased expenditures on health and education (Clayton and Zetterberg 2018; Koch and Fulton 2011) and induces the legislature as a whole to spend more time on issues relating to women's needs (Bratton 2005; Flammang 1985). The percentage of women in parliament also has a significant lowering effect on human rights abuses (political imprisonments, torture, killings, and disappearances), both alone and when interacting with the level of institutional democracy (Melander 2005b). Women in cabinet positions are correlated with longer state-guaranteed parental leave policies (Atchison and Down 2009), and were more likely than their male counterparts to speak out on women's issues (Bashevkin 2014). Women cabinet ministers are also correlated with higher levels of spending on foreign aid supporting gender equality and empowerment goals (*ibid*).

Third, the empowerment of women in positions of political authority is also likely to enable and encourage conditions – both symbolic and practical – that augment the political empowerment of women as elite-challenging actors and as individual citizens. The increase in policies in support of women's needs and concerns (like health and education) in turn creates a feedback effect that promotes greater women's political participation and engagement in civil society (Mettler 2005). The presence of more women in positions of political authority also increases other forms of women's political empowerment, including individual political participation (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer, 2012; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007). For example, in Botswana Bauer and Burnet (2013, 19) found that once women took seats in the legislature and as ministers, more women began to appear as local and tribal chiefs. Likewise, in

Rwanda increases in women in positions of political authority were followed by greater control over household resources and decisions by individual women (Bauer and Burnet 2013, 20).

Women's political empowerment as elite-challenging actors and as individual citizens is certainly important to evaluate in order to gain a complete picture of the ongoing processes through which women are becoming politically empowered. However, I focus in this study on women's political empowerment in positions of political authority as a crucial first step in understanding the overall processes of women's political empowerment in post-conflict states. I argue that this specific form of women's political empowerment is both reflective of and influential to the other two forms of women's political empowerment, and therefore represents an important entry point to the broader study of women's political empowerment in post-conflict states.

Empowerment in the Post-Conflict Environment: Understudied and Misunderstood

Given the importance of women's political empowerment for various elements of human security, more scholarship is needed to examine this outcome specifically in post-conflict states. As the existing literature on women's political empowerment in post-conflict states notes, conflict itself presents a unique window of opportunity for women to disrupt existing gender norms and advocate for new rights and access to political power (Anderson 2015; Chingono 2015; Hughes 2009; Hughes and Tripp 2015). However, the existing literature insufficiently explains *how* women can capitalize on the opportunity created by conflict and convert that potential for change into concrete growth of women's political empowerment. More theorization and empirical evidence are required to determine the most effective pathways and methods through which conflict can be transformed into greater women's political empowerment in post-conflict states.

Certainly, the post-conflict period constitutes a precarious time for the security of all citizens. Not only does negative peace balance on a razor's edge, but other forms of human insecurity remain high even after a ceasefire or negotiated settlement. Women in particular are disproportionately affected by the legacies of war. Domestic and sexual violence frequently continue into peacetime (Kelly 2000; Boesten 2014). Food and water shortages disproportionately affect women (Ni Aolain et al. 2011). Women often confront insufficient or inaccessible healthcare, from access to women's hygiene products to maternal and gynecological care (Hynes 2004). Moreover, patriarchal judicial systems and laws deterring sex education, restricting women's freedom of movement, and limiting reproductive rights keep women powerless and subordinated (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2016; Abdullah et al. 2010; Ward 2009).

Women's political empowerment matters for post-conflict security conditions in a number of ways. First, as in non-conflict environments, women's political empowerment has clear and positive consequences for negative measures of peace specific to post-conflict states. Relapse of civil war is far less likely when the percentage of women in parliament is higher (Demeritt et al. 2014). Mechanisms for this effect include redirected spending from the military to healthcare and improved public perceptions of governance (Shair-Rosenfield and Wood 2017). Should conflict re-ignite, women's representation in parliament is also associated with a lower severity of violence during a conflict (Caprioli and Boyer 2001). In terms of negative peace, it is clear that women's political empowerment is crucial for preventing a return to conflict.

Second, women's political empowerment in post-conflict states is important for the process of reconstruction and the application of transitional justice. Even without open conflict, a

negative peace does not mean the violence ends, particularly for women. Violence that was normalized during conflict often finds its way back home, and expresses itself in violence against women. Without women in the judiciary, violence against women often goes unaddressed in post-conflict states (Entité des Nations Unies pour l'égalité des sexes et l'autonomisation des femmes 2011, 84). Justice for the victims of conflict and accountability for perpetrators of war crimes are critical for a post-conflict society to move forward (*ibid*). In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, the state failed to hold soldiers accountable for wartime rape and sexual violence, leading to a "culture of impunity" and a continuation of the exclusionary politics that led to the war in the first place (Hudson 2009). Problematically, when peace agreements and transitional governments deal with issues of post-conflict justice and reconciliation, they often treat women solely as victims, without agency of their own (Carpenter 2016; Kastner and Roy-Trudel 2019). Instead, scholars argue that including women as active partners in post-conflict justice systems, and building a justice system that incorporates local institutions that work for and by women, will more effectively ensure justice and accountability for post-conflict states (Abdullah, Ibrahim, and King 2010; Hudson 2009; Kastner and Roy-Trudel 2019; Mani 2011; Ni Aolain et al. 2011).

Within post-conflict states, women's political empowerment is important for a durable peace, political stability, and true societal reconciliation and healing. The existing literature has shown that the end of conflict itself can open doors to women's political empowerment. Yet there remains significant variation in those outcomes among post-conflict states. Within the identified opportunity structures at the end of conflict, which factors determine the extent to which women are able to convert those opportunities to lasting increases in access to positions of political authority?

Theoretical Argument

Given the opportunity structures presented by conflict, I argue in this dissertation that variation in how women participate in peace processes is the missing variable that affects the extent to which countries are likely to experience women's political empowerment – as opposed to disempowerment or stagnation – following conflict. At the end of conflict, there is one opportunity structure that presents the greatest *potential* for political and social change: peace processes. Peace processes frequently aim to reshape the state's system of government and constitution as a means of addressing the underlying issues at the root of the conflict. It is not only the warring parties, however, who can benefit from a peace process's reformulation of government; women, ethnic or religious minorities, indigenous peoples, and other oppressed groups can gain new access to politics through these transformations. Peace agreements no longer focus only on ceasefires and division of territory; increasingly they serve as the building blocks for a complete transformation of society and government (O'Reilly et al. 2015). Peace processes are thus an opportunity structure in which women can disrupt traditional gender roles and address long-standing structural inequalities (Ellerby 2016; Kastner and Roy-Trudel 2019; Tripp 2015). Several studies have already shown that the proportion of women in parliament increases significantly more after negotiated settlements to conflict versus ending conflict by other means (Shair-Rosenfield and Wood 2017; Bakken and Buhaug 2021). Post-conflict states with peace accords – especially agreements that include clauses on women's rights – adopt quotas faster than those without peace agreements (Anderson and Swiss 2014). It is therefore

within peace processes that I argue we will find our missing variable in determining women's political empowerment in post-conflict states.

Specifically, I theorize that it is women's participation in peace processes that determines women's political empowerment after conflict. Peace processes themselves are merely a *venue* for these political and societal changes. There is nothing inherent to the formula of a peace process that guarantees increased political empowerment for women as a result. Although the literature on women's political empowerment following conflict has identified peace processes as an opportunity structure for expanding that empowerment, existing research has yet to identify the specific actors and methods used within peace processes to achieve tangible improvements in women's political empowerment. My theory therefore introduces a new variable that can explain the puzzling variation in outcomes in women's political empowerment in post-conflict states.

Local Women's Participation in Peace Processes

Table 1: Typology of Women's Roles in Peace Processes

	Formal	**Informal**
Local	● Signatories as parties to the conflict ● Signatories as civil society representatives ● Conflict parties' delegates ● Official observers (as civil society, women's groups, etc.) with recorded contributions ● Local mediation NGOs	● Official observers unable to make formal contributions who submit recommendations via an intermediary or unofficial means ● External women's or civil society peace conference (or other Track II activity) participants ● Women's or civil society groups submitting concerns/recommendations via an intermediary or unofficial means
International	● Official mediators (from international/regional organizations or third-countries) ● Mediation specialists and support teams (including gender advisors) ● Signatories that are observers or facilitators	● International/regional organizations or NGOs not part of formal peace negotiations who lobby on behalf of local women ● International donors that pressure conflict parties through aid

I argue that *local* women are the actors most likely to increase women's political empowerment in the post-conflict period, and that their participation is most effective when

combined in both formal peace negotiations and informal or Track II processes. I define local participants as those who are directly affected by the conflict. Locality may be determined by residence – i.e. women who live in the region (if localized) or country (if conflict is spread throughout the state) where the conflict is taking place – or by nature of their position – e.g. women who work for the national government or civil society organizations (CSOs) that operate in the region and are affected by the conflict through their work. As shown in Table 1, local participants in the formal peace negotiations include signatories of the final peace agreements from both conflict parties and representatives of civil society, delegates of the negotiating parties, local observers who are recorded as making formal suggestions or contributions to the text of the peace agreement(s), and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) officially tasked with mediation responsibilities in the formal peace negotiations. Local participants in informal peace processes include local women's groups or civil society groups participating in Track II activities or exerting outside pressure on the formal participants of the peace process to raise new issues or consider specific clauses for inclusion in the peace agreement(s). Local, informal participants also include local observers who are not permitted to speak up in the formal peace negotiations, but who attempt to make contributions to the final peace agreements through indirect methods, such as via intermediaries or public recommendations.

International participants in peace processes may include representatives of international or regional organizations, third-country mediators, international NGOs, and international aid donors. In the formal peace negotiations, international participants include the official mediators and facilitators of the negotiations, whether those be from the UN, a regional organization, or a neutral third-country. The UN never sends mediators on a team to their own country[1] and third-country mediators will by definition be from another country. Thus, official mediation teams will always be international. Sometimes third-country participants are present as observers rather than as mediators or facilitators, but these observers are usually still active in advising and putting pressure on the delegates to the negotiations (Paffenholz 2018, 177). In informal peace processes, international actors can include representatives of international, regional, or non-governmental organizations who are not formal participants but who organize or participate in Track II activities, exert external pressure on negotiation parties, or provide support to local women's groups or CSOs in order to amplify their recommendations. Third-country aid donors can also play a role in putting pressure on conflict parties to include more women or address gender issues in the negotiations. They can also provide financial support for Track II activities and local CSOs to encourage more women's participation and attention to gender issues in the peace agreement(s).

I limit this typology and theory to apply to participants who are *active*. I define active participation as contributing verbal or written recommendations that can appear in the final text of the peace agreement. This definition does not include administrative roles such as notetakers and translators, or delegates and observers who either do not or cannot contribute suggestions for the agreement text. In some cases, official observers are prohibited from speaking up at the formal peace negotiations, but are very vocal in external Track II processes. In these cases they would be classified as Local-Informal participants.

I first theorize that – in order to boost women's political empowerment – women's participation needs to be *local* in nature. International efforts to impose gender inclusivity on peace processes often result in vague, holistic references to women and little practical change after the international parties depart (Bell 2015). Since the UN Security Council Resolution on

[1] Discussion with former UN mediator, 12 March 2021.

Women, Peace, and Security (1325) passed in 2000, the UN and other international and regional organizations made increased efforts to include female negotiators in peace negotiations and to add language on gender issues and women in peace agreements. However, these efforts often rely on an "add women and stir" recipe (Harding, 1991: 212; Ní Aoláin et al. 2011) that produces few concrete improvements for women, especially in situations where the international community pushes for peace with little to no local buy-in (Bell 2015; Anderson and Swiss 2014; Abdullah et al. 2010; Chingono 2015). Moreover, in many cultural contexts international gender interventions can be counterproductive, delegitimizing local women's movements by associating them with Western imperialism (Kandiyoti 2007). I therefore theorize *local* women's input in the peace process will increase women's political empowerment after the agreements are signed, while *international* women's participation on its own will have little long-term effect.

Second, I argue that local women's participation is most effective in achieving gains in women's political empowerment when it is combined through both the formal peace negotiations and external, informal processes. Individually, women's participation in either formal or informal processes should modestly increase women's political empowerment after conflict. However, I argue that these two forms of participation have the greatest impact on women's political empowerment when combined. The combined participation in both formal and informal processes balances out the pitfalls of each process individually, and provides maximum opportunity for women's voices to be heard.

Women's participation in formal peace talks is the central component of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, and remains critically important for the status of women in post-conflict states. The number of women participating in formal peace talks as delegates has increased at a sluggish and inconsistent pace since the passage of 1325 (UN Women 2012; Krause, Krause, and Bränfors 2018). Even where women are included as parties to the negotiations, their voices are often still silenced and their means of contributing to the final peace agreements limited (Féron 2017; Paffenholz et al. 2016; Waylen 2014; O'Reilly et al. 2015). Peace negotiations are still seen fundamentally as a method of ending a war. This continued focus on "negative peace" (Galtung 1985) and on the politico-military dimensions of war inherently reinforces the gendered power structures of those fields (Anderlini and Tirman 2010; Féron 2017; Aggestam and Svensson 2018; Ellerby 2016; Kastner and Roy-Trudel 2019; Aharoni 2018). Yet, peace agreements are increasingly used to negotiate not only a ceasefire, but widespread changes to the government, economy, and society as a whole (O'Reilly et al. 2015). Active participation at the table where these deals are being struck is, therefore, essential for influencing the post-conflict political, economic, and social structures (Aduda and Liesch 2022; Paffenholz et al. 2016; True and Riveros-Morales 2019). However, because the entrenched gender power structures of peace processes still prevail, many studies have found that women's presence at the table – even when it involves active participation – is not enough to impact the outcome of the negotiations (Christien and Mukhtarova 2020; Ellerby 2016; Nakaya 2003; Paffenholz et al. 2016; Waylen 2014).

Women's active participation in informal or Track II peace process activities is a second key element to increasing women's post-conflict political empowerment. Compared to their limited presence in formal peace talks, women have consistently and robustly participated in informal, Track II, or parallel peace initiatives (Dayal and Christien 2020). External or Track II peace processes present two benefits unavailable to formal peace talks. First, they open space for the participation of a variety of civil society groups, which are far more likely to include women than the politico-military elites invited to participate in formal peace talks (Cárdenas 2019;

Christien and Mukhtarova 2020; Ellerby 2013, 2016; Hudson 2009; Paffenholz et al. 2016). Moreover, within these organizations the gender norms that restrict women's participation in formal peace talks hold less sway. Civil society groups bridge the divide between the public and the private sphere, and thus give women more leeway to participate and even lead (Anderson 2015; Dayal and Christien 2020; Ellerby 2016). Second, informal peace processes are not tied to the parties to the conflict. By divorcing themselves from the agendas of the conflict parties, women can focus exclusively on demands for clauses on women's rights and issues without subordinating those goals to the objectives of the party they represent (Aduda and Liesch 2022; Anderson 2015; Féron 2017; Waylen 2014). Additionally, women can gain legitimacy through their explicit *disassociation* from the cause of and parties to the conflict (Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019, 263; Tripp 2015, 19). In informal processes, then, women can gain stronger voices, be viewed as legitimate actors, and more freely and openly contribute to the peace process outcomes and consequences.

Methods

This preliminary study aims to identify possible mechanisms through which local women participating in peace processes influence women's political empowerment in post-conflict states. I employ an inductive case study using most-likely case selection. This selection method provides me with the broadest range of tactics and mechanisms as an initial starting point for my theory. Follow-on studies will then use other case studies to test the hypothesized mechanisms derived from this study, and narrow down which tactics and mechanisms are effective across a wide range of cases and situations.

To inductively identify possible mechanisms and methods through which local women in peace processes increase women's political empowerment in post-conflict states, I turn to a recent case study with high levels of local women's participation in both the formal and informal processes: the Philippines Bangsamoro peace process that concluded in a comprehensive agreement in 2014. In addition to the presence of local women, the Bangsamoro peace process was brokered by Malaysia and mediated by an innovative hybrid mediation team made up of four other states (the UK, Japan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia) and various international NGOs. The breadth and inclusivity of this process allows for an examination of the interaction between all four boxes in my typology of women participants in peace processes.

I first provide an overview of the conflict and peace processes leading up to the Bangsamoro agreement. Then, I examine the roles played by both local and international women in both the formal and informal components of the peace process. Next, I review the changes in women's political empowerment following the peace agreement. Since the Philippines conflict and relevant peace agreements only cover the Bangsamoro region, I focus on the status of women's political empowerment primarily in that region. Finally, I identify the tactics used by local women in the peace process that were connected to positive increases in women's political empowerment in Bangsamoro.

The Bangsamoro Peace Process

The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed in March 2014, capped off a 17-year on-and-off peace process ending 45 years of conflict between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Mindanao region of the Philippines. Numerous attempted peace negotiations took place throughout the conflict, resulting in various partial agreements that never fully ended the conflict. The Comprehensive Agreement not only brought an end to decades of conflict, it also created an entirely new political entity, completely reshaping the region's governance system.

Negotiations with the MILF began in 1996, after the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) splintered due to disagreements over the 1996 ceasefire agreement. MILF negotiated a ceasefire with President Ramos in 1997, but when Estrada took over the presidency he took a more hardline and inflammatory stance against the MILF. The peace process stalled as a result, and only resumed after Estrada resigned and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo assumed the presidency in January 2001. Arroyo declared a unilateral ceasefire on behalf of the government, and re-opened negotiations with the MILF. However, various attacks by both parties continued to interrupt the peace process over the subsequent years. The main sticking point of the negotiations was the restitution of ancestral domain. Although an agreement on ancestral domain was reached in 2008 (Memorandum of Agreement… 2008), the Philippines Supreme Court struck it down as unconstitutional. After that, talks ceased and violence broke out in Mindanao once more. The final round of talks resumed in 2011 under President Aquino. Sporadic violence continued in 2011 and 2012, but the government pushed through with a Framework Agreement on the peace talks in 2012 (Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro 2012). This agreement abandoned the previous administrative region of Mindanao and proposed to create a new autonomous political entity called Bangsamoro. Following this framework, the government and MILF finally reached a comprehensive agreement in 2014 (The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro 2014).

One notable difference between the final peace process and earlier iterations was the conscious effort to include women in the process, both formally and informally. From 2001, the government negotiation team consistently included two women (Chang et al. 2015, 105-6). After the prior Philippines government lead negotiator departed, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, the next-ranking team member, became the first (and still only) woman to serve as chief negotiator of a conflict party (Coronel-Ferrer 2020; Council on Foreign Relations 2020). Coronel-Ferrer made the inclusion of women on both sides of the negotiations a priority, and also promoted engagement by formal delegates with women and civil society outside of the formal peace talks (Coronel-Ferrer 2020).

Women participants both as formal negotiators and as civil society activists made clear differences to the outcomes of the peace process. Participants noted that women changed the tone of the talks, expanded the types of topics covered, and ensured a number of clauses specifically on women were included in the agreement (Aduda and Liesch 2022; Herbolzheimer 2015; O'Reilly, Súilleabháin, and Paffenholz 2015; Santiago 2015). Although the MILF rejected gender quotas in the peace agreement, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission composition was 27 percent women and the current Bangsamoro Parliament is 16.25 percent women, including minority leader Laisa Alamia (Coronel-Ferrer 2020; Council on Foreign Relations 2020). However, implementation of the agreement has been rocky, taking four years to pass the Bangsamoro Organic Law after a breach of ceasefires in 2017. This year (2022) was intended to hold the first full elections for the Bangsamoro Assembly, but in October 2021 President Duterte signed a bill extending the transition period from three to six years and postponing elections until

2025. This extension reflects difficulties in implementing the roadmap due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and was requested and supported by the MILF and Bangsamoro communities (Engelbrecht 2021).

Local Women's Roles in the Bangsamoro Peace Process

Women's roles in the formal peace process underwent a significant change after the passage of UNSCR 1325. Women were not included on either side of the negotiations in the 1990s. After the passage of UNSCR 1325, however, there was a consistent effort by the government of the Philippines to maintain a gender balance on their negotiating team. In 2001 the government appointed women's rights advocate Irene Santiago and scholar Emily Marohombsar as formal delegates (Chang et al. 2015, 105). Shortly thereafter, in 2003, Teresita Quintos-Deles became the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), overseeing all five peace negotiations ongoing in Mindanao at the time (*ibid*; Busran-Lao 2014, 28). In this position, Quintos-Deles was able to exert pressure on all Philippines peace processes to push for the inclusion of more women. Quintos-Deles left the position in 2005, and in 2009 another woman – Annabelle Abaya – assumed the mantle for a year, before Quintos-Deles returned in 2010. Both Quintos-Deles and Abaya ensured that government negotiating teams for the Bangsamoro process were composed of fifty-percent women, and encouraged the appointment of women in leadership positions. For example, in 2010 Iona Jalali, a lawyer, was named head of the government of the Philippines' peace panel secretariat (Chang et al. 2015, 106), and two years later Coronel-Ferrer became the lead negotiator for the government side. This move was not without opposition – Coronel-Ferrer noted that there were many who voiced concerns about appointing a woman delegation chair when negotiating with a conservative Muslim group (Coronel-Ferrer 2020). However, Quintos-Deles strongly advocated for Coronel-Ferrer, and the MILF delegation wrote a letter to the president stating that MILF "could work with any chairperson regardless of gender and ethnicity" (Santiago 2015, 9). Upon Coronel-Ferrer's promotion to government negotiation team lead, her delegate seat was filled by Yasmin Busran-Lao, a peace and Muslim women's rights advocate (Santiago 2015, 10). Additionally, two women led the government's legal team, and the technical working groups included many more women (Chang et al. 2015, 106). During the final stage of negotiations, Coronel-Ferrer and Busran-Lao made up half the government team, and 22 percent of the total formal delegates (Council on Foreign Relations 2020).

The MILF's formal delegation took longer to incorporate women, but by the final stage of negotiations their delegates included two women. The MILF negotiators were initially all men, and they pushed back against the inclusion of women in the formal talks (Aduda and Liesch 2022, 10; Santiago 2015, 10). However, in 2011 the MILF finally added a woman to their "board of consultants" – Raissa Jajurie, a human rights lawyer. Although hired for her legal expertise, Jajurie periodically filled in for the primary negotiators at the formal talks, acting as an alternate delegate (Busran-Lao 2014, 28). Jajurie stated that she was added to the MILF team because she happened to be riding in a car with one of the male negotiators and mentioned that she would be happy to help the peace negotiations in any way she could. Jajurie had previously advised the MILF on legal cases, and co-founded an organization to educate Moro women about their legal rights and help them have a voice in the peace process. Still, Jajurie was surprised when a few days later the MILF panel chairman invited her to serve as a consultant to the peace talks. Jajurie's legal expertise did fill a specific need for the MILF team, but at that time the MILF was also receiving considerable pressure from both the government delegation and from

international partners to include women on their team (Santiago 2015, 10). Jajurie later said that she had expected to sit behind the men and take notes, but to everyone's surprise she was often called upon by the MILF chairman to speak on behalf of the MILF on both legal and gender issues. Although the MILF was initially unwilling to talk about gender issues, Jajurie's presence soon made a distinct difference. She was able to explain the government's gender-related suggestions, and even bring the MILF around to many of the proposals (*ibid*, 10-11). The next year, the MILF added another woman to their consultants team – Bai Cabaybay Abubakar, an educator (Chang et al. 2015, 106).

Alongside the talks with the MILF, the government was also conducting talks with four other parties, three of which were already in the implementation phase. The talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF) were at the same stage as the MILF talks, and the government team at that table also included two women: Jurgette Honculada, a labor and women's rights advocate, and Maria Lourdes Tison, a peace and environment advocate (Busran-Lao 2014, 28). Within the MILF peace talks, Coronel-Ferrer made a concerted effort to include more women by opening space for consultants and technical working groups. Through these groups, more women were brought onto both teams and appointed in leadership positions of many of the working groups (Coronel-Ferrer 2020; Busran-Lao 2014, 28; Santiago 2015, 13).

Outside the formal talks, civil society groups, which were overwhelmingly composed of women, were extremely active in following the negotiations, providing suggestions for the text of the agreement, and raising issues of concern to their local communities (Council on Foreign Relations 2020; Santiago 2015). One of the more prominent women's networks advocating for the inclusion of women's clauses in the agreement and later the Organic Law was Women Engaged in Action (We Act) 1325. We Act 1325 had 36 member organizations around the country, including several in Mindanao. Coronel-Ferrer, Jujarie, Busran-Lao, and Froilyn Tenorio Mendoza were all members of We Act 1325 member groups, and their inclusion in the formal negotiations and Transition Commission was largely a result of We Act 1325's lobbying (Chang et al. 2015, 107). We Act 1325 and Women's Peace Table were the most vocal advocates of ensuring a gender-inclusive peace process and final peace agreement (Santiago 2015, 13). Coronel-Ferrer's openness to civil society input was critical for the inclusion of a number of specific clauses related to women and gender (Aduda and Liesch 2022; Council on Foreign Relations 2020; Santiago 2015).

Women's groups also relayed information and updates from the formal talks back to the public, and gathered their input for recommendations to send back to the Track I talks (Council on Foreign Relations 2020; Dayal 2020, 91). Several groups, like the Women's Organization Movement in the Bangsamoro (WOMB), conducted workshops to teach local women advocacy skills and strategies (Trajano 2020, 362). Their work on peace education was important for establishing broad-based community support for the peace process, which has smoothed the implementation and transition period (Aduda and Liesch 2022; Trajano 2020; Coronel-Ferrer 2020; Dayal 2020, 91).

International Women's Roles in the Bangsamoro Peace Process

The Bangsamoro negotiations used an innovative international mediation team composed of representatives from four countries – Japan, the UK, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia – and four NGOs – Conciliation Resources, Muhammadiyah, The Asia Foundation, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Herbolzheimer and Leslie 2013, 4). This International Contact Group

(ICG) contained just one woman – Emma Leslie, from Conciliation Resources (Herbolzheimer and Leslie 2013, 4; Santiago 2015, 13). Although many of the members of the ICG had their own national or organizational commitments to supporting women's rights, the group as a whole had no formal mission or strategy to implement those commitments (Herbolzheimer and Leslie 2013, 4). Conciliation Resources did provide working papers on including women in peace processes and the peace agreement. Leslie also convened separate, informal "all-women's" discussions alongside the formal talks (Herbolzheimer and Leslie 2013, 5). The female delegates have said that Leslie's presence was incredibly helpful, both as a sounding board for ideas and as an emotional bulwark (Santiago 2015, 13).

Outside the formal processes, both funding and pressure from international organizations (IOs), NGOs, and third-countries played a role in women's peace processes participation. International donors reportedly pressured the MILF to include women in their official delegation (Santiago 2015, 10). International funding was crucial for supporting the operations of the numerous CSOs conducting Track II activities and workshops for Moro women. International NGOs also provided technical expertise to support local civil society efforts at enhancing cross-community dialogue and building grassroots support for the peace process (Herbolzheimer and Leslie 2013, 3).

Although there was only one international woman present at the negotiations, the role of international norms in promoting local women's participation in the peace process cannot be discounted. Women were only included in the peace process *after* UNSCR 1325 passed in 2000 (notably, this was also only after Gloria Arroyo became President). The Philippines was the first Southeast Asian country to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the first Asian country to finalize a National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security. Local women's CSOs were a huge part of both of those movements. We Act 1325, the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI), Téduray Lambangian Women's Organization, the Center for Peace Education, and Nisa Ul Haqq Bangsamoro all worked closely with the government on implementing the NAP (Chang et al. 2015, 107). From the start, the Philippines NAP was designed to be implemented in the ongoing peace process. Coronel-Ferrer was one of the drafters of the NAP, and her subsequent appointment to the government negotiating team was a clear signal that the Philippines was actively implementing its commitments to UNSCR 1325 (Medepalli 2019, 25). Both within and outside the formal talks, women repeatedly referred to UNSCR 1325 to support their demands (Ellerby 2016, 144-5).

However, many Filipino women have argued that their advocacy for women's inclusion in the peace process predated UNSCR 1325. Reports by Filipino women who participated in the peace negotiations do not mention UNSCR 1325 as a reason for their inclusion (e.g. Santiago 2015; Busran-Lao 2014). In interviews some have claimed that women's political participation is the "Filipino way," citing two former female presidents as an example (Medepalli 2019, 26). Although several NGOs' reports on peacebuilding activities in Mindanao reference UNSCR 1325, local women have explained that this inclusion is a means of securing more funding from international donors and is not necessarily reflective of the underlying rationales for programs (*ibid*).

Although international norms clearly played a role in the inclusion of women in the peace process, that role appears to be one of justification rather than impetus. Local Filipino women's leadership and advocacy was also a crucial element to the drafting and passage of the NAP, and the extensive participation by women in the peace process. It was under the leadership of

President Gloria Arroyo and Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Abaya that the NAP was completed and passed, and it was under Arroyo, Abaya, and Quintos-Deles that women's participation in the peace process became a priority.

Post-Conflict Women's Political Empowerment in Bangsamoro

The Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro contained nine gender provisions, most of low to medium specificity (Aduda and Liesch 2022, 10). Five additional gender provisions were added in the two Annexes (on Wealth Sharing and Power Sharing), all of which were more specific than those in the Framework (*ibid*, 10-11). One of the most specific clauses requires that five percent of all development funds be set aside for women's programs (Council on Foreign Relations 2020). The political provisions are less specific, and failed to include a legislative quota for women (Aduda and Liesch 2022, 10-11; Coronel-Ferrer 2020).

After the formal talks ended, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission was established to draft the first Bangsamoro Basic Law (which was eventually renamed the Bangsamoro Organic Law, BOL). The Commission comprised seven government members and eight MILF members. Jajurie was appointed to the Commission by the MILF, and given the role of Chair of the Committee on Fiscal Authority (Santiago 2015, 11). She was the only woman of the MILF representatives. The government representatives contained three women, including the representative of the indigenous communities. The government strongly suggested to the indigenous communities that they nominate a woman for their Commission member. Women's groups pushed the indigenous council to name Froilyn Tenorio Mendoza, who had a strong record of supporting both indigenous and women's rights (*ibid*). Mendoza did not have experience with policy *writing*, however, so she approached an NGO for technical support (Santiago 2015, 12). Mendoza and the other two women on the government side met regularly to strategize, in an effort Mendoza called "teaming" (*ibid*).

In the final law, eight out of the sixteen articles contain provisions on gender or women (Trajano 2020, 361). Women are reserved one seat in Parliament, one seat on the Council of Leaders, and at least one Cabinet position. The law affirms support for and participation of women in political parties, employment, economic development, rehabilitation of demilitarized forces, and public information and advocacy campaigns. It also reserves seats for women in the Transition Authority (BOL 2018).

The Bangsamoro Transition Commission contained 27 percent women, and the current Bangsamoro Parliament is 16.25 percent women, including the minority leader, Laisa Alamia (Coronel-Ferrer 2020; Council on Foreign Relations 2020). Those legislators have been active in drafting laws and creating committees on women's and human rights. They, along with civil society women's groups, continue to advocate for the inclusion of a gender quota in the final electoral code (Coronel-Ferrer 2020). Through the myriad of workshops offered by women's CSOs, there has been a palpable shift in the attitudes of women regarding their ability to hold political leadership positions (Chang et al. 2015, 118). Local women saw the examples set by Coronel-Ferrer, Jajurie, Mendoza, Busran-Lao, and the other women in the peace process, and began to step forward into political and leadership positions of their own (Applebaum 2016). Likewise, local men's attitudes toward women in politics shifted when the MILF began to include women in their delegation (Santiago 2015; Coronel-Ferrer 2020). The active and constant efforts of the women in the formal peace process to include more women in committees, technical groups, and civil society dialogue was an important driver of these shifts in attitudes.

The BOL allows for Shari'ah courts alongside secular courts, and in Bangsamoro both of these have a much lower proportion of women judges than the rest of the Filipino courts. As of 2020 there was only one female judge out of 25 Shari'ah circuit courts (Deinla 2021), although previously there were three female judges out of thirty (Deinla and Taylor 2015, 12). In 2015 there was only one woman among the secular Regional Trial Court judges, and two women out of eleven secular lower court judges (*ibid*, 33). Women are more common in informal conflict resolution or mediation roles at the community level, however. These types of institutions are actually preferred for less serious disputes in Bangsamoro (*ibid*, 35-6). The lack of women's presence in Shari'ah courts is notable for two reasons. First, the Shari'ah courts are seen as "women's courts," because about 80 percent of the cases involve women. These are the courts where Muslim women can file for divorce, resolve family-related concerns, or apply for support (*ibid*, 45-6). Second, the proportion of women judges in Bangsamoro Shari'ah courts is not only lower than in secular courts in the rest of the country, it is also lower than in Shari'ah courts in other Muslim Southeast Asian countries (Deinla 2021). Despite the presence of a woman human rights lawyer on the MILF negotiating team, there has been less progress in ensuring women's empowerment in the judiciary in Mindanao.

A key difference between women's empowerment in the judiciary and in the legislature and executive functions is the lack of mention of women in relation to justice in the peace agreements. The only mention of women tangentially related to justice is on the release of specific prisoners, seven of which were women, and a vague mention of ensuring the ability to address women's issues within the police (Bell and Badanjak 2019; Bell et al. 2019). In contrast, there were five mentions of women in relation to legislative and executive representation, and four mentions of women in relation to institutional reform of legislative and executive systems (*ibid*). Similarly, although there are numerous mentions of and provisions for women in the legislative, executive, and economic development and rehabilitation sections of the Bagnsamoro Organic Law, there is no mention of women in the judicial section (BOL 2018).

Tactics Identified from Bangsamoro

Women in Bangsamoro achieved positions in the post-conflict political system through three primary methods. First, they built coalitions across women's groups and across conflict parties in order to advocate for the inclusion of specific women's issues in the peace agreements. As numerous studies have shown, women are most effective at getting to the table, getting women's clauses included in peace agreements, and passing laws promoting women's political rights and empowerment when they work together across party lines to build national movements (e.g. Aduda and Liesch 2022; Anderson 2015; Bell 2015; Cárdenas 2019; Ellerby 2013; Paffenholz et al. 2016). In the Philippines, women delegates from both parties met outside of the formal talks to strategize and coordinate on promoting women's issues in the peace agreements. Women's CSO groups built national and regional networks to coordinate messaging, collectively lobby for women's inclusion in the formal talks and final peace agreements, and pool resources from international donors to support local women. Most of the women who participated in the formal talks had ties to women's groups, and continued to work closely with them throughout the peace process to ensure a gender-sensitive agreement. Members of the delegations and women's CSOs advocated for each other's inclusion in the transitional government. After the peace process, they continued to work together to push for more concrete legislation on women's quotas and women's rights. These coalitions resulted in: 1. several local women from the peace process continuing to serve on the transition commission;

2. the inclusion of an indigenous woman on the transition commission; and 3. more women from the coalitions serving in the cabinet and subsequent parliament.

Second, women inside and outside the formal talks pushed to widen the peace process's focus and participation. The women delegates and team leaders created technical and working groups within the formal talks, with the explicit goal of increasing women's representation. They also added formal avenues for communication with Track II processes, including mechanisms for accepting recommendations from civil society for inclusion in the peace agreements. Through those recommendations and by lobbying both parties to the conflict, women outside the formal talks were successful in raising a number of women's concerns at the formal talks. Their efforts resulted in a wide range of gender provisions in the final agreements, as well as in the subsequent BOL. These clauses included specific reserved seats for women in both the legislature and the cabinet, guaranteeing a certain degree of political empowerment for local women. Widening the process also allowed more women to take part publicly in the peace process. All these women in the formal and informal processes were thus able to demonstrate to the public women's ability to operate in high-level political roles.

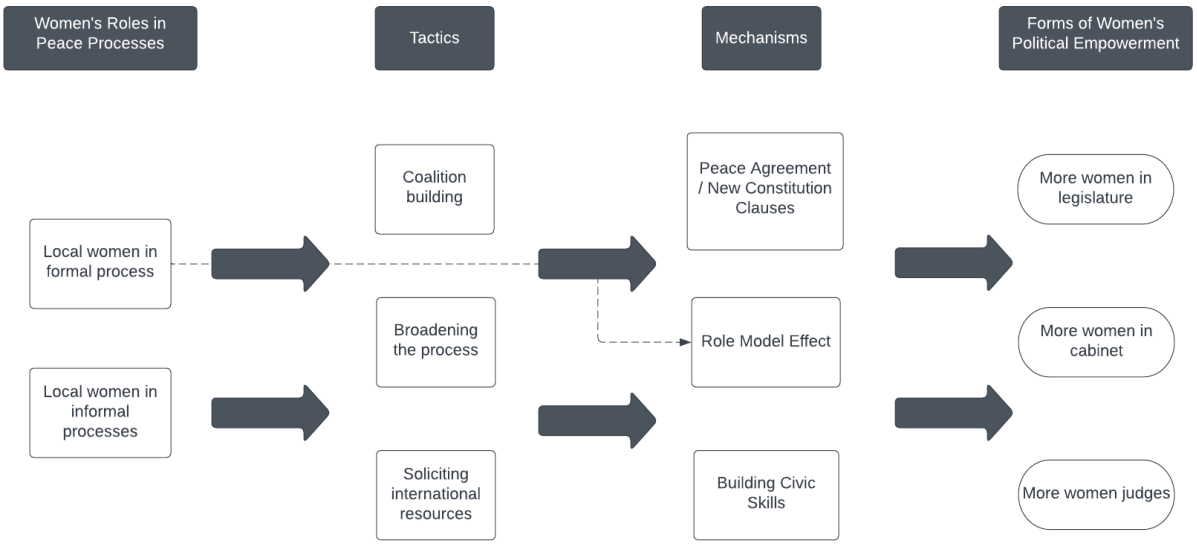
Third, women in both formal and informal processes used their roles in the peace process to solicit resources and support from [primarily] international actors. Women in local CSOs secured international funding from NGOs, IOs, and third countries to provide training and information for local women on politics, advocacy, and law. These programs built civic skills among local women, as well as creating networks of local women interested in politics and advocacy. Resources, skills, networks, and motivation are all essential factors in women's decision to participate in politics (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013; Fox and Lawless 2010; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1987). Because of their relationship to the ongoing peace process, local women in both the formal and informal processes were able to leverage special resources not typically available to their communities. Through their participation in the peace process, these women were able to: 1. connect to new international funding sources; 2. show ongoing, measurable results within the peace process itself and in the newly formed regional government after its conclusion; and 3. justify their funding requests with reference to the end of a decades-long conflict.

International women and norms played a comparatively small role in the Philippines. Only one international woman was present at the formal peace negotiations, and her contributions to gender provisions in the agreement were primarily in the form of moral support. She did facilitate cross-party dialogues between the local female negotiators, but based on extensive coalition building amongst local women and the fact that the women negotiators of both parties were members of the same CSO network, it seems likely that those dialogues would have occurred without international assistance. International donors also contributed substantial funding to women's CSOs, which was in turn used to build political skills and knowledge among local women. However, the ideas, trainers, and execution of these programs all came from local women. There was some evidence of local women citing international conventions and norms, and women's participation in the peace process increased dramatically after the passage of UNSCR 1325. However, the local women citing these documents indicated that the norms already existed locally, and that international sources were only mentioned to garner more international funding. International women thus played a supportive role in all three of the local women's primary tactics, but their involvement was only essential in providing funding to local CSOs.

Mechanisms

To connect the tactics used by women in the Bangsamoro Peace Process with the subsequent increases in women's political empowerment in Bangsamoro, I identify three primary mechanisms. The first mechanism is the clauses of the peace agreement and any new constitution or basic law developed as an outcome of that agreement. In Bangsamoro, both the peace agreements and the subsequent BOL contained clauses guaranteeing seats for women in both the legislature and the cabinet. However, both failed to include clauses on women in the judiciary, resulting in low levels of women's representation among judges. The second mechanism is the role model effect. The women who participated in the Bangsamoro Peace Process demonstrated their effectiveness acting in high-level political positions to both local women and men. Their successes encouraged other women to become involved in politics and increased the openness of men of both parties to include women in elite positions. Finally, the third mechanism is building civic skills among local women. Supported by international funding, women in the Bangsamoro Peace Process developed training programs to build civic skills and political interest among local women. Those skills in turn gave more local women the confidence and resources to become more involved in politics. Figure 1 illustrates the theorized pathways through which local women's roles in both formal and informal peace processes make use of the tactics identified above to trigger these mechanisms and increase women's political empowerment in post-conflict states.

Figure 1: Tactics and Mechanisms for Increasing Women's Political Empowerment in Post-Conflict States



I argue that local women in both the formal and informal processes work together to build coalitions, broaden the process, and solicit international resources. International women can play a supporting role in each of these tactics, but their participation is not a necessary condition for triggering the mechanisms, except in the case of providing funding. Both local women in the formal and informal peace processes act as role models directly, without any tactics, so long as their participation is both active and publicized. Broadening the process can expand the influence of the role model effect by including more women in the public eye.

Coalition building and broadening the process together increase the likelihood of including specific gender clauses in the peace agreement and/or new constitution that results from the peace process. Broadening the process – both in terms of making the process more participatory and democratized, and in terms of making the resulting agreement more comprehensive – has been shown to increase the number of gender provisions included in the final agreement (e.g. Christien and Mukhtarova 2020). Likewise, numerous case studies have demonstrated the efficacy of building coalitions of women across parties for achieving specific gender provisions in peace agreements (Aduda and Liesch 2022; Anderson 2015; Paffenholz et al. 2016). I argue that these two processes support and bolster each other, dramatically increasing the likelihood of achieving women's goals for the peace agreement and post-conflict political system. The two tactics are mutually reinforcing – broadening the process generally adds more women to the process who can then strengthen the existing women's coalition; at the same time, the coalition across parties can be leveraged to gain support from all sides for broadening the process and including more women. Existing networks of women can also act as a candidate pool when the peace process is widened, to ensure that women are included in the new additions to the process. This feedback process is important for reaching the peace agreement clauses mechanism. In order for the two tactics – coalition building and broadening the process – to amplify their individual efforts, new groups added to the peace process must have the same goals as the existing women's coalition. If the existing coalition is able to draw on their own networks

as candidates for inclusion in a broadened peace process, they can ensure that new participants' goals are compatible with their own.

International resources used to build civic skills increase the pool of potential women candidates for political positions. Broadening the process can support this mechanism, as it offers an opportunity for more women to participate in a high-level political event, building experience and networks. In Bangsamoro, for example, neither Jajurie nor Mendoza had experience in policy making prior to the peace process. Their inclusion in the broadened peace process allowed them to gain important skills and networks that positioned them to become members of the Bangsamoro Parliament during the transition (Santiago 2015, 12-13).

Peace Agreement Clauses

The first mechanism through which local women can increase women's post-conflict political empowerment is the clauses of the peace agreement itself. Estimates of the proportion of peace agreements with gender-specific clauses vary depending on study design, ranging from sixteen percent (Bell and O'Rourke 2010) to forty percent (Anderson and Swiss 2014). Although references to gender and women have increased since the passage of UNSCR 1325 (Ellerby 2013), most references to women in peace agreements remain vague, aspirational, and unenforceable (Bell 2015; Buchanan 2012; Sriram 2013; Suhrke et al. 2007). Many peace agreements treat gender as a "problem" or lump women and children together as "victims," removing women's agency and possibility of inclusion in governance or peacebuilding (Buchanan 2012; Abdullah et al. 2010). When sufficiently specific, however, peace agreement clauses can have both direct and indirect impacts on women's political empowerment.

First, peace agreement clauses can guarantee specific political rights, quotas, or reserved seats for women. Quotas are one of the strongest predictors of women in national legislatures (Paxton and Hughes 2015), and even minimal reserved positions for women can have trickle-down effects. For example, in Botswana the presence of a few women ministers at the national level had a strong symbolic effect on politics at the local level, resulting in more women chiefs over time (Bauer and Burnet 2013, 20). Even without quotas in the peace agreement, states with peace accords that include any gender provisions at all go on to adopt gender quotas faster than those without gender provisions and those without peace accords altogether (Anderson and Swiss 2014). In Bangsamoro, a very low number of reserved seats for women in both the legislature and executive resulted in far more than the minimum number of women elected and appointed to both bodies. Those women are in turn continuing to push for an electoral quota, in addition to the reserved seats.

Second, clauses on women's physical security, health, and economic and labor rights can also indirectly affect women's political empowerment. Without such clauses in the peace agreement, women often lack the ability to access resources of post-conflict reconstruction, setting them on unequal footing as the post-conflict state rebuilds society. For example, the Bougainville DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) program specifically excluded women (Buchanan 2012), and Sierra Leone's DDR program only trained women to be hairdressers and seamstresses, resulting in many women resorting to sex work or remaining unemployed (Abdullah et al. 2010). In Somalia, women's groups attribute low political participation by women to a lack of aid resources for women's health and economic needs (Nakaya 2003, 469). Clauses addressing gender issues in the context of DDR, transitional justice,

economic reconstruction, property rights, childcare, and maternal health can all facilitate women's political empowerment by providing or eliminating drains on women's resources that are essential to political participation.

Finally, beyond including gender clauses, the quality of the peace agreement as a whole is important for its chances of full implementation and subsequent political stability in the state. Without political stability or implementation of the peace agreement, there is little chance of changes in women's political empowerment. Indeed, a new or resumed war as a result of a failed peace agreement has been shown to lower women's political empowerment in the short term (Webster et al. 2019). Thus, to have any kind of political evolution in post-conflict states it is crucial to first implement a peace agreement that has enough support to hold the peace. There is evidence that women's participation in peace processes is an important component to achieving a durable and widely-accepted peace agreement – for example, female signatories have been shown to increase the durability of peace and the implementation rate of peace processes (Krause, Krause, and Bränfors 2018). Therefore, one additional potential outcome of the peace agreement clauses mechanism is to create a political environment in which greater women's political empowerment is even possible, let alone likely.

The Role Model Effect

The second mechanism through which local women in peace processes can increase women's post-conflict political empowerment is simply by proving that women can be part of the political elite. "Token" women representatives at peace talks who do not actively participate in discussions would serve only to buttress existing stereotypes about the public sphere as a male arena. However, local women who take active part in the peace process prove to all present and all watching the peace process that women can be political leaders, too. During conflicts, women frequently take on a number of new roles – such as in combat, the labor market, and as heads of household – pushing the boundaries of societal gender expectations (Anderson and Swiss 2014, 39; Chingono 2015; Hudson 2009). Too often, women are shuffled back into traditional roles once the men return from the war (*ibid*). Peace processes, however, bridge the gap between the conflict and post-conflict eras. Women's participation in high-level talks can translate into political positions in the new government. Without the incumbency disadvantage, conflict opens new doors for women to step into elected positions (Hughes 2009). But as political participation research has shown, role models are extremely helpful for increasing women's political representation (Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007).

Building Civic Skills

The third and final mechanism through which local women in peace processes can increase women's political empowerment in post conflict states is by building civic skills among local women. Civic skills are a critical ingredient for robust political participation (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1987), yet in most states women have fewer opportunities to develop these skills. During conflict, many women emerge as the leaders of peacebuilding efforts and advocates for peace negotiations (Arostegui 2013; Dayal and Christien 2020; Tripp 2015). Through these efforts and networks, women begin to develop civic skills and political interest necessary for further political empowerment. These skills must continue to be fostered and utilized in order to lead to a long-term increase in political empowerment. In too many cases, women who were

active in advocating for peace were subsequently sidelined during and after the peace process, leading to no long-term advancements in their political empowerment (Anderson 2015; Chingono 2015; Moosa, Rahmani, and Webster 2013). Indeed, one possible (and as-yet untested) explanation for findings that longer conflicts are correlated with gains in women's political empowerment in post-conflict states (Anderson 2015; Tripp 2015; Webster, Chen, and Beardsley 2019) is that longer conflicts allow women's networks more time to solidify new civic and advocacy skills through their peacebuilding activities. Regardless of the length of conflict, however, existing case studies demonstrate the importance of formalizing those skills during the peace process in order to convert them into political activity in the post-conflict period (Chingono 2015; Moosa, Rahmani, and Webster 2013).

Conclusion

Women's participation in formal peace processes has certainly increased over the past two decades, albeit slowly and stutteringly. Yet, women have long comprised the majority of Track II and other informal peace processes. The Bangsamoro case study highlights the importance of including women in *both* formal and informal processes, and promoting dialogue and cooperation between the two in order to ensure women's political empowerment after conflict ends. Conflict disrupts gender norms in a country, and peace processes are a critical opportunity structure for putting the pieces back together in a way that promotes women's inclusion and voice in post-conflict states. Several studies have shown that national women's movements – which often overlap with peace movements – have been key players in cementing women's political rights in post-conflict states (e.g. Anderson 2015; Hughes 2009; Tripp 2015). These movements frequently transform into the informal, Track II processes that support formal peace processes and lobby for the inclusion of women's provisions in peace agreements. However, they also need support from *within* the formal peace talks in order to ensure their recommendations are taken into consideration at the negotiating table.

The methods that women inside and outside the formal peace process in Bangsamoro used to garner support for women's political empowerment highlight continued barriers faced by women in peace processes. Cultural and religious norms made even the opposing party hesitant to include women in the talks. Women delegates of conflict parties had to shoulder multiple burdens, as representatives of their party, of women, and in some cases of other marginalized identities. These conflicting demands often forced them to compromise on the demands of one of their identities, and often it was women's issues that were sacrificed. Cooperation with women outside the formal process enabled women delegates to continue pushing for women's issues and women's inclusion, even in the face of opposition from other parties or their own colleagues. Additionally, having access to a wide network of skilled women advocates allowed women within the formal talks to easily suggest a number of qualified women to fill spaces on negotiation teams and political positions after the talks ended.

This study identified a number of tactics and mechanisms that local women in peace processes can use to influence women's political participation in post-conflict states. Further research on this topic will test these mechanisms against a variety of case studies in other regions, different types of conflicts, and with varying levels of international support. This research may help WPS practitioners and policymakers better understand what resources and access local women need in order to affect positive change in women's political empowerment in

post-conflict states. This research also expands current understanding of the connections between formal and informal components of peace processes, which may be useful in studying peace processes inclusion and structure more broadly.

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