Implementing Gender Provisions: A Study of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in the Philippines

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Abstract

While scholars on gender provisions have focused on why and how this type of peace agreement clause gets incorporated, few studies have sought to improve our understanding of the mechanisms through which implementation takes place. This study examines the implementation of gender provisions in the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in the Philippines. It draws on fieldwork conducted in Mindanao, the site of the conflict that led to the agreement, and explores how gender provisions were initially articulated, negotiated, and subsequently implemented. The analysis highlights the role of various actors, including government officials, female activists, and international organizations, in shaping the interpretive work that underpins implementation. The study contributes to the broader understanding of gender implementation in peace agreements by offering insights into the dynamic processes and challenges that shape such efforts.
understanding of the implementation process. Addressing this gap empirically, this study utilizes unique interview material to analyze the initial stages of realizing the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in the Philippines. The article bridges and expands on key theoretical insights based on three explanations suggested by previous research: 1) state capacity on promoting gender equality; 2) the mobilization of women’s organizations; and 3) gender awareness of international actors. We find that the strategic actions of women’s organizations combined with state capacity accelerated the implementation. However, their influence was dependent on whether or not the government prioritized the gender provisions, and whether international actors provided financial support to the agreement infrastructure.

Keywords

gender provisions – peace agreement implementation – state capacity – women’s organizations – Philippines – Bangsamoro – Mindanao – international support

The image of the Peace Panel Chair, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, the negotiator representing the Philippine Government, and the Head of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) shaking hands after the signing the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014 has become iconic (UN Women 2015). It was the first time a woman as lead negotiator signed one of the major peace agreements that, since the end of the Cold War, have become a standard method for resolving civil wars (Wallensteen 2015; Joshi et al. 2015; Joshi & Quinn 2017). Such peace agreements form comprehensive roadmaps to address some of the world’s most intractable intrastate conflicts, as that fought in the Philippines, as well as in Colombia, Sudan, and Indonesia, among others. These agreements not only focus on addressing the power distribution or security concerns, but also include provisions that can constitute the foundation for broader transformative social, economic, legal, and political reforms (Joshi et al. 2015).

4 The authors appreciate the generous support from Rotary International for funds to carry out the fieldwork in the Philippines, and the Swedish Research Council (Grant #2017-01589) for research time to write this paper. We also want to extend our thanks to the Centre on Gender, Peace and Security at PRIO; Helga Binningsbe, Karen Brounéus, Kristine Höglund, Alex Raffoul, and Kristine Höglund for their valuable feedback; and to all the interviewees that generously shared their time and insights with us.
A type of transformative provision that has attracted growing policy and scholarly interest is the so-called gender provision (Bell & O’Rourke 2010; Ellerby 2013; Anderson 2015; Bell 2015; Paffenholz et al. 2019; True & Riveros-Morales 2019; Bakke and Buhaug 2021; Berry & Lake 2021; Joshi & Olsson 2021; Reid 2021; Krause & Olsson 2022); this is a provision type included in at least 30% of all peace agreements adopted between 1975 and 2017 (Forsberg et al. 2020). Gender provisions can seek to promote women’s inclusion in post-war institutions, or integrate reforms to improve women’s rights, such as ensuring women’s access to land through rural reform, or improvements in women’s physical security through legal reforms. For example, the CAB contained provisions aimed at creating improved representation of women in legislative bodies, as well as funding for economic and social public projects targeting women. Other illustrative examples are the 2004 Agreement on Power-Sharing in Burundi which stated that the National Assembly should have a minimum of 30% women as representatives, and the 2015 agreement in the Central African Republic which included considerations for reintegrating female rebel soldiers, as well as economic recovery programs for women, youth, and children.

As argued by an expanding body of research, including gender provisions in peace agreements is important, as armed conflicts can be conceived of a social rupture, which, in turn, changes gender roles, and increases women’s political mobilization and empowerment (Berry 2015; Berry 2018; Dayal & Christien 2020; Reid 2021; Tripp 2015). For such ruptures to result in positive changes that carry over to the post-war period, however, negotiating the inclusion of gender clauses in the agreement can be essential. In turn, this could result in existing war-induced changes being translated into actual reforms and institutions, thereby preventing the substantial risk of backlash against women’s rights in which conflict termination could be expected to result (Aolán et al. 2018; Berry & Lake 2021; Webster et al. 2019). Still, there is disagreement on the overall effect of such provisions on empowerment (Bell & O’Rourke 2010; Bakken & Buhaug 2021; Berry & Lake 2021; Joshi & Olsson 2021; Reid 2021; True & Riveros-Morales 2019). A potential reason, as emphasized by the UN, is that gender provisions appear to face specific challenges when they are translated into reforms during the implementation phase (UN Women 2015). Despite the fact that actual gender provision implementation is critical, the literature has thus far primarily centered on why and how this type of provision gets incorporated.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) One prominent exception is the Kroc Institute’s Barometer Initiative in Colombia, based at University of Notre Dame (Kroc Institute 2018).
Empirically, we contribute to filling this gap in the understanding of gender provision implementation by studying the critical initial stages of the CAB implementation process in the Philippines, when the negotiated agreement clauses were to be transformed into actual reforms and institutions. What makes the CAB relevant is that the negotiation of the agreement took place in a state with a relatively high degree of gender equality, and involved a substantial degree of mobilization of women’s organizations with support from international actors – factors argued to positively affect gender provision inclusion and implementation. True to these expectations, the CAB came to include extensive gender provisions, focusing on both women’s inclusion and on gender integration in legal, political, and social reforms. Once the peace processes moved on to the initial implementation phase, however, gender provisions faced a number of substantial challenges when provisions were to be turned into reforms. The analysis of this dynamic rests on a unique set of material consisting of 35 in-depth field interviews collected between July and August 2018, combined with primary written sources.

The article theoretically bridges and expands the emerging literature on peace agreement implementation and on gender. We do this by first reviewing existing research and then teasing out and structuring three clusters of potential explanations identified as central for progressing from the agreement to the implementation phase: 1) state capacity on promoting gender equality; 2) mobilization of women’s CSOs; and 3) gender awareness of international actors. These theoretical clusters are thereafter used to structure the analysis.

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6 Focusing on CAB from a gender perspective is itself a contribution. While recognized as a prominent case of gender dynamics, not least given women’s inclusion in the negotiation delegations, scholarly literature has not explored the implementation phase in depth. Earlier studies have instead mainly focused on the negotiation dynamics, such as inclusion/exclusion of armed groups at the table (Ghais 2019), conditions to resolve Islamist armed conflicts (Söderberg Kovacs 2020), and third-party coordination (Bhattarai 2016). An exception is Söderberg Kovacs, Höglund & Jiménez (2021) who undertook an initial exploration of the peace dividends of the CAB.

7 We interviewed 11 civil society organizations, 9 government officials, 14 international organizations, and one MILF representative of the implementation process. The scope of the fieldwork was affected by the security situation in Bangsamoro, but the fieldwork still attained a fair balance between sex and organizations/institutions, except for MILF representatives. Since the government, international organizations, and women’s organizations are core actors in our theoretical framework, we believe that we have captured a significant range of opinions and assessments to provide robust evidence on the implementation of the CAB. In the analysis, we also considered if this restriction might bias the general findings and have sought to find alternative written sources to ensure a nuanced perspective. To respect the anonymity of participants, quotes do not refer to names or organizational membership.
of the mechanisms and conditions of the initial CAB implementation process. What makes CAB interesting to study from the perspective of developing existing theory is that the negotiations established a degree of territorial self-determination in the Bangsamoro region, an area with more conservative gender roles, set in the context of a country with a relatively high state capacity for promoting gender equality. This makes CAB fruitful for theoretical development in two respects. First, previous research indicates that implementation processes in territorial conflicts could potentially constitute a specifically difficult case for gender provisions implementation (Caspersen 2019). Hence, even if the three potentially explanatory clusters were present, the CAB should constitute a difficult case, providing in-depth insights into gender dynamics during implementation.

Second, research has found that gender equality tends to vary on the sub-state level where some regions might have other gender norms than the central state (Forsberg & Olsson 2021). The CAB thereby provides nuanced knowledge on how we should understand post-war gender equality developments.

Through our analysis, we find that women’s CSOs made a critical contribution by creating political pressure to ensure that the gender provisions were prioritized during the initial implementation phases and to lobby for how the provisions could be translated into reforms. This factor interacted with the other conditions in two crucial respects. First, there was a high degree of collaboration between women’s organizations and women personnel working for gender equality in the Philippine state bureaucracy. This fruitful collaboration was possible as the state bureaucracy had a pre-existing capacity to implement gender provisions. Second, in order to promote their interests, women’s organizations depended on international financial support. This allowed women’s organizations to pressure the signatories independently. Contrary to our expectations, however, we cannot find that the international actors themselves had a conscious approach to directly promote gender provision implementation. In addition, the analysis suggests that the implementation of gender provisions is dependent on both the political will and the ideology of national and regional elites. When there was a shift in government during the implementation process to one where gender equality was granted less priority on the political agenda, the opportunity for women’s organizations to influence the progress of gender equality outcomes was reduced. Furthermore, this shift in political will among state actors meant less leverage for women’s organizations to pressure the regional Bangsamoro elites, which had been more negatively inclined towards improvements in women’s rights from the outset.
Gender Provision Implementation: Three Potential Clusters of Explanations

Peace practitioners commonly argue that the implementation of an agreement often needs to overcome tougher hurdles than those addressed during the negotiation phase (Arnault 2006). Research on peace agreement implementation argues that the difficulties encountered vary based on the types of provisions (Hartzell & Hoddie 2003; Jarstad & Nilsson 2008; Joshi et al. 2015; Joshi & Quinn 2017; Joshi & Melander 2017; Walter 2002). Provisions that focus on security and power re-distribution among the signatories take priority, particularly in the early implementation phases (Lee, et al. 2016). Moreover, particularly for agreements that end territorial disputes, research points to slower implementation progress for provisions related to human rights (Caspersen 2019). Taken together, these results could spell bad news for gender provision implementation.

That said, if we take peace agreement research as our starting point, it indicates other conditions that potentially could affect implementation more positively. In particular, this strand of research argues that state capacity is important. First, it has been found to increase the likelihood that an agreement reaches higher levels of implementation as it arguably enables the state to realize the promised commitments (DeRouen et al. 2010). Second, state capacity is central as it is principally the state that will prioritize which provisions should be implemented and the sequencing of the implementation (Lee et al. 2016), indicating a competition for state priority between provision types in situations of scarcity. In addition to higher state capacity being important in itself, it appears to increase the state’s chance of benefiting from another central condition – international support. Karreth et al. (2017) have found that international organizations, such as the UN and the World Bank, enable higher degrees of implementation through technical support. Importantly, demands on international actors to be gender aware and to promote women’s inclusion through their support have risen sharply in later years (Joshi & Olsson 2021). Hence, the conditions of state capacity and of international support appear to be important for overall implementation levels. Moreover, we can expect that gender provisions face competition from other, more prioritized provisions, and that, in particular, territorial agreements can constitute a specific challenge. A final condition that can be central for overcoming challenges of priority with regard to gender provisions more specifically is women’s mobilization. This condition has been considered key for the inclusion of gender provisions in an agreement (Bell 2015; Berry 2015; Bell & O’Rourke 2010;
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Dayal & Christien 2020; Tripp 2015; True & Riveros-Morales 2019), and is a condition that is equally necessary to pressure for implementation.

State Capacity for Promoting Gender Equality

State capacity is central for implementation, as the majority of provisions in an agreement are likely to fall under the state’s responsibility (DeRouen et al. 2010; Joshi et al. 2015). However, while the state capacity argument appears to assume a fairly even level of capacity across all institutions within a state, it is probable that state capacity can vary between policy dimensions. Thus, for example, it is plausible that a state can have a greater ability to handle security sector reform or education delivery than to improve gender equality. In fact, state capacity on gender equality varies substantially between countries, resulting in different equality outcomes (Htun & Weldon 2010); when feminist women work in the state bureaucratic system, they can play a crucial role for progress (Hernes 1987). To understand the implementation of gender provisions, it is important to consider the state’s capacity to promote gender equality. This can take many forms.

A state can adopt gender equality laws as a result of pressure by national constituents and women’s groups. As a result, with the development of such policies, states are often also obliged to raise the capacity of staff in central state bureaucracies to promote gender equality in practice, or to form new gender-specific institutions, such as ministries for women’s affairs/gender equality, women’s national councils, or gender expert committees (Htun & Weldon 2010). Alternatively, a state could have responded to external expectations, most notably related to international conventions and policies, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), or the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, the normative framework guiding women’s participation and security in war and peace (Gizelis & Olsson 2015). This too could result in formalized policy commitments, such as in national action plans (NAPs), and capacity-building.

Finally, previous research raises relevant points on the potential connection between the negotiation and implementation phases. For example, Ellerby (2013, 2016) shows an association between the level of gender provisions included in agreements and the presence of national gender equality policies or ratified international conventions within states. Along these lines, True & Riveros-Morales (2019) found a positive association between countries that adopted NAPs and agreements that included gender provisions. Such processes of formulating policy and creating institutional capacity on gender
equality prior to the agreement generate knowledge, organizational experience, and capacity that can be used to implement gender provisions post-war.

The Mobilization of Women's Organizations

Peace negotiations create political spaces in which women's organizations can push forward demands for improvements in women's rights in the post-conflict phase (Tripp 2015). A conflict that ends through a peace agreement can generate a situation where the main political actors are interested in assuaging different constituencies, including women's organizations. Therefore, the better organized the women are, and the higher the capacity these organizations have, the more likely they are to obtain their objectives (Tripp 2015: 18–23). Similarly, Joshi & Olsson (2021) argue that the peace agreement implementation phase can bring the need to build new alliances in the post-conflict phase. Building on these ideas, we argue that the mobilization and actions of women's CSOs constitute a critical condition for the progress of implementation of gender equality provisions.

Ellerby (2013) raises relevant points on the potential connection between the negotiation and women's mobilization as she more explicitly connects women's organizations to the inclusion of gender provisions. She argues that the likelihood that women's needs are addressed at the peace table is significantly increased by women's organizations having a specific agenda, preferably written, and women having access to the process, preferably formal, direct, and multifaceted. Likewise, Phelan & True (2021) show that women's bottom-up civil society mass mobilization to pressure the negotiating parties made the 2016 Colombian agreement more gender-aware (Dayal & Christien 2020). That said, studies of the Colombian peace process have shown that the role and function of women's organizations looked quite different during the implementation phase compared to the negotiation phase (Kroc Institute 2018). Extrapolating from these arguments, we examine the processes related to how, where, and when women's organizations seek to pressure the parties to the agreement to implement gender provisions. Importantly, this means that we do not postulate that women's inclusion by itself necessarily improves implementation, but rather that the role and form of organizational engagement in the implementation process is a key mechanism.

Gender Awareness of International Actors

Research on peace agreement implementation has identified international actors as crucial in that they can influence the parties' commitments (Walter 2002; Mattes & Savun 2009). For example, Karreth et al. (2017: 16) argue that “during the implementation process [international government
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organizations] can exert target pressure upon the group of elites and agents who are mandated to implement particular provisions in the agreement.” In this way, direct international pressure can be central, given that the state will not be able or willing to prioritize all provisions. Notably, Lee et al. (2016) find that social provisions, under which many gender provisions fall, are more likely to be classified as having lower priority. This problem might be particularly present during the first years of implementation when the parties are likely to prioritize security provisions.

Research suggests that international awareness of the importance of promoting gender equality in peace processes has improved somewhat over time. This has been substantially strengthened by the norms on Women, Peace and Security. This normative framework outlines specific roles for both international organizations and states. Many states have also adapted NAPs, outlining how this norm should be realized in efforts to support peace processes (Bell & O’Rourke 2010; Gizelis & Olsson 2015). Examples of what form such direct international support can take include pressuring the parties to the agreement, or contributing gender equality experts to support the establishment of reform programs in the implementation phase. In addition to such direct support, research suggests a potentially fruitful indirect interaction with other conditions explored in this study. Specifically, Tripp (2015: 23) argues that improved awareness among international actors can interact positively with the efforts of women’s CSOs through the provision of financial and political support.

From Negotiating to Implementing the CAB

The conflict between the Government of the Philippines and the separatist Muslim rebel group, the MILF in the southern Philippines, lasted almost three decades. It was not until 2010, under the new President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, that the conflict reached maturity that led to negotiations and the signing of the 2014 peace agreement. In this early stage of the peace process, Aquino’s government also increased the participation of women among the negotiators compared to earlier negotiation efforts. Notably, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines and a feminist activist, was appointed as the chair of the Peace Panel of the Government of the Philippines in July 2010. As visible in Table 1, the Panel and almost all support teams had gender-equal representation, with the notable exception of the power-sharing working group where no women were included (GIWPS 2015: 106). At first, the MILF leadership was reluctant to
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negotiate with leading women negotiators and did not recognize them as legitimate counterparts, although the group adopted a more positive viewpoint on women’s participation over time (Interview 4 2018). That said, MILF’s group of negotiators remained mainly male, with only two women included in their whole team (Interview 4 2018).

After about two years of negotiations, on October 7, 2012, a cycle of adopting partial agreements began when Aquino announced the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro. These partial agreements were then combined and ratified as the CAB on March 13, 2014.

**From CAB Gender Provisions to Reforms**

Due to the involvement of women’s organizations, women negotiators, and international support, the CAB came to contain eight gender provisions. As seen in Table 2, these encompassed representations and reforms concerning political participation in the new autonomous region, non-discrimination due to gender, and economic and social rights and improvements for women. As can also be observed in the table, there was substantial variation in how specific these clauses were on what should be achieved. That means that among these provisions, some constitute mainly abstract acknowledgement of women’s rights, whereas others posit more concrete aims and outcomes on gender equality or women’s representation.

### Table 1 Negotiation team composition of the government of the Philippines and MILF (2010–2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Government of the Philippines</th>
<th>MILF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Peace Panel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth sharing technical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power sharing technical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normalization technical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal team</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Elaborated by the authors based on OPPAP (2015)
Table 2  Gender provisions in the CAB

1. Right of women to meaningful political participation, and protection from all forms of violence.

2. Right to equal opportunity and non-discrimination in social and economic activity and public service, regardless of class, creed, disability, gender and ethnicity.

3. The parties recognize the need to attract multi-donor country support, assistance and pledges to the normalization process. For this purpose, a Trust Fund shall be established through which urgent support, and recurrent and investment budget cost will be released with efficiency, transparency and accountability. The parties agree to adopt criteria for eligible financing schemes, such as priority areas of capacity building... and economic facilitation for return to normal life affecting combatant and non-combatant elements of the MILF, indigenous people, women, children, and internally displaced persons.

4. In the utilization for public funds, the Bangsamoro shall ensure that the needs of women and men are adequately addressed. For this purpose, the Bangsamoro shall set aside at least 5% of official development funds that it receives for support programs and activities for women in accordance with a gender and development plan.

5. The Bangsamoro assembly shall be representative of the Bangsamoro’s constituent political units, as well as non-Moro indigenous communities, women, settler communities, and other sectors. The Bangsamoro Basic Law shall ensure that representation in the Assembly reflects the diversity of the Bangsamoro.

6. There shall be a Bangsamoro council of leaders composed of the Chief Minister, provincial governors, mayors of chartered cities, and a representative of each of the non-Moro indigenous communities, women, settler communities, and other sectors.

7. The Bangsamoro will have exclusive powers on special laws for women, the youth, the elderly, labor, the differently-abled, and indigenous cultural communities.

8. Special socio-economic programs will be provided to the decommissioned women auxiliary forces of the MILF.

While these provisions provide the foundation for transformation and improvements in empowerment, it was not a given that these eight provisions were to be included in the process of turning the agreement into actual legally binding decisions and reforms. In the CAB, it was agreed that the first step of the implementation phase entailed that the entire agreement had to be
translated and transformed into a law that was to be adopted by the Philippine congress. The CAB outlined that the Bangsamoro Transition Commission – an implementation body – would craft the first draft of what was to become the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL). This process came to include specification of 23 new gender provisions resulting from the discussions with multiple constituencies (see Table A1 in the Supplemental Materials). For instance, the BOL reserved a seat for women in the Parliament; outlined the participation of women in the Bangsamoro Government; stated that “the Bangsamoro Government shall uphold and protect the fundamental rights of women;” “recognize the role of women in governance and ensure their fundamental equality before the law;” and “guarantee full and direct participation of women in governance and development processes, ensuring that women shall benefit equally in the implementation of development programs and projects.” The BOL further defined the creation of a Women’s Office in the new Bangsamoro Authority and a Women Commission in the new parliament. This outcome was the most significant effort of the implementation phase for the gender provisions.

Inclusion of Women in Implementation
The crafting, discussion with other constituencies, and ratification process of the BOL took more time than expected, and was not signed until July 26, 2018. By then a new President, Rodrigo Duterte, had taken over responsibility for the implementation process from President Aquino. In the next stage of the implementation process, the new government ran a two-part plebiscite in the Bangsamoro region in January–February 2019. This was done to define the territories that would belong to the new autonomous region. Thereafter, in March 2019, the new Bangsamoro Transition Authority was formally inaugurated, appointing 80 members. The MILF selected 41 members and the Philippine Government selected 39 members. Despite the CAB objectives on women’s meaningful participation, however, the government and MILF only gave 15% of the total seats to women (International Crisis Group 2019: 7).

In addition to the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, the CAB created eleven decision-making bodies to more concretely design and implement reforms to secure and stabilize the new Bangsamoro region. Based on data collected in our fieldwork, Table 3 outlines these implementation bodies intended to oversee the decommissioning of arms, design socio-economic programs for MILF ex-combatants and impoverished communities, and design a transitional justice program. Except for the Implementation Panel and the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, most of the other mechanisms are known as normalization mechanisms to prepare and secure the new Bangsamoro region.
As for the Transition Authority, Table 3 demonstrates that the representation of women in formal mechanisms was generally low. With one exception, the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), no implementation body reached 30% female representation. The TJRC, responsible for making recommendations to address the “legitimate grievances of the Bangsamoro People” consisted of 43% women, and was headed by a woman (Mô Bleeker). She also ensured the inclusion of a gender perspective in the Final Report and appointed a Gender Adviser (Lourdes Veneracion-Rallonza) to strengthen the effort to consider gender aspects. Additionally, among the 3,307 people that participated in the TJRC listening process, approximately 40% were women (TJRC 2016).

The work of the TJRC stands in sharp contrast to other implementation mechanisms, notably those related to peace and security, decommissioning of combatants and their communities, and camp reconstruction, which had no female representation. The responsibility for the selection of the members of each body was evenly distributed by MILF and the Government. As was the case in the negotiation teams, the government side had better representation of women than MILF, even with the new regime under Duterte. This is visible if we further disaggregate these figures by party based on the collected data: about 26% women from the government compared to MILF’s 10%.

### Table 3 The gender composition of the implementation bodies of the CAB (August 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation mechanisms</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace Implementation Panel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangsamoro Transition Commission (Aquino)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangsamoro Transition Commission (Duterte)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-Party Monitoring Team</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Normalization Committee**</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Peace and Security Committee**</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Decommissioning Body**</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Commission on Policing**</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Task Forces on Camps Transformation**</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Task Forces on Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities**</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission**</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **Normalization mechanisms

Source: The figures were collected through interviews
Integration of Gender in the Implementation Processes

In addition to further developing the specific gender provisions and ensuring women’s inclusion in implementation bodies, it was possible to integrate a gender focus in all reform processes and promote gender equality more widely. The work of the TJRC is an example of that. In addition, the CAB defined a particular mechanism, Working Groups on Vulnerable Sectors, to create strategies to promote gender equality across different programs, institutions, and offices developed during the implementation phase. However, during our fieldwork, we found that the parties had not yet even formed this mechanism. We could also not identify any additional body with gender-focused programs apart from the TJRC. For example, members in charge of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs reaffirmed this:

The Task Force of Camps Transformation is a normalization mechanism, and so, I do not know or hear about gender. I presume that the World Bank and the EU push for gender analysis, but I do not know.

Interview 13 2018

I am not really aware if there are any programs targeting women, but we have delivered on skills training programs, like driving, carpentry, tailoring. It’s really geared towards combatants, and any extras that can help their kin or families.

Interview 9 2018

Exploring the CAB Implementation Through the Three Theoretical Clusters

What the above results indicate is that the most successful efforts to implement gender provisions were concentrated on the process of crafting the BOL. But neither the formal representation of women in implementation mechanisms nor gender integration in regular reforms were dominant themes. Why then was the BOL process so successful? We explore this question by applying the lens of the three sets of conditions identified in previous research.

State Capacity on Promoting Gender Equality

Our first theoretical cluster suggests that states that have worked to promote gender equality prior to peace agreements are more capable of implementing gender provisions. Concerning state capacity, the Philippines is recognized as
a state that has established a relatively high level of gender equality (World Economic Forum 2018). This means that the Philippines had built up institutions for the promotion of gender equality prior to the implementation process (GIWPS 2015; WE Act 1325 2016). This can be traced back to the establishment of the Philippine Commission on Women on January 7, 1975, and includes its recognition for complying with international treaties on women’s rights, such as the CEDAW. The Commission on Women is a policymaking body in charge of overseeing gender policies, advocating for gender mainstreaming, and encouraging gender equality across all government institutions (GIWPS 2015: 107). It was elevated to an essential role after the end of Ferdinand Marcos’ dictatorship in 1986. The following democratically elected government and the first female president, Corazon Aquino (1986–1992), promoted multiple policies through the Commission to address issues on participation, development, and violence against women (GIWPS 2015: 107). In 1987, the new Philippine Constitution integrated gender equality as a basic principle. In the 1990s, several gender equality laws and programs were ratified, such as the Women in Development and National Building Act (1991), the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (1995), and the Anti-rape Law (1997). In addition, the government signed the 1995 General Appropriation Act stating that gender and development policies should contain at least 5% of the total budget of government agencies (WE Act 1325 2016).

A significant step toward developing laws and policies was taken in 2009 when the Philippines government signed and ratified the Magna Carta of Women. The interviewees recognized this document as one of the milestones towards an integrated national gender policy, which rearticulates former laws and includes specific clauses to attend to special needs in conflict zones. For example, one of the interviewees stated:

With the Magna Carta, we wanted to distinguish a disaster from a natural calamity and conflict contexts ... the needs are different, you cannot put them together ... So we created the Magna Carta, we had the gender budget that is also in the Magna Carta, we had the Commission on Women

8 This is further supported in other gender equality indices. For instance, V-DEM datasets rank the Philippines above the average of Asian countries on gender indicators, such as women’s political empowerment index, women’s civil society participation index, women’s political participation index, and gender equality in respect to civil liberties (Coppedge et. al. 2021). Similarly, the Women, Peace and Security Index places the Philippines in the second quintile of countries with better status related with inclusion, justice and security for women (GIWPS-PRIO 2021).
that is the operating mechanism, and also the NAP on women, peace and security.

Interview 2 2018

In addition, CSOs and the government collaborated on gender equality in the context of conflict by adapting to the international norm on Women, Peace and Security. On March 1, 2010, the Philippine Government adopted a NAP on Women, Peace and Security (OPPAP 2017). A network of 35 CSOs, known as “the Women Engaged in Action on UN Security Council Resolution 1325” (WE Act 1325) was established on November 27, 2010. It became the leading partner of the government for the implementation of the NAP (WE Act 1325 2016). The preceding national gender equality policies and capacities contributed to the effort on adapting Women, Peace and Security to the Philippine context. One of the interviewees took part in the initial NAP consultations and confirmed how the gender bureaucracies enabled the government to design the first NAP:

The NAP is not the first plan on gender; it was the first plan with a security focus ... so the challenge was to the take the architecture that we have already, on peace and gender, and to use that architecture and extend the discourse on women, peace, and security.

Interview 2 2018

Combined, these state policies and capacities came to affect how the parties to the peace negotiations integrated the accumulated knowledge on women’s issues and the promotion of gender equality in two respects. First, during the peace negotiations, Peace Panel Chair Coronel-Ferrer, who had led the initial efforts to design the NAP, handed the text of UNSCR 1325 to the MILF panel as a symbol to raise awareness of Women, Peace and Security to the rebel group. Second, she appointed members to the working groups who had long experience in implementing these gender and development policies in the Philippine state. An interviewee highlighted that:

It was at the level of the technical working groups, ... our chair on the annex for wealth-sharing – the Regional Director of the National Economy and Development Agency – she knew the gender language and gender discourses at the National Economic Development Agency ... She could bring these issues up at the technical working group level ... I mean, of course, there were general guidelines. We were talking about taxes, grants, laws, and credits, but then she brought in items like women in
development and all of that ... If the regional director was a man, I don't know how far we would be able to reach in terms of gender propositions.

Interview 4 2018

The quote refers to Maria Lourdes Lim, who pushed for the provision in the wealth-sharing annex that states that “the Bangsamoro shall set aside at least 5% of the development funds that it receives for support programs and activities for women in accordance with a gender and development plan” (CAB 2014). This provision speaks directly of the former gender and development policies granted by the Women in Development and National Building Act that established the gender and development plans at all administrative levels. Thus, the peace talks kept the gains already reached and utilized the gender bureaucracies to include gender provisions in the CBAB.

After the CAB was signed in 2014, several Philippine state agencies gave institutional support to CSOs to include new gender provisions in the crafting of the BOL. Notably, the Philippine Commission on Women and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process encouraged public consultations with women's organizations and supported the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (Philippines News Agency 2014). This became particularly salient in the early phases of crafting the BOL when congress members, government officials, and civil society actors feared that the Bangsamoro government would adopt Sharia law. This was argued as potentially leading to future setbacks on the participation and protection of women gained at the national level (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2015). However, due to the experience of government gender officials actively supporting the process, the signed BOL did not ignore women's rights. Instead, the BOL reaffirmed multiple national policies such as the Gender and Development plans (Article XIII, Section 3), gender budgets (Article XIII, Section 5) and the recognition of the CEDAW (Article IX, Section 13) (BOL 2018). A civil society member asserted:

National laws should apply to them [Bangsamoro Region], and there's no need for them to enact another bill. I think that the laws should not be lower than the standards at the national or international level because we have the Magna Carta, an anti-trafficking law, a sexual harassment law…. They’re not perfect, but they should not enact a law that is at a lower standard than we already have.

Interview 8 2018

Although the Philippines developed considerable expertise in gender policies, it would turn out that the use of this state capacity depended on whether
or not the government had the political will to push on gender issues. Under Aquino's administration, gender equality was prioritized on the political agenda; the first NAP was promoted and signed, and several women were appointed as heads of different ministries and departments. However, under Duterte's administration, gender equality lost priority, and women were less frequently appointed to high-level positions. Importantly though, even if he was known for his misogynist and sexist statements at public events, gender equality was not removed entirely from his political agenda (Ellis-Petersen 2019).

What we can conclude from our analysis is that the Philippine state’s substantial laws, policies, and capacity on gender equality during the critical first stages of the implementation process made it possible to incorporate and prioritize the CAB gender provisions in the BOL. State capacity provided political opportunity for women’s CSOs to channel their demands toward key actors and decisions. Finally, inclusion of the gender provisions in the BOL was also possible due to the willingness of Aquino’s government to prioritize gender equality issues. However, this willingness lagged under the Duterte government, which has increasingly deprioritized gender equality issues, though minimal representation of women in the BOL implementing bodies was maintained. Still, this indicates the role of a potential fourth explanatory cluster, the political will and ideology of the ruling elite.

The Mobilization of Women’s Organizations

The second cluster refers to how women’s organizations might affect the implementation. As described, women’s CSOs have a long history of political participation in the Philippines even if Bangsamoro-based women’s organizations are more recent. At the time of the peace agreement’s adoption and implementation, a report by UN Women (2016) found 157 women’s CSOs in Muslim-dominated areas in the Bangsamoro. Some of these Bangsamoro-based women’s organizations had actively participated in the peace talks and were to play important roles in the implementation process, such as the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy, the Teduray Lambangian Women’s Organization, and We Act 1325. Still, this difference between the national and

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9 Under Duterte’s administration, the gender composition of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission changed, reducing women’s representation in the mechanism.

10 Duterte appointed women as heads of some departments (for example, Irene Santiago, chair of the Implementing Panel of the CAB resigned), but the national appointments show a more male-dominated cabinet.
regional highlights the variation in gender roles and equality at the subnational level. What role did this then play in the peace process?

At the peace negotiations in 2010–2014, the negotiators consulted with a range of women's organizations. Women's civil society acted through a multi-staged process where they collaborated to advocate for their participation at the table and the inclusion of their needs (GIWPS 2015). When the peace process turned to the implementation stage, the women’s CSOs further strengthened this collaboration and formed a more cohesive joint strategy through a common position paper. This enabled them to more strongly lobby for the inclusion and translation of the CAB gender provisions into more specific legally binding commitments in the crafting process of the BOL. A government official asserted:

There are Bangsamoro women's groups actively advocating for the body. They submitted a position paper to us which we have reviewed, and the recommendation is incorporated already in the BOL.

Interview 35 2019

In addition to the pressure of the women’s CSOs, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission formally included four women representatives in both versions (see Table 2). Most of these women representatives were also selected from women’s CSOs, such as Froilyn Mendoza, an indigenous women and director of the Teduray Lambangian Women’s Organization, and Johaira Wahab and Raissa Jajuire who founded and led Nisa Ul Haqq, a national organization of Filipino women that promotes gender equality. Though their participation, civil society could directly channel their demands to the Commission which was drafting the BOL.

Two illustrative examples demonstrate how women’s organizations were able to influence the peace process and the crafting of the BOL. The first is the Women’s Peace Table, launched in 2013 (Interview 8 2018). This body conducted peace consultations with the MILF and government members, and carried out activities in Bangsamoro with women’s organizations to lobby for gender-specific provisions in the implementation law (Mendoza 2015). In an interview, one of the members explains:

We are a big group. We said that if the BOL passed, women had to be prepared for self-government. We call ourselves the Women’s Peace Table. It was very informal, you know, we wrote to the MILF Central Committee. So, we said we want to talk to you about what we can do. But several months passed ...[and] there was no response. And then suddenly they
said, okay, we’re ready to talk to you ... and then, they said, can you please clarify what you really want and what is this feminism that you are talking about. So, I let them talk, but then Chair Iqbal was very curious ... and I said, these women really want to talk to you, because they really want to help, and we are here because we have quite a lot of experience about how governance works. So, in other words, my message was: You need us more than I need you. We just want to be sure that women are part of the process.... I think this is the first time that organized women’s groups have participated in the peace process in every step.

Interview 8 2018

In 2016, the Women’s Peace Table led a summit for drafting the BOL, entitled “If the Women Drafted the Bangsamoro Law”. The summit resulted in a political agenda that contained a variety of propositions on gender clauses (WAGI 2016). This included proposing to ensure gender balance in non-elective government positions, two seats in the parliament reserved for women, and that the Council of Leaders would be composed of 40% women. These written proposals were shared with lawmakers and stakeholders involved in the crafting of the law.

The second example was sponsored by Conciliation Resources. This London-based organization coordinated a project with Nisa Ul Haqq Bangsamoro, Teduray Lambanguian Women’s Organization, the United Youth of Philippines-Women (UnYPhil-Women), and We Act 1325. The partners engaged in 75 consultations with about 3,000 women from Bangsamoro (Conciliation Resources 2016). These consultations resulted in the ratification of a document named Women’s Contributions for a Better Bangsamoro for All. This document proposed 67 new gender clauses distributed across 11 different themes. The agenda was validated at a Women’s Summit on March 7, 2014 and handed over to the Chair of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission. The Bangsamoro-based organizations provided their knowledge of issues related to women’s situation in the Bangsamoro, and We Act 1325 was mainly engaged in lobbying during the crafting of the BOL. Conciliation Resources argued that the project could shift the perceptions and actions of elite male Muslim power-holders in the

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11 It is important to clarify that while the summit occurred 20 days before the signing of the CAB (March 27, 2014), the document was handed over to the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, which was officially formed on December 27, 2013. This indicates that the government and civil society were already preparing for the implementation phase months before the official signing of the CAB.
Bangsamoro region towards the acceptance of women's rights (Conciliation Resources 2016).

This experience depicts how these women's organizations at the national and regional levels worked in cohesion, combining different skills to pressure the parties to prioritize the gender provisions. In discussing the role of women's organizations, it is critical to observe that women do not constitute one coherent group. In fact, discussions on identifying the best strategies to influence lawmakers on the design of the implementation law led to some general disagreements between women's organizations. Some of these divisions capture differences in views on how to progress gender equality between the state and regional level. For instance, organizations disagreed on the proposition of a 50/50 gender quota (Interview 5 2018). The Bangsamoro-based organizations claimed that the gender norms and roles could not be changed as drastically as the Manila-based organizations were proposing. Moreover, there was a general friction at the lobbying level. National level organizations were focusing only on the gender-specific provisions, while the regional organizations claimed that the lobbying strategy should not lose sight of the provisions that would grant the Bangsamoro autonomy. A Bangsamoro-based women's organization stated:

> It became very problematic, during the lobbying, because you know, non-Moro women, they were noisier as compared to women from Bangsamoro. It also became quite problematic when you are saying that we believe in the gender provisions and we know that is very important, but during the lobbying, they were carrying that alone. If you look at the wholeness of the bill because, if you were saying to the government: We just want this and we don't care about others provisions ...[if] we had bad elements in budgeting, there will not be enough money for gender activities ... So, there was friction between CSOs coming from Bangsamoro homeland and Manila because we looked at this differently.
> 
> Interview 25 2018

Despite the heterogeneity of claims and standpoints, the women's organizations worked strategically to ensure that the heterogeneity did not jeopardize their cohesion, and thereby their influence on the implementation process. Rather, our fieldwork material demonstrates that the active mobilization of women's groups, the insertion of demands in written joint agendas, and continuous monitoring and lobbying with the lawmakers contributed to the acceptance of women's demands in the BOL. Additionally, the two examples illustrate that women's organizations actively sought to harness the different
sets of expertise of the organizations (lobbying skills and regional knowledge) to strengthen their influence. This signaled to the main implementation stakeholders that they could rely on the capacity of the women’s organizations which, in turn, positively affected the implementation of gender provisions.

What is noticeable, is that the women organization’s influence on the implementation process mainly took place under the Aquino administration. When Duterte took over, the change in administration created challenges, primarily related to changes in the government personnel and political will. CSOs found it difficult to form networks with the newly appointed officials as these, in turn, operated under more limited political will to continue with the gender equality agenda (Interview 30 2018).

**Gender Awareness of International Actors**

The third explanation to probe is the potential role of international actors – their awareness and willingness to promote gender provision implementation. In fact, during the implementation phase, the CAB process formally received support from twelve countries – including Indonesia, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Turkey, United Kingdom, Japan, and Norway, two international organizations – the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and seven international non-governmental organizations, including The Asia Foundation, Center of Humanitarian Dialogue, Conciliation Resources, and Muhammadiyah (see Supplemental Materials for a list of the actors). This international involvement included representation across five of the formal CAB implementation mechanisms. Interestingly, even though we would expect international actors to be gender-aware, as visible in Table 4, the representation of women among the international actors was notably low. International actors appointed 18 people of which only two were women: Emma Leslie, a representative of Conciliation Resources, and Mô Bleeker, the Chair of the TJRC. Leslie recognized that: “If you see the pictures and contrast that with the Philippines where there are women in both government and the MILF panels, you realize that the international community did not do so well” (AIPR 2015 142).

In terms of support to gender provision implementation, our field work and written sources indicate that neither states nor international organization representatives brought much direct gender awareness to the implementation mechanisms. For instance, as revealed during our interview with the Independent Decommissioning Body, there was no specific plan to address the different needs women and men have during the demobilization process (Interview 3 2018). Hence, although countries such as the UK, Australia,
Canada, and Norway have a long history of support for women’s agendas worldwide, the only country that was tangibly recognized for employing these principles in the CAB implementation process was Switzerland. This was done through the provision of gender experts who assisted the TJRC Chair, improving and broadening the capacities of the commission on gender analysis in the final report. None of the other actors contributed directly by pushing for gender provision implementation in their interactions with the Philippine state or the MILF representatives.

In contrast to the states and state-based organizations, international NGOs more actively supported and promoted gender projects. This included organizations, such as the Asia Foundation, the Centre of Humanitarian Dialogue, and Conciliation Resources, which all have a long presence in Bangsamoro working with local civil society. For instance, the Asia Foundation has intensely focused on strengthening governance and women’s political empowerment:

"We always have a strong gender component, and it’s mostly on women issues, not all the other gender issues. We funded research on gender and conflict in Mindanao [and] we had previously done work with the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao Commission on Women."

Interview 13 2018

Additionally, Conciliation Resources directly supported the peace process in developing a gender agenda towards drafting the BOL, as we discussed earlier. Likewise, the organization brought other international peace lessons to

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**Table 4** International actors in CAB mechanisms: gender composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Contact Group</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Commission on Policing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Decommissioning Body</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Monitoring Team</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-Party Monitoring Team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Figures were collected through interviews with international actors.
improve the policy advocacy of women’s organizations in Bangsamoro. They carried out a Colombia-Philippines project to promote cross-country lessons, especially on how women’s CSOs can participate in peace processes (Herbolzheimer & Leslie 2013).

The picture is more nuanced if we examine indirect forms of support, in addition to direct support for implementation. Here, international organizations, states, and international NGOs significantly contributed in Bangsamoro both before and after the signing of the peace agreement. This involved primarily funding and support to women CSOs. Notably, international organizations such as the European Union, UN agencies, and the World Bank have funded women’s organizations and participation through different locally-based projects:

There’s a push coming from donors for increased participation by women. It’s usually part of the conditions when donors, like the EU and Australia, give grants to include some provisions for women. This has an effect of getting more women involved, for example, you have the National Women’s Commission.

Interview 6 2018

For example, UN Women (2016) identified existing women leaders and women’s organizations to determine the baseline capacities and to develop training kits to strengthen women’s leadership and participation in Bangsamoro. Furthermore, countries such as Australia, the US, the UK, Canada, Norway, and South Korea have funded a wide range of projects from women’s organizations and government programs on gender issues. International funding was one of the primary sources that fostered involvement by women’s organizations in crafting the BOL.

After the informal group [Women Peace Table], which we continued for about two years, we got formal support from USAID to campaign for gender-sensitive Bangsamoro, and to organize women so that they will be more active in their political participation and the peace process ... After that, we had another two-year project that was supported by the US State Department, where we trained women to participate, not only politically, but also economically.

Interview 8 2018

Overall, however, although we observed significant work done by organizations such as the World Bank and United Nations agencies towards a gender equality agenda in Bangsamoro, these organizations did not support or
monitor the implementation or directly contribute to the implementation of the gender provisions in their dialogues with the state or the MILF. This could have been significant in order to increase political pressure as the political will decreased after Duterte came into power. In contrast, the financial support of international actors to local women’s organizations resulted in a more substantial indirect impact on the implementation phase.

Conclusions

Our analysis of the initial stages when the CAB turned into an implementation process, and the gender provisions turned into actual reforms demonstrates the complex mechanisms and conditions at play. Turning an agreement into visible reforms involves a number of critical decision points where the priority of gender provisions was weighed against other reforms and where political pressure, capacity, and will appear to be key.

First, we expected that state capacity on promoting gender equality would enable gender provision implementation. The Philippines has adopted many legal bills and policies to improve the participation and protection of women since 1975. This proved important in two respects: first, in the process of formulating the BOL – this law was made to agree with pre-existing gender equality laws, and second, earlier state efforts to reinforce and realize the objectives of existing gender equality laws had resulted in a reasonably high level of state capacity to achieve reforms on gender in the implementation process.

In addition, our analysis uncovered a related, fourth, theoretical cluster to examine in future studies: the role of political will and ideology of state elites. Notably, we could detect a clear difference between Aquino’s and Duterte’s administrations in prioritizing gender equality. As prioritization of a gender provision appears to be central for its implementation, political will is a factor that can constitute the bridge between capacity and results. This factor has been noted in other studies as explaining variations in peace agreement implementation (Joshi & Quinn 2015) and on the effect of gender equality in post-war periods (Olsson & Joshi, 2021). Moreover, this change in political will at the state level additionally impacted the ability of women’s CSOs to pressure the Bangsamoro elites, which from the outset had been more negative in addressing gender equality. This tension between the state and regional level is interesting given the current discussion on subnational variation in gender equality levels (Forsberg & Olsson 2021; Gizelis 2011). In fact, some interviewees stated that variations in gender norms and women’s empowerment exist within Bangsamoro’s main ethnic groups (Maguindanao, Maranao and Tausug), and their views of religious practices.
Second, our analysis demonstrates the critical contributions of women's CSOs. Women's organizations acted strategically in two respects. They actively selected to focus their efforts on influencing the crafting of the BOL, and they created networks to amplify their capacity. This form of engagement contributed to the addition of 23 new gender clauses in the implementation law. In this context, the study additionally demonstrated the importance of the high degree of collaboration between women's organizations and women personnel working in the Philippine state, that is, state feminists (Hernes 1987). This network, combined with the state capacity, meant that institutions could effectively channel the demands of women's organizations. These actions and decisions highlight the importance of further examining the prioritization and engagement strategies of women's organizations.

Third, we studied whether and how the degree of gender awareness and support of international actors affected the implementation of gender provisions. Our expectation was that gender equality should constitute a priority for most international actors. However, in the case of the CAB process, most international actors were found not to directly advocate for gender provision implementation in the formal implementation mechanisms where they interacted with the state and MILF representatives. With the exception of the TJRC, even the representation of international actors was gender imbalanced. Instead, our examination illustrates a more indirect alternative path for how some international actors impacted the implementation. States, such as the UK, Norway, and Canada, and international NGOs, such as Conciliation Resources and the Asia Foundation, contributed positively through financing and capacity-building projects to strengthen the work of women's organizations. Hence, instead of directly putting external pressure on the former warring parties to prioritize gender provisions, international actors indirectly supported the internal demands of women's organizations for gender provision implementation.

These findings provide relevant insights into the theoretical understanding of gender provision implementation in initial stages. In short, we find that state capacity to promote gender equality improved the ability to implement the gender provisions and that it created an institutional basis for women's organizations to lobby for prioritizing gender equality. The engagement strategy of women's organizations to focus their efforts and to develop women's organization networks, in turn, increased their influence on the implementation process. This can be further illustrated through the experience of the WE Act 1325 network. This initiative originated as a women's network that aimed to monitor and support the implementation of the Philippine National Action Plan on WPS. Not long after this, the chair of the WE Act 1325 network, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, was chosen to chair the peace negotiations, where she strongly...
advocated for gender provisions. In the subsequent implementation process, WE Act 1325 partnered with two Bangsamoro-based women’s organizations and with Conciliation Resources to carry out consultations and formulate a women’s agenda of demands to push in the crafting of the BOL. International actors were central as they funded these women’s organizations. In the illustration, the UK and EU funded the WE Act 1325 initiative and contributed to the process where the eight CAB provisions were translated into 23 new gender provisions in the BOL.

The novel empirical results provide useful theoretical pathways for advancing and refining our current understanding on gender and peace agreement implementation – pathways which provide venues for future research where these theoretical ideas can be examined in both comparative studies and tested through quantitative research. The relevance of this can be further illustrated by the newly developed Implementing Gender Provisions Dataset which shows that, between 1975 and 2017, 105 peace agreements were adopted that contained gender provisions (Forsberg et al. 2020). Based on these data, the Philippines could be expected to have a much higher degree of state capacity on gender equality compared to Sudan (agreement in 2005), Uganda (2008), Central African Republic (2015), and Burundi (2006); these agreements also appear to have yielded less progress on implementation. That said, we might expect similar gender provision implementation progress in cases like Colombia (2016) or Indonesia (2002), which have more comparable levels of state capacity, women’s engagement, and international awareness in comparison with our CAB case study. Colombia and Indonesia are additionally interesting to compare as they represent implementation processes regarding both governmental and territorial peace agreements.

In conclusion, our study of the CAB implementation process emphasized the dynamics of the initial critical stages of turning negotiated provisions into actual reforms. This underlines the importance of considering potential differences in phases of the implementation process in future studies, in particular those affecting decisions on priorities among provision types. Hence, future research should consider the connections between earlier and later reform decisions and their impact on gender equality developments, the life quality of women and men, and sustainable peace.

Supplementary Material

Supplemental Materials for this article are available at: https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.21214931.
References


