CASE STUDY ON MINDANAO THE PHILIPPINES

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IN PEACEBUILDING

JICA

GEORGETOWN WOMEN PEACE

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The Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security have joined forces on a collaboration at the nexus of gender, peacebuilding, and disaster risk reduction. Each institution has produced original, evidence-based, and policy-oriented research on these critical topics, to be released as case studies. The ultimate goal of this partnership is to use the unique resources and perspectives of each institution to identify effective policy and programming options for development agencies working to advance women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction.

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Abbreviations

ALMAKKA	Alliance for Modern Women
ARMM	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
BBL	Bangsamoro Basic Law
BDA	Bangsamoro Development Agency
BIAF	Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces
BIWAB	Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade
BTC	Bangsamoro Transition Commission
CAB	Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DV	Domestic Violence
GAD	Gender and Development
ILAGA	Ilonggo Land Grabber's Association
IP	Indigenous People
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LGU	Local Government Unit
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process
PCID	Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
SWC	Social Welfare Committee
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children

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Executive Summary

Since the 1990s, there has been increasing recognition by the international community of the importance of integrating women's voices and experiences into peacebuilding efforts. Traditionally, conflict was considered a male arena: men dominated the high politics determining the winners and losers of conflict,[1] while women were merely on the periphery, compartmentalized as conflict "victims" needing special protection. However, the need to involve women in peacebuilding processes became the focus of discussion as the number of female victims of internal conflicts rose and understanding of women as crucial actors in conflict mediation, resolution, and prevention increased.[2]

Adoption, on October 31, 2000, of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace, and security accelerated this understanding, highlighting the importance of strengthening women's participation and leadership in conflict resolution, prevention, and reconstruction. Integrating women and their specific needs and perspectives in peacebuilding has become an international norm, based on empirical evidence and globally available knowledge.[3]

In reality, however, women's participation and leadership remain invisible, especially in formal decision-making processes.[4] Many field operations undertaken by international development agencies, including the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), still often treat women in the same manner as children, the elderly, and disabled people, viewing them merely as conflict victims and passive receivers of protection. To date, efforts to strengthen women's participation and leadership in decision making, as active agents of change for peacebuilding and development, have been insufficient; even when such efforts are made, they often focus more on numerical targets for women in leadership positions than on the content and quality of their participation and leadership. Without empirical analysis of the complex and dynamic features of women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding, including the implications, effective approaches to advance this are yet to be grasped by development actors.

This study aims to promote a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of women's participation and leadership in ongoing peace processes by investigating the conflict-affected areas of the Philippines. As prior studies principally promote theoretical understanding of the importance of women's participation and leadership, means to effectively promote women's role and advance their participation and leadership remain on the margins of most policy discussions and reconstruction efforts by donors.[5] This study's empirical analysis and findings aim to transcend the rhetoric, providing insight into how best to improve development agencies' policy programming

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[1] Masako Ishii, "Joseino funsoukeiken heno approach," *Watashitachi no Heiwa wo Tsukuru, Global jidai no Heiwagaku* 4 (houritsu Bunkasha, 2004): 191.
[2] Nicola Pratt, and Sophie Richter-Devroe,. "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13 (2011): 489–503.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Funmi Olonisakin, Karen Barnes, and Eka Ikpe, "Women, Peace and Security: Translating Policy into Practice," in *Contemporary Security Studies*, (Kings College, London, 2011): 4.

and promote the implementation of pragmatic assistance to advance women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding.

Objectives of the Case Study

This case study analyzes the complex and dynamic features and context of women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding processes by examining the socio-economic attributes of women in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. Focusing on the armed conflict in the Southern Philippines – in particular, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) – it investigates the different levels and features of participation and leadership, and the barriers thereto, among women with different socio-economic statuses, seeking knowledge and insight to help advance local women's participation and leadership.

To this end, the following questions were posed:

1. In what ways have women experienced conflict differently based on their social identities?

2. Who is participating and exercising leadership in the ongoing peacebuilding processes? Who is excluded therefrom? What factors affect the different levels of participation and leadership?

3. What kind of female leadership is needed to realize peace in Mindanao? Which elements are key?

4. What can be learned to effectively enhance women's role in peacebuilding?

The case study comprises a literature review and field research. Nineteen focus group discussions were held with 146 people from various socio-economic backgrounds in Mindanao. Thirty-eight individuals, including representatives of various organizations, were also interviewed in Manila and Mindanao.

Women's Experience in Conflict

Mindanao's women have experienced conflict differently based on their social and cultural identities. Muslims were particularly affected by the regional conflict and clan conflicts called "*rido*": many experienced the loss of family members, disruption of regular daily life, displacement, and physical attacks in the form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Although non-Muslim indigenous women were not directly involved in the regional conflict, they were also affected by displacement and disruption of livelihood activities. Such experiences have driven economically vulnerable indigenous people's (IP) households deeper into poverty. The status of indigenous women in the conflicts was also exacerbated by cultural practices, such as early marriage and domestic violence.

However, conflict and the subsequent transition period also open unique new spaces for agency and leadership, pushing these women into previously unavailable private and public sphere opportunities. They have gradually increased their voice, mobility, and roles in the household and

community to provide for family welfare, security, and the reconstruction of communities affected by conflicts.

Women's Participation in Peacebuilding

Despite their increased voice, mobility, and roles during conflict, women continue to face significant challenges in their participation in peacebuilding; their status and obstacles to participation in these processes depend on social standing, including religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class.

Women's Participation in Political Peace Processes

Though women's participation in Mindanao's peace processes is internationally recognized as a successful example, it is, in truth, limited to a handful of wealthy women from elite families and clans with strong political and social ties to influential men. Support from politically influential men is a key determinant of women's participation in political processes. Despite a tendency, especially among Muslim women who have organized themselves and completed higher education, to increase their space in the political sphere, decision making continues to rest with influential men. Thus, these women are denied full decision-making and management power due to male-dominant, patriarchal gender norms. Furthermore, division among women from diverse backgrounds also hampers their efforts to effectively raise their voices and influence political peace processes.

Grassroots political participation of the majority of Bangsamoro's women has been greatly hampered by the double burden of reproductive and productive labor; lack of access to education, information, and social networks; and limited connections with influential men. Indigenous women in rural communities are especially affected by inaccessible education and the aforementioned double burden.

Women's Participation in Socio-Economic Development

Female participation in socio-economic development during the peace processes has also been limited to a handful of less economically challenged women. Poor rural women, especially the indigenous, are often unable to participate in socio-economic development activities, faced with the same barriers that restrict their grassroots political participation. Even when able to participate in such activities, mobilized by external actors, their participation often remains passive, being only targets of information dissemination or awareness raising. Government members and development practitioners persistently enforce male-centered views, with women kept at the periphery of livelihood support. Additionally, there are often divisions and disparities among women in a conflict-affected community, with marginalized group members facing additional discrimination and barriers from other women regarding access to resources and effective participation.

Women's Participation in Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Women are similarly disadvantaged regarding participation in community conflict resolution mechanisms. Among Muslims, the prevailing male-dominant social structures treat men as decision makers and deny women a say as either arbitrators or parties in disputes. While, conversely, some indigenous women play an arbitrator's role in their traditional justice system, the influence of

cultural beliefs and patriarchal practices precludes their participation from addressing peace and security issues specific to them, such as violence against women.

Lessons Learned for the Advancement of Women's Participation

A range of actions is needed to eliminate barriers around the lives of women at the household, community, and national levels, in order to advance their participation. The following highlights key actions on the advancement of women's participation in Mindanao's peacebuilding process.

1) Ensuring gender and diversity analysis in promoting peacebuilding

Rather than treating women as a homogeneous group, it is important to understand the diversities among them, based on their social attributes, and to promote strategic assistance by examining their different barriers to and opportunities for participation. Thus, gender analysis should be based not only on gender differences but should also examine the local context, where power dynamics are influenced by ethnicity, class, religion, and cultural differences among women.

2) Direct grassroots assistance to help women remove practical barriers at the household level

Enhancing women's access to basic needs

In both Muslim and IP communities, particular efforts should be made to eliminate various barriers around women's lives at grassroots and household levels, e.g., by strengthening access to basic needs, such as water and sanitation systems, community roads, schools for children, and hospitals, thereby reducing the burden of reproductive responsibilities. Poor women, especially the indigenous in rural areas, also need literacy and education support to enable their participation and effective organization.

Supporting the improvement of women's livelihoods

Efforts should also be made to strengthen poor women's livelihoods, enabling escape from poverty and participation in community development. Rather than conventional livelihood support, the intervention for women should be scaled up to involve acquisition of new, marketable skills to promote economic empowerment. Introducing entrepreneurship and microfinance components to enhance women's capacity to effectively organize themselves, network, and access information and other community networks, may also be helpful.

3) Building community-level networks and solidarity among women across religious and cultural identities

Lack of opportunities to network at the community level is another major barrier to women's participation, limiting their ability to voice and address their own needs collectively. Supporting indigenous women to effectively network, through livelihood programs, education, and community infrastructure development is deemed effective to help them increase their voice and influence in decision-making processes within the public sphere. The study also identified that division along

cultural and religious lines especially hampers vulnerable women from accessing the information and opportunities required to participate in statebuilding processes. Development interventions should further facilitate networking between women from diverse religious and cultural identities.

4) Strengthening alliances with men to eliminate discriminatory cultural and social practices

In male-dominant families and communities, women's participation often depends on men's understanding and support. Thus, key male academics, advocates, and other allies should be expressly invited to join specific dialogues and activities supporting women's participation. An effective means is to involve Muslim or Sharia scholars, particularly experts in Islamic teachings on women's rights.

5) Strengthening gender-responsive local governance and service delivery

Currently, local government efforts to promote women's participation often fail to fully grasp the needs and reality of women in local communities, due to the absence of effective support networks, institutions, and local governance resources. Development of local government capacity should be supported by promoting data collection and analysis to identify local women's needs and issues and clarify community power dynamics. The government response to violence against women is also seriously deficient, with many female victims forced to remain silent by cultural taboos. Governmental capacity to provide responsive services and eliminate such violence must be further strengthened.

Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding

Participation alone is not enough for peacebuilding, for which leadership should promote desired social change. Women's leadership is considered a powerful driving force for integrating women's voices and experiences into peacebuilding processes and facilitating collective female action to achieve positive peace. Conversely, merely installing women in leadership positions is insufficient to change the lives of other women, as the female leaders do not necessarily have awareness of or concerns regarding structural inequalities and the plight of poor women.

Women in Conventional Leadership Roles and Transformative Leadership Roles

In Mindanao, some women assume leadership positions through links to elite clans and families as daughters, sisters, wives, or relatives of politically powerful men. Nonetheless, these women do not necessarily have awareness of or concerns about structural inequalities or the needs of socially marginalized women. Conversely, some female leaders from both elite and non-elite backgrounds do possess a strong sense of agency and awareness of women's rights issues. However, their leadership seldom seeks to strongly challenge gender norms and relations, often being limited to preserving and expanding cultural and religious identities, rather than building alliances with diverse communities.

Conversely, some female leaders are endeavoring to address marginalized women's needs and concerns and challenge the unequal social structures and gender norms. Though not always

formal leaders, they mobilize women and men of diverse backgrounds in conflict-affected areas to improve their lives, bring justice and equality, and build a resilient community through peacebuilding processes.

Desired Elements of Women's Leadership

The study identifies that the type of female leader desired by Mindanao communities is a woman who objectively seeks to achieve justice, equality, and collective well-being for the community's women and men; she should work to achieve these goals by focusing on the marginalized and most vulnerable groups of people fragmented throughout society, speaking up about their needs, and uniting people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds to build societies respecting diverse values and rejecting discrimination and violence. In essence, female leaders need to promote transformative leadership and social change in peacebuilding by challenging structural inequalities, including patriarchal gender power relations. Thus, within this context, the goal of advancing women's leadership in peacebuilding does not concern simply substituting male leaders with females.

Lessons Learned to Advance Women's Leadership

1) Provide training on gender-sensitive transformative leadership for female leaders

Current female leaders must be given opportunities to increase their capacity for transformative leadership, focusing on their knowledge of gender and diversity and providing skills for strategic planning, gender and diversity analysis, facilitation, management, communication, collaboration, and collective decision making. Increasing their understanding of the international normative frameworks they are able to utilize, and the thematic post-conflict issues, such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, elections, would also be effective.

2) Support female leaders to promote more dynamic transformational social change

Promote women's leadership at grassroots level

To promote transformational social change for peacebuilding, promotion of grassroots leadership is indispensable. Leadership is not limited to an appointed position or role: anyone can lead in any given situation. In the prevailing circumstances in Mindanao, more attention and support should be given to women's grassroots-level initiatives for leadership in peacebuilding processes.

Promote strategic alliances among diverse female leaders

Efforts to reduce divisions among women must be facilitated, supporting them to establish link-ages and convene dialogues among women and female leaders divided by ethnicity, religion, and/or class. Such facilitation efforts support women to build a common agenda, a unified platform of interests, and constituencies for social change toward peacebuilding. Providing opportunities to strengthen alliances among diverse female leaders would potentially close current gaps in knowledge and perceptions, alongside strengthening efforts to overcome differences and promote effective peacebuilding actions.

Alliance with key male members

A key component of advancing women's leadership is to engage male leaders, thus avoiding their resistance and hostility and promoting more dynamic transformational social change. Female leaders currently tend to be confined to traditional gender roles, with women subordinate to men; women's tendency to internalize ideology also hampers other female leaders' efforts. Donors and CSOs have devised ways to work with Muslim scholars and religious leaders to empower women and secure gender equality, nurturing and expanding relations and networking with male advocates of women's human rights and peace at the community level using local terminologies within Islamic teachings.

Support women in gender-responsive transformative leadership to scale up their initiatives

Women lack funding and networking opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and expand their operations. Support should be expanded for women already exercising transformative leadership initiatives at grassroots level.

Introduction

1. Introduction

The Philippines has experienced over 40 years of internal armed conflict on the country's southern island of Mindanao, as the resident Muslim population continues to demand self-determination. Since the late 1960s, the conflict between Muslim separatists and the Christian-dominated government has killed approximately 160,000 people and displaced more than two million.[6]

After a decade-long peace process, the Philippine Government and the Muslim Separatists, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), signed a final peace agreement (Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, CAB) in March 2014, moving the conflict into a transition period toward the establishment of a new autonomous political entity called "Bangsamoro."[7] Currently, the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), the legal basis for this new entity, awaits passage through the Philippine Congress. After the BBL's approval, it is expected that a public referendum will be conducted to finalize the areas to be included in Bangsamoro, and a new Bangsamoro Government will be established.[8]

The Philippines was the first Asian country to adopt a National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000), and the Mindanao peace process is perceived internationally as a successful example of women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding processes.[9] At the formal level, the first Chief Negotiator for the Philippine Government was female, and women have served as negotiation panel members and technical advisers. At grassroots level, women have organized local consultations, training, advocacy, and lobbying activities to promote peacebuilding by ensuring women's needs and rights are fulfilled. Such visible participation and leadership by women have produced tangible outcomes: e.g., in the historic CAB, 8 of the 16 articles refer to mechanisms for engaging women in governance and development, and/or protecting women from violence.[10] Moreover, the new Bangsamoro Government is expected to earmark at least 5% of its official development funds for programs targeting women.[11]

Nevertheless, there remain significant challenges to women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding processes in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas. Studies indicate that men continue to dominate the formal peace processes and hold decision-making power in the region.[12] Furthermore, as clans dominate politics in Mindanao, only women from elite clans tend to participate in

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6 Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, *Religious Conflict Resolution on Mindanao,* (George Town University, 2013).

7 *Bangsamoro* refers to the nation of Moro in the Southern Philippines.

8 Conciliation Resources, *Operationalising women's "meaningful participation" in the Bangsamoro: political participation, security and transitional justice*, (Conciliation Resources, September 2015), www.c-r.org.

9 Conciliation Resources, *Accord Insight: Women building peace,"* (Conciliation Resources, March 2013), http://www.c-r.org/sites/default/files/AccordInsight_WomenBuildingPeace_1.pdf, accessed May 26, 2015.

10 UN Women, *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, (UN Women, 2015), http://wps.unwomen.org/~/media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf, accessed January 17, 2016.

11 Ibid.

12 Rosalie Arcala Hall and Joanna Pares Hoare, "Philippines," *Women in Conflict and Peace* (2015), http://www.idea.int/publications/women-in-conflict-and-peace/upload/Women-in-Conflict-and-Peace-philippines.pdf, accessed January 19, 2016.

and lead the peacebuilding processes, with most women at grassroots level marginalized and not fully participating.[13]

This case study examines the complex and dynamic features and context of women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding processes, by examining the socio-economic attributes of women in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. Focusing on the armed conflict in the Southern Philippines, in particular, the ARMM,[14] it investigates the different levels and features of participation and leadership, and barriers thereto, among women with different socio-economic statuses, seeking knowledge and insight to help advance local women's participation and leadership.

To this end, the following questions were posed:

1. In what ways have women experience conflict differently based on their social identities?

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4. What can be learned to effectively enhance women's role in peacebuilding?

By addressing these questions, the study's findings are expected to help development agencies to grasp the policy implications and best approaches for effectively advancing women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding.

The paper first explains the framework of analysis, followed by the research methodology. A brief background of the conflict in Mindanao is then provided, before exploring women's conflict experiences. The paper next examines the different levels, features, and barriers to women of different socio-economic status participating in peacebuilding processes, offering insight for development agencies seeking to advance women's participation. Before drawing conclusions, the paper finally explores the desired form of women's leadership in Mindanao, including the key elements and the actions needed to advance women's leadership.

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Currently, ARMM is composed of five provinces, namely Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Basilan (except Isabela City), and Tawi-Tawi. Armed conflicts waged by other insurgency groups, such as the New People's Army (NPA), are not covered by the present study.

Literature Review: Framework of Analysis

2. Literature Review: Framework of Analysis

2-1   Peace, Peacebuilding, and Development

In peace and conflict studies, the theory of peace is seen to have two sides: "negative peace" and "positive peace." "Negative peace" refers to the absence of war, conflict, and violence.[15] Conventionally, peace has been understood as the absence of war or other direct forms of organized violence.[16] However, Johan Galtung (1969), a principal founder of peace research, engendered a paradigm shift in the understanding of peace by introducing the concept of "positive peace," referring to the absence of not only personal or direct violence but also structural or indirect violence, such as poverty, hunger, oppression, marginalization, and discrimination.[17]

Galtung also developed the concept of "peacebuilding" by calling for structures to promote sustainable peace by both addressing the root causes of violent conflict and strengthening local capacities in peace management and conflict resolution.[18] Following the publication of former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report – defining "peacebuilding" as "actions to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict"[19] – the concept moved to the forefront of intergovernmental discussions. Growing awareness of peacebuilding has enhanced international recognition of its close link to development, as the "causes" of armed conflict are intimately associated with development issues.[20] While, given the complexity of conflict backgrounds, no general root causes can be applied to all conflicts,[21] causal arguments presenting important policy links between peacebuilding and development have raised awareness that conflict is often caused by the absence of capacity or political will to provide the basic functions necessary for social change, including poverty reduction, equality, development, security, and protection of human rights.[22]

Within this context, the role of development assistance in peacebuilding has been emphasized, to build capable, legitimate, and responsive states, without a risk of relapsing into conflict, through "statebuilding": an endogenous process to enhance the capacity of governments and public institutions to respond to citizens' needs, including promoting political processes to reflect these needs

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[15]   Loreta Narvarro-Castro and Jasmin Nario-Galace, *Peace Education – A pathway to a culture of peace*, (Center for Peace Education: Miriam College, October 2010): 20.

[16]   Ibid.

[17]   Ibid.

[18]   Johan Galtung, "Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding. From Impact of Science on Society," 1/2, PRIO publication No. 25-9, 283-304: 297, http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/international_law/users/vessier9/public/Galtung%20-%20Three%20Approaches%20to%20Peace.pdf, accessed May 2, 2016.

[19]   Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping," A/47/277 - S/24111, (June 1992).

[20]   Thania Paffenholz, "Understanding the Conflict-Development Nexus and the Contribution of Development Cooperation to Peacebuilding," in *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution,* ed. Dennis J. D. Sandole, (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009): 272-285.

[21]   Hideaki Shinoda, "Re-considering the Concept of Peace-building from Strategic Perspectives on International Peace Operations," *Hiroshima Peace Science* 24 (2002): 21-46, http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/heiwa/JNL/24/Shinoda.PDF, accessed January 13, 2016.

[22]   Ibid.

and creating conflict-resilient societies.[23] The core of statebuilding lies in the concept of "building back better" for lasting peace, rather than restoring the society that used to exist.[24] Post-conflict peace should not replicate the pre-conflict situation. In this respect, it is believed that development efforts for statebuilding must always be accompanied by structural social change.[25]

2-2   Why Gendered Peacebuilding Matters

Despite growing understanding of peacebuilding, feminist peace researchers have highlighted that, within positive peace theory, the concept lacks a gender perspective.[26] They argue that positive peace concepts are only partially understood in the current situation, characterized by oppression of many women by existing social systems. In particular, the need to recognize violence against women as a structural, rather than personal, issue is strongly advocated, reflecting an inherent feature of gender inequality under patriarchal systems, used to control the lives, bodies, and sexuality of women by individual men, male groups, and patriarchal institutions and states.[27]

Discussion on the nexus of gender and positive peace has yielded an abundance of research revealing the gender-specific impact of conflict, namely that women's and men's experiences of conflict, and its impacts upon them, differ. Women and children often face more difficulties as internally displaced persons and refugees,[28] while women's post-conflict life expectancy typically declines more than men's due to economic hardship, displacement, the impact of HIV/AIDS infection, and rising maternal mortality rates.[29] When men leave to fight, women must support their families as head of the household, in addition to their traditional reproductive role. Through such disruption to their livelihoods and limited access to social protection and welfare, including education, women face difficulties earning enough to look after themselves and their families.[30]

Women's experience as SGBV victims is another major aspect of conflict's gender-specific impact. Many studies have revealed that, with an increased amount of weapons, no rule of law, and aggravated masculinity, violence tends to occur more intensively during conflict. Moreover, more women suffer from SGBV inflicted not only by their "enemies" but also their husbands or other family members in private.[31]

Takenaka (2006) argued that the aim of peacebuilding should be "to build a society with peace where women's freedom, equality and participation is also achieved with no gender discrimination

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[23] OECD, "Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Stability: Policy Guidance," DAC *Guidelines and Reference Series*, (OECD Publishing, 2011): 20.

[24] OECD, "Gender and Statebuilding in Fragile and Conflict-affected States," *OECD,* 2013, http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/gender_statebuilding_INCAF.pdf, accessed January 19, 2016.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Kozue Akibayashi, *"*Anzenhoshou to Gender ni kansuru Kousatsu,*" Gender Studies*7 (2004), 73-85: 75, http://www.igs.ocha.ac.jp/igs/IGS_publication/journal/7/5.pdf, accessed May 3 2016,

[27] Ibid.

[28] Anna Louise Strachan and Huma Haider, *Gender and Conflict: Topic Guide,* Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, (University of Birmingham, 2015):11.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Caroline Green and Caroline Sweetman, "Introduction to Conflict and Violence," *Gender and Development* 21, no.3 (2013): 423-431.

including oppression of and violence against women."[32] Furthermore, Cynthia Cockburn (2013) argued that patriarchal societies, characterized by unequal gender relations, tend to relapse into conflict.[33] Citing patriarchal gender relations that emphasize the dominant notions of masculinity – characterized by authority, coercion, violence, and female subordination – as one of the causes of violence and oppression within a society, fueling a tendency toward militarization and armed conflict, she promoted eliminating the social shaping of masculinity and structural gender discrimination as an important dimension of conflict prevention.

While women and girls are more likely to be victims of SGBV, recent research indicates that such offenses against men and boys are also widespread during conflict,[34] with members of sexual and gender minorities, i.e., homosexual, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons (LGBTI), particularly targeted.[35] Male victims experience social stigma and community marginalization, which has a deeply adverse effect on their psychological, social, and economic status.[36]

Peace for women (and men) cannot be achieved without eliminating gender inequality as part of the structural inequalities and discrimination norms that legitimize violence. It is now widely acknowledged that statebuilding must include the challenging of patriarchal gender power relations.[37]

2-3   Women's Participation and Leadership in Peacebuilding

More than a decade after UNSCR 1325 (2000) was adopted, highlighting women's role as an active agent of change in peacebuilding, there is now strong support for the view that women have a vital role and responsibility in shaping peace, as citizens, educators, economic actors, mothers, community mediators, and leaders of civil society groups and, furthermore, that women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding is indispensable to challenge patriarchal gender power relations and achieve positive peace for both men and women.

Despite understanding the theoretical importance of women's participation and leadership across a range of peace and conflict prevention efforts, development assistance remains inadequate in promoting the same. On the ground in conflict-affected areas, concerns have been growing that development assistance misunderstands women's peacebuilding participation as simply mobilization, representation, or merely increasing the number of females involved. Development assistance also tends to treat women's leadership in a limited way, targeting only elite women for leadership positions or politicians as beneficiaries and stakeholders. While "women's participation" and "women's leadership" are often discussed together in the literature, implying that these two dimensions encompass the same elements and determinants, this case study examines the features of both

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[32]   Chiharu Takenaka, "Peacebuilding and Gender," *heiwaseisaku*, (Yuhikaku, 2006): 305-332
[33]   Cynthia Cockburn, "Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12, no. 2 (2010): 139-157.
[34]   Strachan and Haide, GSDRC, 2015. http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/gender_conflict.pdf, accessed June 26, 2015.
[35]   Ibid.
[36]   Ibid.
[37]   OECD, "Gender and Statebuilding in Fragile and Conflict-affected States," *OECD*. 2013. http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/gender_statebuilding_INCAF.pdf, accessed January 19, 2016.

within peacebuilding, aiming to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of both issues.

2-3-1 Analysis of Women's Participation

"Women's participation" has been understood as the right to engage in society and to make decisions that impact their lives.[38] It also aims to empower the individuals with whom women are involved, to increase their awareness and confidence, and to influence decisions on peacebuilding or development activities that will affect them. The participation process is believed to influence the empowerment of individual women, the sustainability of development projects, and the strengthening of civil society.[39]

The abundance of international politics, sociology, and international cooperation research discussing the promotion of women's participation in decision making focuses mainly on the number of women involved in peacebuilding. While this is important for the collective incorporation of women's voices into male-dominated decision-making processes, sheer numbers do not automatically bring qualitative changes in peacebuilding and development. Women's inclusion for its own sake has been widely evidenced and criticized:[40] often cited by feminist peace researchers as the "just add women and stir" approach, this instrumentalizes women's lives and fails to challenge patriarchal systems and structures.[41]

Within this context, researchers and policy makers in peacebuilding and development have become increasingly aware that the quality of women's participation must be ensured, with the voices, interests, and needs of women from various social groups being heard, negotiated, and reflected in decision-making processes.[42] Nevertheless, when emphasizing the quality of "women's participation" in practice, the term "meaningful participation" is often used vaguely, without in-depth explanation of what it constitutes.

In the field of development, some attempts to analyze the depth, levels, and impact of participation have employed a typological analytical framework called the "ladder of participation" model, developed by Sherry R. Arnstein, an American sociologist.[43] Arnstein defined participation as a distribu-

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[38] Andrea Cornwall, "Beneficiary, Consumer, Citizen: Perspectives on Participation for Poverty Reduction," Sida (2002), http://www.sida.se/contentassets/232a6ee3f3504314b13dc2d793933b03/beneficiary-consumer-citizen--perspectives-on-participation-for-poverty-reduction_1627.pdf, accessed February 19, 2016.

[39] Womankind Worldwide, "Women's civil and political participation," https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/women's-rights/participation-and-leadership, accessed March 17, 2015.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Andrew Kardan, Jeremy Holland, and Stephen Jones, "A framework for Analyzing Participation in Development," Oxford Policy Management (May 2013).

tion of power among citizens who do not hold power. The different participation levels are shown as eight rungs of a ladder (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Arnstein's Ladder of Participation Model[44]

8. Citizen Control	• **Citizen Power** (obtaining full managerial power)
7. Delegated Power	• **Citizen Power** (achieving dominant decision-making authority)
6. Partnership	• **Citizen Power** (enabling to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with powerholders)
5. Placation	• **Tokenism** (allowing to advise but powerholders retain the right to decide)
4. Consultation	• **Tokenism** (consulting without assurance that their concerns and ideas will be considered)
3. Informing	• **Tokenism** (one-way flow of information with no channel for feedback)
2. Therapy	• **Non-participation** (enabling powerholders to "cure" the participants")
1. Manipulation	• **Non-participation** (enabling powerholders to "educate" the participants")

(Source: Oxford Policy Management 2013)

While Arnstein's work was originally devised to analyze the levels and degrees of citizen participation, it has since been applied to show the direction of participation among development agencies.[45] Nevertheless, there has been little prior effort to analyze participation from a gender perspective, and there is a tendency among development agencies to see women's participation as a matter of "ticking the box."[46]

This case study employs Arnstein's model to measure the level of women's participation in the Mindanao's conflict-affected areas. Critics of this analytical framework counter that, in reality, participation does not deepen over time in a manner analogous to ascending a ladder; other criticisms include its omission of the diverse and complex aspects of participation processes, such as changes in individual intentions to participate over time and the influence of external controls.[47] Though some researchers have proposed improved versions of the model,[48] Arnstein's simple and clear version, which is possibly the best known and is frequently cited, is considered relevant and useful for this case study, and is helpful for examining the different types and levels of women's participation in Mindanao.

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[44] Sherry R Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." *JAIP* 35, no.4 (1969): 216-224.
[45] Oxford Policy Management, 2013.
[46] Katrina, Lee-Koo, "Translating UNSCR 1325 into Practice: Lesson's Learned and Obstacles Ahead" in *Responsibility to Protect and Women, Peace and Security,* ed. Sara E. Davies, Zim Nwokora, Eli Stamnes, and Sarah Teitt, (2013), 35-52: 47.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

Furthermore, there are criticisms that existing policies and practices for women's participation have yet to recognize the intersections between gender and other social structures – at which oppression and marginalization occur (e.g., nationality, class, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and age) – as factors affecting the various levels of women's participation.[49] Despite women being neither a homogeneous group nor one social category, the generic language of "women's participation" has failed to engage with the multiple identities women form through their social identities and where the roots of gender inequality are entrenched.[50] There is now growing recognition that, to advance women's participation in peacebuilding, the diversity of their identities, roles, and experiences, and how these are shaped by the different challenges and impacts of conflict, must be addressed.

Therefore, this study specifically considers women's socio-economic attributes, on the fundamental understanding that women are not homogeneous and their experience and challenges in conflict and peacebuilding vary, depending on the gender norms shaped by other social categories, including class, ethnicity, and religion.

2-3-2 Analysis of Women's Leadership

Advancement of women in leadership roles has traditionally focused on increasing women's political participation or the number of women in leadership positions:[51] e.g., increasing female representation in governments or other leadership positions through quotas has been widely discussed as a strategy for creating positive peace for women and society.[52] However, the mere representation of women in politics or leadership positions does not automatically (or necessarily) engender desired changes in peace, social justice, and development outcomes.[53] Globally, decision-making spaces are male-dominated, with modeling of prevailing male behaviors by female leaders often encouraged and rewarded, which may compromise their principles.[54] It is, therefore, argued that merely ensuring women participate and hold formal positions of power is insufficient to advance women's roles in leadership.[55]

Recent growing discussions focus especially on changing the formal and informal rules and norms central to discrimination against and the exclusion of vulnerable people in society. These discussions promote the exercise of "feminist transformative leadership" by women at every level of society.[56] The concept of feminist transformative leadership became widely known during the late 1990s.[57] It is often defined as a process of changing existing unequal power structures, distribution,

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[49] Anna Louise Strachan and Huma Haider, *Gender and Conflict: Topic Guide,* Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2015): 7.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Oxfam International, "Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights: An Oxfam Guide," (May 2014), https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/transformative-leadership-womens-rights-oxfam-guide.pdf.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Patricia Justino, et al., "Quantifying the Impact of Women's Participation in Post-Conflict Economic Recovery," *Households in Conflict Network* (November 2012), http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/3221/HiCN-WP-131.pdf;jsessionid=09C0B146101C79453FABB353BD0A2D87?sequence=2, accessed June 1, 2015.

[54] Oxfam International, "Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights," 11.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Peggy Antrobus, "Transformational leadership: Advancing the agenda for gender justice," *Gender and Development*.8, no.3 (2000): 50-56.

and systems to guarantee social justice, equality, and equitable distribution of resources: this is achieved by transforming and empowering others through influence and collaboration, cooperation, and collective decision making.[58]

"Leadership" is often understood as the "process of organizing or mobilizing people and resources in pursuit of particular ends or goals, in a given institutional context of authority, legitimacy and power."[59] Conventionally, leadership style has often been founded on existing power structures, shaped by a masculine, hierarchical belief system "that values independence, competition, distance, autonomy and power."[60] Contrary to this "transactional leadership" approach, which seeks to preserve the status quo and rewards followers for meeting specific goals or performance criteria,[61] feminist transformative leadership emphasizes equality and empowerment, not control, focused on changing the unequal distribution of power in society by eliminating oppressive practices toward marginalized groups.[62] While "power over" is associated with transactional leadership, "power with" is the defining feature of feminist transformative leadership, focused on maximizing one's own potential or positive power while building others.[63]

Finally, it must be noted that women's participation and leadership are multi-dimensional and interdependent processes, involving social, political, economic, and legal changes enabling women to *meaningfully* participate in shaping their own futures. Women's leadership can be an outcome of women's participation, but it can also be a driving force to promote women's participation and collective action for social change. Recall, though, that leadership is not always linked to an appointed position or role: anyone can be a leader, or take on a leadership role, in any given situation.[64]

Based on current discussions, this study understands women's leadership to be a driving force in promoting women's participation and collective action for social change. Accordingly, the following working definition of women's leadership examines the key elements of desired leadership in the context of peacebuilding in Mindanao:

> *She is not only a woman but also has a vision and the relationship skills to hear the needs of women from diverse backgrounds. She can lead women and men of diverse backgrounds to achieve social change in peacebuilding.*

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[58] Marry Wanida, "Challenging structural Inequalities: The vision of Feminist Transformative Leadership," *BUWA! - A Journal on African Women's Experiences: Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa*, (2009): 47-52.

[59] Heather Lyne de Ver, "Conceptions of Leadership," *Developmental Leadership Program* (March 2009), http://publications.dlprog.org/Conceptions%20of%20Leadership.pdf, accessed January 14, 2016.

[60] University of Calgary, "Feminist Transformative Leadership," *Our voices* 1, no. 3 (2008).

[61] Wanida, "Challenging structural Inequalities," 50.

[62] Oxfam International. "Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights."

[63] Ibid., 9.

[64] Ibid., 11.

Some argue that context, including the culture and region, is relevant to desired leadership; moreover, in practice, top-down leadership is often observed in conflict settings. However, this case study presupposes that the style of women's leadership required in Mindanao's peacebuilding context will mobilize women and men from diverse backgrounds, listen to and speak up for people in need, particularly women, and build a new society promoting a culture of sustainable peace, addressing the root causes of structural violence, and changing existing inequalities in the power structures.

Methodology
of the Study

3. Methodology of the Study

The case study comprises a literature review and field research. Existing academic papers and reports on social and gender issues in Mindanao, as well as donor reports, are reviewed to develop understanding of the nature of conflicts and of women's experiences in conflict and transitional settings. Interviews were conducted among key groups and individuals in both Manila and Mindanao's conflict-affected communities. Nineteen focus group discussions were organized, involving 146 people (93 women and 53 men)[65] from various socio-economic backgrounds in Mindanao. Individual interviews were also undertaken in Manila and Mindanao with 38 representatives of various organizations, including government officials at central, regional, municipal, and *barangay*[66] levels, as well as international aid agencies, women's civil society organizations, peace panel members, and one religious leader.

3-1   Target Conflicts and Area of the Case Study

The target conflicts in this case study comprise the regional conflicts waged by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the MILF, and area-specific clan conflicts, called "*rido,*" often caused by political rivalries and land disputes in Mindanao. Regarding the regional conflicts, while the case study also examines women's experiences *during conflict*, its main focus is to understand the status and issues of women's participation and leadership in the ongoing peace process *during the transition period* from the signing of the peace agreement to discussions on the BBL in Congress. Furthermore, this study's analysis of women's participation and leadership centers around Track 2 and Track 3 processes.[67]

Maguindanao province in Mindanao was selected for the study's field research component, due to the area's socio-economic relevance and physical accessibility. Part of the southwestern group of islands of Mindanao, this province is predominantly inhabited by Muslims. According to the Human Development Index, in the provincial rankings, Maguindanao is ranked in the bottom ten for the entire Philippines, with low levels of life expectancy, education, income, and equality.[68] Socio-economic development in Maguindanao is considered to be adversely affected by multi-faceted conflicts. It is also one of the four provinces with the highest number of *rido* incidences.[69]

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[65] Approximately 6-7 people participated in each focus group discussion.

[66] A *barangay* is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and is equivalent to a village.

[67] "Tracks" indicate different levels of negotiation activities. Track 1 is direct negotiations between official representatives of warring parties, while Track 1.5 involves official and non-official representatives of warring parties taking place in informal settings in a personal capacity. Track 2 refers to activities with influential non-official persons on both sides, and Track 3 involves grassroots actors and activities on both sides (see Patty Chang, *Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*, (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2015), https://giwps.georgetown.edu/sites/giwps/files/Women%20Leading%20Peace.pdf, accessed January 18, 2015.)

[68] Human Development Network, *2012/2013 Philippine Human Development Report*, (2013), http://hdn.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/7thPHDR_full.zip, accessed February 9, 2016).

[69] Ibid.

Within Maguindanao, three *barangays* were selected for the field research: 1) Barangay Kibleg in Upi municipality; 2) Barangay/Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat municipality; and 3) Barangay Makabiso in Sultan Mastura municipality. The selection criteria were as follows: presence of women and men from various backgrounds, including religion and ethnicity; influence of regional conflict and/or *rido*; target community for peacebuilding assistance by development agencies, including the JICA; and physical accessibility and low security risks.

These *barangays* represent the diverse socio-economic characteristics of the Mindanao communities and the different experiences of conflict. In addition to the three *barangays* in Maguindanao province, interviews were also conducted with a number of community members around Pikit municipality in Cotabato province to generate a broader understanding of *rido* conflicts in different contexts.[70]

3-2 Categorization of Women by Social Class and Religious/Cultural Identity

The religious and cultural identities of the Mindino people are divided into three major groups, generally known as "Tri-people." The groups comprise Muslim tribes called "Moros," Indigenous Peoples (IPs) known as "Lumads" (meaning "native" or "indigenous") who practice ancestral beliefs, and Christian settlers originating from the islands of Luzon and Visayas.[71] Among the Tri-people, the Muslim groups are this study's particular focus, as they are the minority and the key interest group in the ongoing peace process. The experiences and perspectives of the IPs are also examined, as another minority group on the island with distinct identities and cultures. Furthermore, while women in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas are the main target of the case study, close attention is also paid to the involvement of Filipino women activists and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) based in Manila, recognizing their critical role in the peace processes.

In addition, the identities of Mindanao's women are known to be fragmented along class lines.[72] Historically, politics in the southern Philippines has been dominated by "clans" (individuals tied by kinship) from the traditional *sultanate* and *datu* systems.[73] To date, it is the clan elites from the former royal families who hold political and economic power as politicians, religious leaders, and landlords, and it is these individuals who penetrate the formal institutions to extend the power of their respective clans.[74] The case study, therefore, takes class lines into consideration, alongside

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[70] The province of Cotabato is not part of the ARMM.

[71] It is estimated that 18.5% of the population are Moros, 8.5% are IP, and the majority are Christians (Alistair MacDonald and Gabriel Munuera Viñals, *The EU and Mindanao: innovative avenues for seeking peace*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper (June 2012): 97.)

[72] Dwyerand Cagoco-Guiam, "Gender and Conflict in Mindanao."

[73] A sultanate is the land ruled by a sultan (Muslim king or ruler). Sultanates, such as the Sultanate of Sulu and the Sultanate of Maguindanao, were founded in different parts of Mindanao between the 15th and 20th century. *Datu* is also a title used for native royalty in the region. (Office of the President, "The History of Muslims in the Philippines," Republic of the Philippines, http://www.yuhikaku.co.jp/books/detail/4641183430, accessed July 13, 2016.)

[74] Peter Kreuzer, "Political Clans and Violence in the Southern Philippines," *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt* (2005), http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2008/260/pdf/PRIF_71.pdf, accessed February 8, 2016.

women's economic status, as one of the key social elements in analyzing their differing experiences and levels of participation and leadership in peacebuilding activities.

3-3 Limitations of the Case Study

The case study has several limitations. First, although it examines the diversity of women's ethno-linguistic backgrounds in Mindanao by categorizing them into three groups, based on the Tri-people concept, due to language differences, cultures, and identities, such as Tatusugs, Maranaos, and Maguindanaons among Muslims, further internal divisions exist.[75] This case study does not consider such detailed divisions. Second, while the case study analyzes the different experiences of local women based on their socio-economic attributes, including religion and ethnicity, its focus is placed on Muslim and IP women as the minority groups most affected by the prolonged conflict. In this respect, the representation of Christian women in the field research and interviews is limited. Finally, the target *barangays* for the field research were selected to ensure a balanced representation of women's diverse socio-economic backgrounds and experiences of conflict. However, they are not representative of all the women of Mindanao. It is hoped that the identities and voices of women introduced by the case study can, nonetheless, offer relevant and useful empirical data and analysis for development actors assisting women in similar contexts.

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[75] There are 13 Muslim tribes (Moros), 18 IP tribes (Lumads), and 64 Christian groups. See Isis International, *Recognising Women's Participation in Sustainable and Lasting Peace: Research Report, Women and Peacebuilding, Philippines*, (Quezon City: Isis International, 2011).

The Context

4. The Context

Mindanao is the second largest of the Philippines 7,100 islands and islets, forming one-third of the Philippines' landmass; its 21 million residents, comprising Muslims, Christians, and IPs, represent a quarter of the Filipino population.[76]

Conflict ignited in the late 1960s, when the growing number of Christians from the northern Philippines settling in Mindanao caused a drastic demographic change.[77] This resettlement was promoted by the central government under the Marcos regime (1965-1986), and eventually established a Christian majority in Mindanao. Muslims and IP became the minority groups in their homeland, losing traditional land titles and enduring the weakening of their political influence.[78] In addition, logging, mining, and plantation businesses promoted by the central government further marginalized the lives of Muslims and Lumads by damaging the ecology, which is a source of their livelihood.[79]

By the late 1960s, triggered by inequality, marginalization, oppression, and poverty following the resettlement, alongside development policies perceived by many Southerners as unjust, the secessionist MNLF had intensified its armed resistance to Christian-dominated central government in Manila, endeavoring to gain Moro independence. The MNLF sought to unite the Muslim tribes and forge a new identity separate from the Philippine Government. Full-scale civil war erupted in 1972 when President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law following increased armed resistance by the MNLF. Since then, the long-term conflict has resulted in over 160,000 deaths and many injuries and displacements.[80]

An end to the conflict was first in prospect in 1976, when the Tripoli Agreement between the MNLF and the Philippine Government declared a general ceasefire and called for a semi-autonomous government. Subsequent to the initial agreement, the ARMM was established in 1989; the 1996 Final Peace Agreement (also known as the Jakarta Accord) was subsequently reached between the state and the MNLF.[81] ARMM obtained special autonomous status with the right to elect its own officials, levy taxes, and set education and development policy. However, the MILF, which separated from the MNLF, rejected the agreement, pursuing a fully independent Bangsamoro state, and

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[76] Berkery Center, "The Philippines Religious Conflict Resolution on Mindanao."

[77] Patty Chang et al., "Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines," *Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security,* (2015): 99.
https://giwps.georgetown.edu/sites/giwps/files/Women%20Leading%20Peace.pdf, accessed January 18, 2016.

[78] The issue of ancestral domain involves land claimed by both Muslims and IP. See Yuri Oki, "Land Tenure and Peace Negotiations in Mindanao, Philippines," (2013), http://environmentalpeacebuilding.org/assets/Documents/LibraryItem_000_Doc_150.pdf, accessed September 9, 2016.

[79] Chang, *Women Leading Peace.*

[80] NOREF, "The Peace Process in Mindanao, the Philippines: Evolution and lessons learned," (December 2015), http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/a6c4f7339db9c90cd15a63c85405404e.pdf, accessed January 27, 2016.

[81] Ibid.

vowed to continue the Moro's struggle. The MILF's emergence was followed by over a decade of violent clashes and sporadic peace negotiations between them and the national government.[82]

After numerous attempts to resolve the conflicts, peace negotiations between the two parties were revived in 2010 under President Benigno Aquino III. The Philippine Government and the MILF signed the CAB in March 2014 towards the establishment of a new autonomous political entity called "Bangsamoro." The draft BBL's passage, the legal basis for the creation of Bangsamoro, through the Congress has been delayed by a number of contentious issues relating to power sharing between the Philippine Government and the MILF, as addressed in the bill; this has led to a lengthy process of interpellation. Therefore, the timeline for establishment of the Bangsamoro Government is presently unknown.

Although Mindanao's conflict is often regarded as ethno-religious, Rufa Cagoco-Guian (2009) argued that, to promote peacebuilding, it must be examined within the broader social and economic context.[83] Albeit partly shaped by religious differences, the conflict is rooted in the economic deprivation caused by competing interests in land and other natural resources, and identity issues emerging from the *de facto* second-class status of much of the Muslim population.[84]

Furthermore, greater attention should be paid to the situation of Mindanao's IPs,[85] a number of which were also, historically, pushed aside by the Spanish and American colonizers, Christian settlers, and the Moros themselves. They were first displaced from the lowlands to the highlands, then pressured by the rush of outsiders wanting to exploit the timber and the gold located there.[86] Today, they are viewed as inferior, even by the Moros, and often lack a role and voice in the peacebuilding processes.[87] Economic deprivation, combined with a sense of injustice, often inflames conflict. Within this context, it is argued that greater attention should be given to involving the IPs in peacebuilding, and that the equitable distribution of resources and social development for peacebuilding in Mindanao should both be promoted.[88]

The persistent threat of *rido* conflicts between families, clans, and communities is also considered a major factor behind social instability in Mindanao.[89] Such violent conflicts, driven mainly by land disputes and political rivalries, have reportedly increased in recent years while conflict waged against the state has stabilized since the ceasefire agreement.[90] *Rido* conflicts have resulted in countless deaths, injuries, and displacements, sometimes escalating into armed confrontations between insurgent groups and the military. Many community members feel *rido* conflicts pose a

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[82] Leslie Dwyer and Ruth Cagoco-Guiam, "Gender and Conflict in Mindanao."

[83] Ibid.

[84] Thomas Parks, Nat Colletta, and Ben Oppenheim, "The Contested Corners of Asia" *The Asia Foundation*, (2013), https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/ContestedCornersOfAsia.pdf, accessed January 27, 2016.

[85] Masako Ishii, "Philippines nanbu no futatsu no senjyumin to heiwakouchiku."

[86] Ibid.

[87] Faina Ulindang, "Lumad in Mindanao," *National Commission for Culture and Arts, Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines*, (2015).

[88] Masako Ishii, "Philippines nanbu no futatsu no senjyumin to heiwakouchiku."

[89] Magno Torres III, ed., "Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao," *The Asia Foundation,* (2007), https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/PHridoexcerpt.pdf, accessed January 27, 2016.

[90] UNOCHA, "Philippines (Mindanao) Humanitarian Action Plan 2013," https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/2013_Philippines_HAP.pdf, accessed January 27, 2016.

higher security risk than vertical conflict.[91] Thus, the prevention, mediation, and resolution of *rido* conflicts are also understood to be critical for peacebuilding in Mindanao.

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[91] Carijane Dayag-Laylo, "Exploring Conflict Management in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao," (2004), http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/ExploringConflict.pdf, accessed January 27, 2016.

Women's Experiences in Conflict

5. Women's Experiences in Conflict

Mindanao's women have experienced various hardships during the conflict, including losing family members, disruption of regular life, displacement, and physical attacks in the form of rape, sexual abuse, and domestic violence perpetrated by the military and family members.[92] Nevertheless, it is apparent that women in the conflict have gradually increased their voice and decision-making power within the household and community, discovering a new role and breaking traditions to increase their public presence.[93] Meanwhile, their conflict experiences vary depending on their age, ethnicity, and religion. This section explores how women experienced the conflict differently, based on their social and cultural identities.

5-1   Muslim Women's Experience of the Regional Conflict

Muslim women in the target communities were more affected by the armed conflict between the Philippine Government and the armed insurgent groups (especially the MNLF and MILF) than women from other ethno-linguistic groups.[94] In particular, during the 1970s conflict under martial law, Muslim women aged above 50 experienced various difficulties at the community and household levels, including losing family members, displacement, disruption of livelihood activities, poverty, and a lack of mobility and access to basic needs. During the interviews, women in Barangay Kibleg and Barangay Darapanan shared their fear of violence, their grief at losing husbands and other family members, and their struggles following displacement with children and no source of income. A 54-year-old Muslim woman reflected, "I had to evacuate from one place to another with children when my husband was killed in 2001."[95] A 52-year- old Muslim man also stated, "There was a huge evacuation for years and people were forced to live in makeshifts in various areas. Men were in the forest away from the military and women were left with an economic burden to look after their children."[96]

Many Muslim men and women in Barangay Kibleg and Barangay Darapanan also expressed fears and anger that women were targeted for sexual violence. A 47-year-old Muslim woman reflected, "In 2000, seven women in my community were raped in conflict."[97] A 40-year-old Muslim man, a MILF combatant, also relayed his own painful experience: "My aunt was raped. She killed herself after being psychologically affected."[98]

5-1-1 Muslim Women in the Household and Community

Conversely, the study found that Muslim women have changed their perceptions of themselves and society, emerging as agents of change by increasing their mobility and economic roles to reconstruct their conflict-damaged lives. A 52-year-old Muslim woman in Barangay Kibleg noted,

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[92] Isis International, *Recognising Women's Participation.*
[93] Leslie Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam, "Gender and Conflict in Mindanao."
[94] Ibid.
[95] Interview No. 21, August 3, 2015.
[96] Interview No. 22, August 3, 2015.
[97] Interview No. 14, July 31, 2015.
[98] Interview No. 25, August 5, 2015.

"women became actively engaged in agricultural activities and small businesses such as sari-sari stores[99] while men were absent."[100] Another Muslim man echoed, "while men became absent from the household as they went to the battlefield, women who were left with children and an economic burden were compelled to take over the role as heads of households and breadwinners from men."[101]

 Traditionally, Muslim women were perceived to follow the strictest gender norms among the Tri-people women of Mindanao. Prior to the conflict, Muslim communities preserved a clear division of labor between men and women according to the Islamic gender norms.[102] Women stayed at home to fulfill the reproductive role of housewife and mother, their access to education and economic activities being severely limited.[103] However, once the conflict started, men's absence from the household, either in battle or hiding from the military, women left with children, family members, and an economic burden were compelled to assume responsibility for managing the farm, maintaining livelihoods, and looking after their families, replacing men as the head of the household and breadwinner. A woman, therefore, was compelled to expand her mobility and participate in the public sphere to engage in social and economic activities. The number of Muslim women who became Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) – an apparently good option to alleviate economic hardship – also increased. Thus, the conflict transformed traditional norms and changed women's perceptions of themselves and their society.

5-1-2 Muslim Women as Combatants and Auxiliaries

Muslim women's role and space in the private and public spheres also increased through exposure to new roles and experiences as combatants and auxiliaries of the MNLF and MILF. In Barangay Kibleg, some women in their 50s shared their experiences of training and fighting as MNLF combatants, recalling that a limited number of women, those deemed sufficiently physically and mentally strong, were recruited as combatants by the MNLF, with some even picked to lead male combatants. Other women also joined the Women's Committee under the MNLF to provide food and medical assistance to male combatants.

Women in the MNLF were kept active in their activities by shifting their engagement to post-conflict reconstruction after signing the peace agreement in 1996; however, many Muslim women were also mobilized to join the struggle by the MILF.[104] Under the MILF's Central Committee, two women-only units were established: the Social Welfare Committee (SWC) and the Bangsamoro Is-

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[99] Sari-sari stores are small retail shops. They exist in almost all communities of the Philippines and are mostly privately owned.
[100] Interview No. 17, August 1 2015.
[101] Interview No. 14, July 31, 2015.
[102] Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam, "Gender and Conflict in Mindanao."
[103] Ibid.
[104] Muslim women have also been involved in reconstruction and development projects on livelihood support, the provision of social services, and capacity building initiatives supported by international donors. (Interview No. 2 July 27, 2015)

lamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB).[105] The motivations for and circumstances of joining the BIWAB differ among Muslim women: some needed support after losing family during the conflict, while others, reflected a 34-year-old BIWAB member, "wanted to be part of the *jihad"* to combat state-imposed oppression and injustice.[106]

The case study found that both the conflict and subsequent transition periods enabled Muslim women to be actively engaged in the private and public spheres. Women are evidently cognizant that their roles have changed and their capacity has increased through exposure to new roles and experiences outside the household.

5-2   Indigenous Women's Experience in Conflict

Though not directly involved in the MNLF/MILF-government conflict, Mindanao's non-Muslim IPs were certainly affected in the form of displacement and disruption of livelihood activities.[107] For instance, indigenous women in Barangay Kibleg recalled that, under martial law in the 1970s, all community members, including men, were forced to stay at home for six months, surviving on government-provided food relief. Some lost their houses and had to evacuate to other areas. Such experiences drove the economically vulnerable IP households deeper into poverty.

While Muslims and Christians often share economic and living spheres, IPs have, historically, been pushed to live in remote highland areas, including mountains and forests.[108] They are often subsistence farmers without livestock and cultivatable land, and usually maintain their livelihood through daily labor, slash-and-burn farming, and trading with neighbors; many face poverty.[109] In these circumstances, as the conflict escalated and mobility was restricted, IPs' livelihoods further deteriorated.

IP group women are considered to be the most disadvantaged groups in Mindanao due to the patri-archal gender norms deeply embedded in IP society. IP gender norms are generally perceived as less strict than Muslim norms,[110] with IP traditions emphasizing communal ownership and life, and

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[105] The SWC, organized at regional, provincial, municipal, and *barangay* levels, plays a supportive role in the MILF through activities such as fundraising for combat, raising community awareness of Islamic teachings, and strengthening mutual support systems among the members. The SWC also provides emergency assistance through basic provisions, such as water, food, and medical support, to injured combatants (Interview No. 24, 4 August, 2015). In contrast, the BIWAB is an auxiliary counterpart to the male-only Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF). The BIWAB is mainly responsible for food and first aid support to the BIAF. Compared to the SWC, the BIWAB is more technically oriented due to its military nature. Though the BIWAB has a non-combatant stance, anchored in the Islamic teachings that women cannot engage in war, its members do receive military self-defense training, including how to handle and use weapons, how to read a map, and various military tactics, such as guerilla warfare (Interview No 29, 6 August, 2015).

[106] Interview. No. 23, August 4, 2015.

[107] *Lumads* represent indigenous people who did not convert to Islam. The group has a population of approximately 2 million and consists of 18 ethno-linguistic groups. Research has also shown that some IP were mobilized by the Ilonggo Land Grabber's Association (ILAGA) at the beginning of the conflict and subsequently by the MNLF as combatants and guides. In these circumstances, they were caught between the two parties and became displaced, being forced to evacuate as the conflict escalated. See Ishii et.al, *Joseiga kataru Philippine no Muslim shakai*, (Alashi Shoten, 2002).

[108] Masako Ishii, *Joseiga kataru Philippine no Muslim shakai*, (Akashi Shoten, 2002).

[109] Ibid.

[110] MacDonald and Viñals, "The EU and Mindanao,": 97

women allowed mobility within the public sphere and to actively engage in livelihood endeavors, particularly agricultural activities.[111] Nevertheless, according to the female IP activists interviewed, IPs follow paternal lines and women's lives are affected by the patriarchal values and structures embedded in IP culture. In addition to clear gender-line divisions of labor,[112] access to education for indigenous women is strictly limited "because girls tend to be responsible for looking after younger siblings."[113] As most IP women live in remote areas of the *barangay*, with extremely limited access to resources and basic social services, they are overburdened with heavy reproductive responsibility.

The status of indigenous women in the conflict was also exacerbated by cultural practices, such as early marriage and high fertility. Among those interviewed, some married as early as 14 and gave birth to up to 10 children without skilled birth attendants. Women who are illiterate, married early through arranged marriages, and/or do not earn an income are believed to have the lowest decision-making power within the household.

The study also found that violence against women is pervasive among IPs, both in private and at the community level. A female IP activist stated, "there are many cases of violence against women among IPs. Especially when men consume alcohol, domestic violence happens."[114] A 33-year-old mother also stated, "I hesitate to send my girl child to school as there are several rape cases on the road to school."[115] In conflict-affected areas globally, many studies reveal that more women suffer from SGBV and domestic violence (DV) inflicted by their husband or other family members;[116] the interviewed indigenous women also implied that they have suffered an increased level of violence within the household and community during the conflict.

5-3   Women's Experience of Rido Conflicts

The study found that both Muslim and indigenous women in the target communities had experienced a range of *rido* conflicts, the security risk of which was perceived by many community members to have increased while the peace process progressed between the MILF and the Philippine Government. According to a Muslim woman in Barangay Darapanan, "*Rido* have created more displacements, death and injuries than the regional conflict, particularly since the Comprehensive Agreement was signed in 2014."[117]

Muslim women appear to have been more affected by *rido* than indigenous women. According to a study conducted by the Asian Foundation, *rido* is prevalent among Muslims, "often triggering ethnic conflict and even military confrontation, and bring[ing] about serious problems of loss of life, evacuation and destruction of property, with widespread curtailment of family economic activ-

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[111] Hall and Hoare, "Philippines."

[112] Interview No. 15, July 31, 2015

[113] Interview No. 15 July 31, 2015

[114] Interview No. 19, 2 August, 2015

[115] Interview No. 18, 1 August, 2015

[116] Caroline Green and Caroline Sweetman, "Introduction to Conflict and Violence," *Gender and Development* 21, no. 3 (Oxfam GB, 2013): 423-431.

[117] Interview No. 21, August 3, 2015.

ities and hampering of development."[118] Thus, in a similar way to the reional conflict, *rido* conflicts have constrained Muslim men's mobility and livelihood activities, increasing the burden on Muslim women to engage in economic activities to support their families.[119]

Furthermore, the study observed that younger Muslim women tend to become more involved in *rido,* as the number stemming from disputes about perceived sexual misdemeanors committed against women is increasing. Bartolome's study of the twenty-three incidences of *rido* revealed that fifteen resulted from disputes about premarital sex, elopements, and inter-ethnic marriage.[120]

A 60-year-old Muslim man from Barangay Darapanan described the recent trend of *rido* as follows:

> It is about the honor of women that should be protected by the man. When a man disrespects the family of the woman by eloping…the action of the man to the woman is considered as a violation of her right... If the man's side does not respond to the request of the woman's family and it is not paid, the situation gets aggravated and it becomes *rido*.[121]

In a Muslim clan community, men are commonly responsible for the care, protection, and needs of women, who are regarded as "precious" family property and, thus, sequestered in the domestic realm. In this context, a man makes a public claim against another man because of an alleged theft of his family's property or sexual misconduct with a woman in his family. Women have no say in their own marriage, relationship, or life.

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[118] Magno Torres III, ed., "Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao," *The Asia Foundation,* (2007), https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/PHridoexcerpt.pdf, accessed January 27, 2016.
[119] Leslie Dwyer and Rufa, "Gender and Conflict in Mindanao."
[120] Chlaribel D Bartolome, *Marakabat and rido: Implications for peace and national development*, Marawi City: Department of Graduate Studies/Psychology College of Social Science and Humanities Mindanao State University (2001): 36-42.
[121] Interview No. 22, August 3, 2015.

Women's Participation in Peacebuilding: Who is Participating?

6. Women's Participation in Peacebuilding: Who is Participating?

The agreements to end the long-standing conflict between the Philippine Government and the MILF grant Mindanao more autonomy, particularly regarding local authority in the Muslim-majority provinces, and create the Bangsamoro region, an autonomous political entity in Mindanao. Since the CAB, government agencies, international communities, and CSOs have accelerated various peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao through political processes, socio-economic development, and the building of conflict-resilient communities in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas.

This section analyzes the status of women's participation in three spheres of the statebuilding processes: 1) political peace processes, 2) socio-economic development, and 3) creating a culture of truth, justice, and reconciliation. Specifically, it considers women with different socio-economic statuses and examines who is participating in the ongoing peace process and who is excluded. It then proceeds to explore the different barriers to and opportunities for advancing their participation. The level of women's participation is also examined in accordance with Arnstein's ladder of participation model to identify the elements and determinants for increasing the level of women's participation.

6-1 Women's Participation in Political Peace Processes

It is widely acknowledged that women have actively participated in Mindanao's political peace processes. For example, the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (OPAPP) is headed by a woman, Secretary Teresita Quintos Deles. Ms. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, a well-known academic and human rights expert, was also appointed to the government's peace panel and has been serving as the its first female chief negotiator. In fact, the 2014 CAB was achieved through negotiations led by Coronel-Ferrer.[122] Furthermore, two women were appointed for the first time as technical staff on the MILF Board of Consultants.[123] Currently, of the fifteen members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC, also referred to as "the Commission"), four are women:[124] three represent the Philippine Government and one represents the MILF.[125] There are also female technical advisors in the BTC.

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[122] Chang, *Women Leading Peace*.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid. (With the signing of the Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro in October 2012, the Bangsamoro Transition Committee (BTC) was established by virtue of President Benigno Aquino III's issuance of Executive Order 120 in December 2012, with a mandate to draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which serves as a legal basis for the new autonomous political entity in Mindanao. See: http://www.opapp.gov.ph/bangsamoro-transition-commission.)

[125] Conciliation Resources, *Women's Participation and Inclusive Peace Processes: Lessons Learned from Mindanao and Beyond*, Conciliation Resources, (March 2015), http://www.c-r.org/sites/default/files/CR%20submission_1325%20Global%20Study.pdf, accessed May 26, 2015.

The literature also indicates that women have been active in political peace processes at the community level.[126] A number of women's CSOs organize various peace talks and local consultations to hear, articulate, discuss, and synthesize the views and issues pertaining to women and community members in political peacebuilding processes.[127]

Nevertheless, through interviews with women at grassroots level and analysis of their actual involvement in the process of formulating the BBL, the study revealed gaps in and different levels of participation among women. It was found that the majority of female participants in political processes comprise members of women's associations and movements based in Manila or urban-based elite women in the Bangsamoro region, who are wives, daughters, and sisters of influential men of various religions or ethnicities. However, the level of participation among urban elite women is thought to have remained at the level of "tokenism" with reference to Arnstein's model.

The following sections examine the features of women's participation in detail, focusing on two specific areas within the political peace processes: consultation processes on the BBL's formulation and lobbying for the BBL.

6-1-1 Women's participation in Consultation Processes on the BBL's Formulation

The BTC was mandated to draft the BBL. As part of the drafting process, the Commission organized various consultations with the local community. It was found that a number of women in the communities targeted in this study participated in these consultations, which were organized in partnership with MILF, ARMM, and civil society groups to increase community awareness of the importance of the BBL for peacebuilding. Women in communities were also given a forum within which to discuss the needs and concerns of the community regarding the BBL's integration, and to have their voices heard. Some of the consultations were for women only, while others were also attended by men.

Through such participation, women in the rural communities seem to have gained increased awareness of the BBL and the peace processes. Interviewed women in the target *barangays* shared their thoughts on peace, expressing a strong expectation that the BBL would pave the way for peace in a community torn apart by decades of conflict. A 46-year-old Muslim woman in Barangay Darapanan observed, "We support the BBL and strongly advocate it as a solution to war."[128] Another Muslim woman noted, "We think the BBL is the only solution for peace."[129]

It was found that, at the community level, participation was higher among Muslim women than IP women. In particular, Muslim women who participated in the consultations were often associated with organizations such as the SWC, the BIWAB, and the MNLF, who provide them with access to information. Nevertheless, most of their participation is only at the level of "manipulation," "therapy," or "informing" on Arnstein's ladder. For many Muslim women, participation simply involved

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[126] Chang, *Women Leading Peace*.

[127] Conciliation Resources, *Women's Participation and Inclusive Peace Processes: Lessons Learned from Mindanao and Beyond*, Conciliation Resources, (March 2015), http://www.c-r.org/sites/default/files/CR%20submission_1325%20Global%20Study.pdf, accessed May 26, 2015.

[128] Interview No. 23a, August 4, 2015

[129] Interview No. 23b August 4, 2015

being physically "present" to receive information; none reported voicing their own opinions or concerns during the consultations. Furthermore, Muslim women from Barangay Makabiso and Barangay Darapanan recalled that they were "ordered to participate"[130] or that it was "an obligation for SWC members to attend."[131] Their participation, thus, appears to be passive, simply responding to mass mobilization by the MILF.

Nevertheless, a significant number of rural community women did not participate in any of the BBL consultations. Their main reasons were conflicting schedules with childcare arrangements or work, a lack of information or advanced notice, and the financial burden of transportation costs. A 43-year-old IP woman with seven children noted, "I could not attend the meeting as I was busy at home. I also could not afford the transportation costs."[132] Another 37-year-old IP woman stated that she did not know about the consultation.[133] It was found that IP women living in remote areas with a heavy domestic burden are not able to participate. Many IP women in the community are not organized, do not belong to any organizations, lack access to information and resources, and do not have sufficient availability to participate.

Interestingly, many Muslim women did not participate in the BBL consultations despite having access to the relevant information. Some of the Muslim women in Barangay Kibleg commented, "Although both women and men were invited to the consultations, most of the attendees were men. We decided to send our husbands so we can stay home and look after the children."[134] For poor Muslim women, although conflict has increased their mobility in the public sphere, patriarchal gender norms viewing males as superior continue to limit their participation.

6-1-2 Women's Participation in Lobbying for the BBL

Subsequent to consultations on the draft BBL, female activists and CSOs have been actively engaged in lobbying activities in the Congress and Senate in Manila. However, very few women from Bangsamoro are participating in these activities. The female lobbyists are predominantly from outside Bangsamoro; most are members of women's CSOs based in Manila. A Manila-based female lobbyist explained, "The participation of women from Bangsamoro region (conflict-affected areas) should be more promoted to reflect their experience and voice in peace processes. However, there are a limited number of women in the region who are educated and capable to participate in the lobbying process."[135] Another Muslim female lobbyist from the Bangsamoro region stated, "Only a few women's organizations from Bangsamoro are involved in lobbying. It is because we have to cover transportation costs to Manila."[136]

Participating female lobbyists from the Bangsamoro region are mainly from socially and economically elite backgrounds, connected to influential men belonging to *Datu* clans. These women tend to be the wives, daughters, and sisters of those elite men, and are themselves well connected to

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[130] Interview No. 24, August 4, 2015
[131] Interview No. 48, September 17, 2015
[132] Interview No. 17, August 1, 2015
[133] Interview No. 4, July 29, 2015
[134] Interview No. 7, July 29, 2015
[135] Interview No. 39, September 14, 2015.
[136] Interview No. 41, September 14, 2015.

the management of the MILF or the MNLF through a male family member. Many are urban-based professionals who were educated in Manila, possessing political influence and networks with women's associations or movements based in Manila, who help them to approach senators and congressmen for lobbying. Women from other social segments in Bangsamoro are virtually absent from this sphere.

Nonetheless, among these elite women from the Bangsamoro region engaged in lobbying through strong political and social ties, their participation is at the level of "consultation" or "placation" on Arnstein's ladder. Despite opportunities to voice their needs and concerns at the national level, they have not yet demonstrated full decision making in the lobbying process, due not only to their being outnumbered but also the various cultural barriers confronting them. A female activist based in Manila explained, "I once encountered a moment during the consultative meeting with the MILF where some men shouted at their women participants to be silent saying that 'women are not competent."[137]

It is also important to note, here, that disconnect and conflicting views among female lobbyists over the issues to be integrated into the BBL tend to sideline their voices, preventing their effective integration into lobbying. A Muslim woman from the Bangsamoro region, actively engaged in the political peace processes, explained, "While there are many versions of the BBL, some national women's organizations support certain versions that are different from us … they are pushing too hard without looking at grassroots level concerns and barriers."[138] Another female Muslim advocate from Bangsamoro also stressed, "We need to increase options or choices for women to decide what they want to do in their lives. But because women outside Bangsamoro are more vocal, articulate, and physically close to the Congress, their voice is more heard in the official processes than Bangsamoro woman."[139]

There is widespread agreement that women in the Philippines' CSOs are active in peacemaking, gender equality advocacy, and lobbying, playing an essential role in the political peace process in Mindanao.[140] Some of these organizations are linked to larger CSO networks or international NGOs and donor groups, and are working at grassroots level by maintaining close ties with women and women's CSOs in the conflict-affected areas.[141] Conversely, the study identified some sentiments and concerns among women from the Bangsamoro region that "women outside Bangsamoro push for a more advanced status of women based on international standards for gender equality and women's empowerment, and that women outside Bangsamoro are not in line with women's realities, concerns, and needs on the ground."[142] One female activist from Bangsamoro emphasized the necessity of increasing efforts to bridge the gap among women in the ongoing peacebuilding processes.

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[137] Interview No. 39, September 14, 2015.
[138] Interview No. 41, September 14, 2015.
[139] Interview No. 9, July 30, 2015.
[140] Chang, *Women Leading Peace*.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Interview No. 9, July 30, 2015.

6-1-3 Key Findings on Women's Participation in Political Processes

Women's political participation is limited to a handful of wealthy women from elite families and clans with strong political and social ties to influential men. Support from politically influential men is considered a key determinant of women's participation in political processes. Despite a tendency, especially among Muslim women who have organized themselves and completed higher education, to increase their space of engagement in the political sphere, the participation of these women is at the level of "consultation" or "placation." While they are given opportunities to speak up and make recommendations in the political processes, decision making remains with influential men.

Negotiation and power delegation among Muslim women is heavily constrained by male-dominant structures in communities. Furthermore, a division among women from diverse backgrounds also hampers their efforts to effectively raise their voices and influence political peace processes. Grassroots-level political participation of the majority of women in Bangsamoro has been greatly hampered by barriers including: the double burden of reproductive and productive labor; a lack of access to education, information, and social networks; and limited connections with influential men. The political participation of indigenous women in rural communities is thought to be especially weak: without sufficient access to education and burdened with both reproductive and productive labor, many IP women thereby lack access to the necessary information and opportunities to organize themselves and participate in various political activities.

6-2   Women's Participation in Socio-economic Development Activities

Tapping into increased donor resources during the transition period, the ARMM and the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA)[143] have implemented various socio-economic development projects, including those for basic social services, such as education and health, livelihood, and capacity building. In implementing these projects, concerned donors and agencies also endeavored to increase women's participation in socio-economic development activities.[144] Muslim, IP, and Christian women have benefitted from being required to organize themselves for programs and projects at grassroots level. Nevertheless, female participants in such projects in Bangsamoro tend to be less economically challenged, whereas poor rural women are often marginalized and unable to participate in these activities.

The following sections examine women's participation in two on-going interventions aimed at community-level socio-economic development. The first is the "Gender and Development Programs" implemented by the Philippine Government and the ARMM. The second is a livelihood support intervention backed by the BDA and JICA.

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[143] The BDA was established based on the Tripoli Agreement of Peace between the MILF and the Philippine Government in 2001. The agency was established to address relief, rehabilitation, and development issues in the conflict-affected areas. See: http://bangsamorodevelopment.org/history/, accessed May 3, 2016

[144] Interview No. 3, July 27, 2015; Interview No. 40, September 14, 2015.

6-2-1 Women's Participation in the "Gender and Development Program"

The Gender and Development (GAD) program is a key socio-economic initiative to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, operated by the Philippine Government following the Gender and Development (GAD) Code formulated at local level. The Code aims to mainstream gender in policies, plans, programs, and projects, not only nationally but also locally; among its key purposes is to implement GAD programs by institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting, requiring all government agencies, including Local Government Units (LGUs), to spend at least 5% of their annual agency budgets on GAD initiatives. The GAD efforts have systematically integrated gender into peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas.[145] In conflict-affected communities, it is expected that GAD program implementation should function as an entry point for linking development and peacebuilding from a gender perspective.

Despite systematic efforts to empower women regarding their livelihood, awareness raising, and capacity building through GAD initiatives, the study found a lack of effective implementation measures to empower vulnerable women in conflict-affected areas. For example, the "GAD network" for women is present in each of Upi municipality's 23 *barangays*, with the budget for its program activities executed by the Mayor's Council and implemented by a woman's CSO.[146] In Barangay Kibleg, about 100 women are organized within the GAD network; however, the network is inactive and, in reality involves very few women from the community. A Muslim woman interviewed there stated, "there are so few participants because a lot of women became inactive without actual benefits from the GAD program."[147]

One women's organization in Upi emphasized that they are implementing various GAD activities for the livelihood improvement and capacity building of community women; some members even stressed that "there are few gender issues in the communities because everyone increased awareness on gender issues through our activities."[148] However, while the terms "gender equality," "women's empowerment," and "women's rights" are widely known at the community level, the substance of these concepts does not seem to reach women on the ground. Activities focusing heavily on awareness-raising, such as campaigns for women's rights and against SGBV, fiestas (festivals) celebrating Women's Day, and seminars on women's rights are mostly planned and implemented without a detailed gender analysis or data collection to identify the challenges, needs, and concerns of community women.[149] Consequently, most of these awareness-raising programs and activities seemingly fail to respond practically to grassroots women's issues.

Furthermore, GAD network members are required to pay 10 Philippine Pesos to complement the GAD budget.[150] For poor women, overburdened with reproductive and productive responsibilities

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[145] The ARMM Gender and Development Code was enacted in 2011. Government agencies in the region, including the ARMM, have organized gender-related advocacy and training activities, established and coordinated with GAD focal points in all government agencies for gender mainstreaming. They have also monitored the implementation of the 5% GAD budget. See: http://pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/.documents/resources/gad_code_guidelines.pdf, accessed May 6, 2016.

[146] Interview No. 6, July 31, 2015.

[147] Interview No. 18, August 1, 2015.

[148] Interview No. 13, July 31, 2015.

[149] Interview No. 13, July 31, 2015.

[150] Interview No. 18, August 1, 2015.

in the household, being obliged to pay monthly membership fees to participate in social activities offering few tangible benefits provides almost no incentive to join. Consequently, many economically and socially vulnerable women from remote areas, who should be main GAD program targets, are not participating at all.

As of September 2015, a small-scale GAD livelihood project involving poultry has been implemented in Barangay Kibleg; however, the study discovered only three female beneficiaries, one of whom is a Christian college graduate. She observed, "although the list of potential beneficiaries for the poultry project included all members registered in the network originally, the list was revised and ended up with only three beneficiaries because active members excluded the inactive women from the membership."[151] Conversely, several IP women voiced concern that many women, especially IP women in Barangay Kibleg, are unaware of the GAD program and lack knowledge of its purpose, budget, benefits, or even the existence of a women's network. This demonstrates inadequate information sharing and coordination among women, and that socially and economically vulnerable women are excluded from accessing information and benefitting from the program. Nonetheless, the few women with access to the information, time, and resources needed to attend GAD activities are mobilized and benefitting from the interventions.

6-2-2 Women's participation in Livelihood Support implemented by BDA and JICA

In a joint peacebuilding effort to address community development through livelihood support and infrastructure improvement, the BDA and JICA partnered to establish "The Project on Capacity Building for Community Development in Conflict-affected Areas in Mindanao" ("the Project").[152] Its main purpose is to strengthen the BDA's capacity to promote community development in conflict-affected areas. Several pilot projects supporting target farmers' livelihood activities through various training and technical support have been implemented under the Project's umbrella.[153]

In Barangay Makabiso, a target community of the pilot projects, the beneficiary Muslim farmers are supported to increase their income through capacity development in vegetable production and marketing. During project implementation, active female farmers were also selected from the women's sector established in the *barangay*. Women are organized into four groups, each participating in pilot project activities. However, the focus group interviews indicate that women are on the periphery, with men the main beneficiaries of the pilots.

According to male beneficiaries of the pilots, men were involved in the projects' sensitization and development aspects and, since the intervention began, have received a series of training on vegetable production and marketing. A demonstration farm with basic facilities has been established as a learning area for men, receiving on-the-job training for actual production and monitoring support from the BDA. They have also been supported to form a cooperative to ensure their initiatives' sustainability. In contrast, female beneficiaries have only been organized into groups for a few activities, including one-off training on vegetable production, reported by a female beneficiary as

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[151] Interview No. 18, August 1, 2015.

[152] IC-Net Limited and Central Consultant Inc., "Inception Report on the Project for Capacity Building for Community Development in Conflict Affected Areas in Mindanao (CD-CAAM)," JICA, (July 2013).

[153] Ibid.

"organized only once for the women groups and the groups were practically dissolved after harvesting and sharing income."[154]

The Project's training topics were found to be specific to communities' traditional gender norms and roles. A male beneficiary commented, "Training for women did not include marketing because the practice in the community is that men bring farm products to the market."[155] Conversely, women have different views and perceptions about gender roles, as exhibited by a 43-year-old Muslim participating in a women-only focus group discussion: "I have small plots of land to cultivate and sometimes go to market to buy seeds of vegetables. I want to obtain business skills on vegetable production to become an entrepreneur."[156] Another woman (aged 59) stressed that "Islam does not prohibit women to do business, just like the wife of Muhammad was a business woman."[157]

Many of the pilots' female beneficiaries become OFWs to contribute to household finances. A 48-year-old woman stated, "I was a domestic worker in Dubai for two years. The money I earned from the OFW time was used to build a house and to buy water buffaloes for my family."[158] Another stated, "I also worked in Riyadh for three years as a domestic helper and used the savings to build a house."[159] During the interviews, women manifested strong resolve to contribute financially and illustrated the ways they have been actively engaged in farming activities, including weeding, spraying, harvesting, and even marketing.

However, the Project did not illustrate full awareness of these kinds of women's interests, needs, and concerns, constrained by traditional gender roles. According to an interviewed male BDA officer, pilot development involved consulting predominantly male *barangay* councilors and community leaders. Women invited to the assembly were only present in silence, with only men actually sharing their views.[160] This officer's view highlights that women's participation in Project implementation was promoted only as a formality, without any understanding of the reality of gender dynamics. He neither conducted any gender analysis nor facilitated women's active involvement in the Project's design and development, which could have been achieved, e.g., by organizing women-only focus groups. Consequently, with no assurance that women's Project participation would be effective, it is rated at the level of "therapy" or "informing," as women were only on the periphery of the male-centered intervention.

6-2-3 Key findings on Women's Participation in Socio-Economic Development

While conflict has strengthened women's agency and economic roles, female participation in socio-economic development during the peace processes has been limited to a handful of women at the community level. As shown by the GAD program, the women involved tend to be less economically challenged and both literate and educated; these women are available and have access to relevant networks, information, and resources needed to facilitate participation in various development

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154 Interview No. 48a, September 17, 2015.
155 Interview No. 50, September 17, 2015.
156 Interview No. 48b, September 17, 2015.
157 Interview No. 48c, September 17, 2015.
158 Interview No. 49a, September 17, 2015.
159 Interview No. 49b, September 17, 2015.
160 Interview No. 55, September 18, 2015.

initiatives. Female beneficiaries of the JICA project are also in this category, having some access to land, economic resources, and the women's sector at the Barangay Council.

In contrast, the participation of these women in socio-economic development remains at the level of "manipulation," "therapy," or "informing" on Arnstein's ladder. Though mobilized by external actors, women are merely present in various socio-economic development activities: their participation remains passive and, in many cases, they remain targets of information dissemination or awareness raising. Government members and development practitioners persistently enforce male-centered views, with women typically peripheral regarding livelihood support. It must be reiterated here that the participation of women from vulnerable social classes, including IP women, is largely hampered by heavy reproductive and productive burdens and a lack of access to information and resources.

6-3 Women's Participation in the Culture of Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation

Creating conflict-resilient communities by facilitating truth, justice, and reconciliation is an important aspect of statebuilding; it should be addressed to prevent relapse into conflict in the areas prone thereto, comprising diverse ethno-linguistic groups in Mindanao. Community mechanisms for mediating and resolving disputes and conflicts have been strengthened in the ARMM region, with various formal and informal mechanisms available for community members to address both small and large disputes among and within families and clans.

Nevertheless, women's participation in the formal and traditional conflict mitigation and resolution mechanisms is largely limited at the community level. Prevailing male-dominated social structures prevent women from addressing peace and security issues specific to them (e.g., violence against women). The following sections examine the status of women's participation in formal and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms at the community level.

6-3-1 Women's Participation in Formal and Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Conflict resolution mechanisms have been established at the *sitio*,[161] *barangay*, and municipal levels within Mindanao's conflict-affected areas. *Lupong Tagapamayapa* is a *barangay* level (one in each *barangay*) committee led by the Barangay Chairman (i.e., the village chief), extrajudicially mediating and settling conflicts between the *barangay's* residents. According to the community members interviewed, the *Lupong Tagapamayapa* comprises *sitio* leaders: the first arbiter of such disputes. Cases they cannot resolve proceed to the *Lupong Tagapamayapa* at the *barangay* level, then on to the Mayor's Council at the municipal level.[162]

As the majority of *Lupong Tagapamayapa* and *sitio* leaders are male, particularly in Muslim-dominant communities, women's access is greatly restricted. In Barangay Kibleg, only one of the *Lupong Tagapamayapa* members is female, while that in Barangay Makabiso is entirely male-con-

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[161] "*Sitio*" is a subdivision of *Barangay*.
[162] Interview No 12, July 31, 2015.

stituted. Furthermore, in Upi and Sultan Mastura, members of the Mayor's Council conflict resolution mechanism are exclusively men. Lack of female representation in gender-segregated Muslim communities makes many women reluctant to access these mechanisms to resolve their issues: those raised by female interviewees, such as violence against women, conflict over polygamy, or divorcing husbands, are considered to particularly culturally sensitive and unlikely to be addressed through these mechanisms.

Besides the formal extra-judicial mechanisms, both the IP and Muslim communities have traditional justice systems, which tend to be preferred by community members not only because they follow customary belief-based laws, but also because "official procedures take more time and money."[163]

In Muslim communities, the "Council of Elders" operates pursuant to Sharia law. However, women are effectively excluded from participation as either arbitrators or persons involved in the disputes. Council memberships are traditionally limited to men, and even a woman involved in a dispute often finds her rights to voice concerns and demands are often neglected. For example, regarding the commonly handled issues of relationships between men and women, when a man disrespects a woman's family by eloping or having pre-marital sex with her, the men in that woman's family demand the man's family to pay a penalty to protect her "honor," a discussion in which the woman has no say. A 33-year-old Muslim woman noted, "It is always the male elders and fathers of the families who discuss and decide how to resolve the case."[164] As men are traditionally recognized as decision makers in the household and community, the traditional arbitration process denies women decision-making powers on critical issues affecting their bodies and lives.

Conversely, there is a distinct traditional justice system for IPs led by both male arbitrators (*Timuay*) and female arbitrators (*Fintailan*), who often handle minor cases, e.g., gossip and damage to property, and heinous crimes, e.g., murder, adultery, rape, and land grabbing.[165] In general, *"Fintailan* are given equal status with *Timnuay* and are well accepted and respected by both male and female members in the community."[166] However, the study found that patriarchal practices within IP communities often silence women on issues concerning, apparently pervasive, violence against them. According to an indigenous woman in Barangay Kibleg, "There was a rape case among IP, but it was settled amicably."[167] An IP female activist explained that, under customary IP law, rape cases are amicably settled by either requiring the female victim to marry the perpetrator or the latter paying a "blood money" penalty to the victim's family. If the woman rejects the settlement, she can approach an official court. However, these cases are often unreported because government assistance is lacking, and, eventually, women tend to be forced to return to the community where the perpetrator lives. Consequently, according to an IP female activist, "raping a woman

[163] Interview No 19, August 2, 2015.
[164] Interview No. 21, August 3, 2015.
[165] Interview No. 19, August 2, 2015.
[166] Interview No. 4, July 29, 2015.
[167] Interview No. 5, July 29, 2015.

is considered to be one way of marrying the victim."[168] Thus, the active engagement of indigenous women as traditional arbitrators does not bring justice for women.

6-3-2 Key findings on Women's Participation in Formal and Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Muslim women are usually disadvantaged regarding access to and participation in community conflict resolution mechanisms, including the traditional justice system. Prevailing male-dominant social structures, in which men are decision makers, deny Muslim women any say, as either arbitrators or persons involved in disputes. While, conversely, indigenous women may be arbitrator's in their traditional justice system, being consulted and giving advice, they are particularly influenced by cultural beliefs and patriarchal practices, such that their participation does not contribute to resolving women's issues. In this regard, their participation is only considered as "tokenism" on Arnstein's model.

6-4 Lessons Learned for the Advancement of Women's Participation

The study's findings illustrate that women's participation in peacebuilding differs according to various social categories, including religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. While the required support varies between contexts, a range of elements have been identified. The following section highlights some of the key recommendations on the advancement of women's participation in Mindanao's peacebuilding process, based on the findings and analysis detailed to this point.

1) Ensuring gender and diversity analysis in promoting peacebuilding

It is important to understand the disparities and diversities among women based on their social attributes, and to examine the different barriers to and opportunities they have for participation. Analysis should be based not only on gender differences but should also examine the local context, where power dynamics are influenced by ethnicity, class, religion, and cultural differences among women.

Conflict analysis is often considered crucial to effective peacebuilding, enhancing understanding of conflict causes, the needs and interests of different stakeholders, the dynamics and patterns of conflict, and the opportunities for peace. Gender and diversity analyses, identifying the different experiences of conflict and the specific needs and priorities of diverse groups of women, should be a standard component of conflict analysis and needs assessment.

2) Direct grassroots assistance to help women remove practical barriers at the household level

One finding indicates that the majority of the region's economically and socially vulnerable women, in both Muslim and IP communities, face significant barriers to attaining full and equal participation in public life and peacebuilding decision making. At the household level, many such women lack sufficient access to education, often limiting their confidence and precluding awareness of

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[168] Interview No. 19, August 2, 2015.

their rights to participate and how to exercise them. They also have little access to basic infrastructure and adequate financial resources, and face the double burden of productive and reproductive work at home, including household tasks and childcare responsibilities; therefore, these women lack time and access to the information and opportunities to organize and participate in political and socio-economic peacebuilding activities. Furthermore, the study found gaps in and difficulties regarding a fair distribution of benefits among different classes and ethnicities. Within this context, development agencies must focus more on the needs of poor grassroots women with vulnerable socio-economic attributes, providing direct assistance to them.

i.   Enhancing women's access to basic needs

Particular efforts should be made to eliminate grassroots and household-level barriers around women's lives in both Muslim and IP communities. Strengthening their access to basic needs, such as community infrastructure, including water and sanitation systems, community roads, schools for children, and hospital buildings, would then support them in reducing the burden of reproductive responsibilities. Poor women, especially IP women in rural areas, must also be enabled, through literacy and educational support, to participate and organize themselves effectively, communicate their ideas and demands, and gain respect and credibility.

ii.   Supporting the improvement of women's livelihood

Poor women's livelihoods should be strengthened to facilitate escaping poverty and participating in development within their communities. Examples from the GAD program and the Project illustrate development assistance's tendency to lack strategic approaches for effectively responding to women's needs. Any interventions assisting community-strengthening livelihood programs should promote strong representation of women as a group. Additionally, women's concerns must be on the official discussion agenda during project design and implementation. Furthermore, gender balance among experts within a project's facilitation team must be promoted.

Conventional, small-scale livelihood support, focused on providing services and equipment, is ineffective for women's economic empowerment. As indicated by the female beneficiaries of the JICA-supported livelihood project and the GAD program, interventions for women must be scaled up to involve acquisition of new, marketable skills, including literacy and accounting, thereby promoting economic empowerment, not mere subsistence. Entrepreneurship and microfinance components, enhancing women's capacity to effectively self-organize, network, and access information and other community networks, may also further equip them to achieve real and sustainable empowerment.

The study found that women in conflict-affected communities have actively engaged in economic activities and have control over their income, but only for day-to-day expenses. Women often lack a sufficient say in the household and community to effectively control their own lives and bodies, as well as their families' welfare. An innovative intervention approach is needed to train women to scale up their operations and expand their aspirations. Women must also be encouraged to gain

autonomy and power, progressing from simply earning income to having a say in decision making by fully participating in the household and community.

3) Building community-level networks and solidarity among women across religious and cultural identities

The study also found lack of networking opportunities, especially among vulnerable IP women at the community level, to be another major barrier to women accessing information and social networks facilitating their participation; it also limits their ability to voice and address their needs collectively. Within this context, supporting IP women to effectively network, through livelihood programs, education, and community infrastructure development, is deemed effective for helping women increase their voice and influence in decision-making processes within the public sphere, thus advancing their level of peacebuilding participation.

Further, the study identified divides along cultural and religious lines at the community level, hampering women, especially the vulnerable, from effectively accessing information and opportunities required to participate in statebuilding. The division among women is especially hampering effective community-level peacebuilding. Development interventions must further facilitate networking between women of diverse religious and cultural identities.

4) Strengthen alliances with men to eliminate discriminatory cultural and social practices

Another key finding indicates that, in families and communities where the male-dominant ideology is deeply entrenched, women's participation often depends on men's understanding and support. While conflict has increased the public mobility of both Muslim and IP women, male-superiority gender norms remain a major barrier to advancing female participation. As seen in BBL lobbying, participating women are often relegated to lower levels and are unable to realize their full potential. Thus, awareness, understanding, and support from household and community males are indispensable to advancing women's participation.

Within this context, key male academics, advocates, and other allies must be expressly invited to join specific dialogues and activities supporting women's participation. Men need to believe that women's participation and gender equality are beneficial for both genders and the whole of society. It may be effective to involve Muslim or Sharia scholars in debates, particularly experts in Islamic teachings on women's rights. Discriminatory cultural and social practices, such as high fertility, domestic violence, and early marriage, are perpetuated by the family and community, thus preventing women from political and socio-economic participation. The aforementioned experts are best positioned to publicly denounce such practices as unacceptable; they can also act as mentors to their communities and influence other men.

5) Strengthening gender-responsive local governance and service delivery

Women's participation was also found to be constrained by the absence of effective support networks, institutions, and local governance resources to facilitate participation and address women's needs at grassroots level. Influenced by other women's movements in the Philippines, Mindanao's peace process benefits from a certain level of understanding and awareness about gender main-

streaming. However, efforts to actually change gender dynamics in households and communities barely impact the targeted female beneficiaries. Local government efforts often remain theoretical, without fully grasping the needs and reality of women in local communities. The capacity development of local government must be supported by promoting data collection and analysis to identify local women's needs and issues and clarify intra-community power dynamics, including those between women. Policy development and operationalization of peacebuilding programs and projects based on the actual needs of women at grassroots level must also be promoted.

Significantly, a major gap endures in the government response to violence against women, considered a cultural taboo in Mindanao, about which many female victims are forced to remain silent: their cases are unreported or met with an inadequate response by the local government.[169] The study verified that early marriage, DV, and SGBV threaten women's peace and security and pose significant barriers to women's participation in the peace and reconstruction processes. Thus, further action must be taken to prioritize strengthening: the government's capacity to provide responsive services and eliminate violence against women; support systems and mechanisms, including capacity building for social workers; and coordinating mechanisms for victims of violence among government agencies. The formal and transitional justice systems and conflict resolution mechanisms within communities should not be implemented without adequate consultation with women, and should be designed to eliminate discrimination against them.

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[169] Interview No. 56, September 19, 2015.

Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding

7. Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding

As the peace process has progressed, and with increased pressure internationally and from Filipino women's movements, more women have assumed leadership roles in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas.[170] These leadership roles range from peace negotiators and heads of regional governance and *barangay* councilors to heads of local women's organizations and community arbitrators. Nevertheless, the previous section's analysis of women's participation indicates an ongoing shortage of female leaders at the community level, able to effectively mobilize and lead other women to participate or advance the level of their participation.

This section examines the existing female community leaders and clarifies the desired form that women's leadership should take, including its key tenets from the perspective of people in Mindanao's conflict-affected communities. It also explores the necessary interventions for advancing women's leadership in Mindanao.

7-1   Female Leaders in Mindanao's Conflict-affected Areas

Using the present study to analyze details of female leaders and their leadership, two different types of female leaders are apparent in the context of local peacebuilding. The first is women whose leadership has often been shaped by a hierarchical belief system; therefore, they seek to exercise power and authority over others, thus failing to challenge unequal social structures. Conversely, the second category is women who try to address the needs and concerns of marginalized groups, promoting their empowerment, social justice, and equitable distribution of resources by challenging unequal social structures and the prevailing gender norms and relations.

7-1-1 Women in Conventional Leadership Roles

Many of Mindanao's female leaders are from elite clans and families, married or otherwise related to politically powerful men. These connections to political and economic power seem to become leverage for elite women, including Muslim and indigenous women, to overcome the religious or cultural perceptions constraining women from occupying leadership roles.

Nevertheless, these women do not necessarily have awareness of or concerns about the structural inequalities and plight of women on the ground. Even when working for such causes as the Women's Sector under the Barangay Council and women's organizations at the local level, this limited awareness of patriarchal structural inequalities or the needs of socially marginalized women, and the absence of intention to address them, usually prevent their leadership bringing tangible change to women's lives.

For instance, in a focus group discussion on the challenge of violence against women, the current Violence against Women and Children (VAWC) desk officer of one Barangay Council commented, "there is no issue of violence against women in the community."[171] This suggests that the respon-

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[170] Interview No. 2, July 27, 2015.
[171] Interview No. 8, July 29, 2015.

dent – a 43-year-old Muslim woman whose husband was formerly Barangay Chairman – is unaware of the issues and challenges facing women at grassroots level. An indigenous woman from a wealthy elite clan – currently heading a regional entity in the ARMM – also stated, "women are fully participating in peace processes in Mindanao" and "there is no violence against women in the IP community."[172] This, again, betrays a lack of awareness, as the prevalence of early marriage and violence against women have been verified by this study.

Conversely, women from both elite and non-elite backgrounds take leadership positions in women's caucuses and organizations, some of whom do possess a strong sense of agency and awareness of women's rights issues. These women are actually leading female members to seek education, relief, and rehabilitation, and to participate in livelihood programs. Nevertheless, their leadership is often limited to a narrow agenda, viewing women as mothers and wives, and not strongly seeking to challenge gender norms and relations: though willing to promote "women's empowerment" and "women's welfare," they often object to gender equality. Furthermore, their leadership is often limited to preserving and expanding their cultural and religious identities, focusing little on building alliances with diverse communities.

For example, Habiba (a pseudonym), a 46-year-old Muslim widow with three children, heads the sub-committee of a regional Muslim women's organization, leading 14 female members in the active promotion of hygiene education for women and children in the community. Though she believes women play an important role in peacebuilding, she opposes "gender equality," stressing that "women can be trainers/lecturers for men but cannot lead them."[173]

7-1-2 Women in Transformative Leadership

A number of female leaders have endeavored to reflect the needs and concerns of women (and men) at grassroots level during the peacebuilding process, challenging discriminatory social structures by leveraging their elite status. Though not always in formal leadership positions, they are determined to make a difference, and have been leading various initiatives and activities for peacebuilding in conflict-affected communities, mobilizing women and men from diverse backgrounds.

Camela Bantayao, the Muslim president of a women's CSO called "the Alliance for Modern Women" (ALMAKKA), defined "modern women" as "women who were involved in peace and development" and who have been promoting peace dialogue and livelihood improvement aimed at reconnecting Tri-people affected by conflict at the community level. As a former MNLF combatant captured by the government army aged 23, her experience of torture and rape during captivity made her realize the need to end war and promote peace and livelihood improvement: "When I escaped the captivity, it opened my mind and I realized that we should stop war."[174] Currently in her early 60s, she leads 300 male and female Christians, Muslims, and IPs in various community-level peacebuilding activities.

Ms. Sabina (a pseudonym), a female Muslim lawyer working at an ARMM institution, is currently engaged in various community-level gender advocacy, training, and outreach programs, in part-

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[172] Interview No. 10, July 30, 2015.
[173] Interview No. 23, August 4, 2015.
[174] Interview No. 42, September 15, 2015.

nership with several women's entities, such as the Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women (RCBW[175]) and female CSOs. Having been born and raised in a wealthy but patriarchal family, encounters and interactions with fellow students at the University of Manila caused her to change her mind and perceptions about the role and power of women. She noted, "In Bangsamoro region, the culture is that women are not supposed to be leaders. But they were articulate, confident, and outspoken. I realized that I was living in a small world. I also realized that women have the capacity to lead and change society."[176] She is now "determined to work for women in Bangsamoro who are marginalized and voiceless due to the lack of education, poverty, and gender inequality."[177]

The study also identified female IP leaders, from elite family backgrounds, working diligently to integrate the voices of IP women into political peace processes by organizing various local consultations at grassroots level. One IP woman has been mobilizing resources from donor communities, aiming to promote networking among vulnerable IP women for the grassroots development of IP communities.

The women considered above are not necessarily in formal leadership positions but are nonetheless mobilizing women and men of diverse backgrounds in the conflict-affected areas to improve their lives, bring justice and equality, and build resilient communities in the peacebuilding process. Their work emphasizes the need for greater attention upon collaboration, cooperation, and collective decision making. Their leadership, in particular, looks to transform society for peacebuilding.

7-2 The desired form of Women's Leadership in Mindanao – voices from the community

To explore the kinds of leadership needed for the peacebuilding processes in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas, the study also explored community people's perceptions of women's leadership. When asked whether they admire a particular female leader, the majority of women named those connected to male leaders, such as "Chairwoman of the SWC who is a sister of the MILF Political Advisor" or "Congresswoman whose husband is the MNLF Chairman." Thus, this admiration appears to be based on these women being the counterparts of influential male leaders. In a society where women are generally considered inappropriate leaders, there is an absence of inspiring female leaders and role models. Consequently, people in the community tend to perceive female leaders as the wives and daughters of politically and economically elite men.

Conversely, when asked for the key elements or qualities of any female leader in the Mindanao peacebuilding processes, a number of different perceptions were revealed. One of the most commonly mentioned traits among Muslim and IP women was "being vocal and articulate." According to one Muslim woman, "it is about having confidence to lead and being brave by speaking what you want to say, expressing yourself and telling the truth."[178] In a society where women should be silent on issues affecting them, women at grassroots level especially seek female leaders who will listen to them and speak up on their behalf. In particular, given Muslim society's male-dominated struc-

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[175] A commission established within the ARMM for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment.
[176] Interview No. 36, August 10, 2015.
[177] Interview No. 36, August 10, 2015.
[178] Interview No. 23, August 4, 2015.

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tures, there is a strong expectation that female leaders will risk bringing the marginalized voice of women to the center of the conversation. A 55-year-old Muslim woman noted, "I admire women leaders who raise their voice at the decision-making table in the community about women's needs for equality such as having a say in divorce."[179] An IP woman in Barangay Kibleg also noted, "We expect them to promote more economic opportunities for women and also advocate for women's rights including violence against women."[180]

It is also noteworthy that some Muslim women regard being "religious" as a necessary element for women's leadership. This is very much reflective of the local context, where preserving religious values and identities is considered indispensable after conflict. Similarly, indigenous women also described female leaders as those who recognize and voice their cultural identity as IPs in the peacebuilding process. Simultaneously, many voices seek a "fair and neutral" leader, who promotes a transparent and fair approach to peacebuilding, regardless of gender or ethnic/religious backgrounds. Given the context of conflict in Mindanao, this implies two of the key elements required in female leaders are sensitivity to social justice and respect for the diversity of all stakeholders, regardless of their status, class, gender, or religion.

Furthermore, the study found that ability to build alliances and trust with the male community is strongly needed in female leaders at the community level. A 52-year-old Muslim woman observed, "I admire women leaders who work for women's peace and security by also facilitating dialogues with men in the community."[181] Another Muslim woman echoed, "Women who encourage men to stop war are good leaders."[182] A number of interviewed women named Raissa Jajurie, a female member of the peace panel of the MILF, as an admired leader who has been instrumental in reflecting the voices of women in the peace process by actually changing the attitude of the MILF men. A male Muslim MILF combatant noted, "She is working hand-in-hand with male MILF peace panel members and her leadership is recognized as beneficial to not only women but also men."[183]

Another attribute raised as key for a female leader was "non-corrupt," seemingly reflecting the current struggle of people at the grassroots, where nepotism and corruption are pervasive. Being non-corrupt also implies that a leader should hold the values of honesty, responsibility, and fairness.

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[179] Interview No. 16, August 1, 2015.
[180] Interview No. 4, July 29, 2015.
[181] Interview No. 21a August 3, 2015.
[182] Interview No. 21b August 3, 2015.
[183] Interview No. 25, August 5, 2015.

Figure 2 illustrates the elements of women's desired leadership detailed to this point.

Figure 2   Qualities of a Desired Female Leader in Conflict-affected Areas in Mindanao

The above analysis shows that the type of female leader desired by Mindanao communities is a woman who objectively seeks to achieve justice, equality, and collective well-being for the community's women and men; she should work to achieve these goals by focusing on the marginalized groups and most vulnerable groups fragmented throughout society, speaking up about their needs, and uniting people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds to build societies respecting diverse values and rejecting discrimination and violence. In essence, Mindanao's female leaders need to promote transformative leadership and structural social change in peacebuilding by challenging structural inequalities, including patriarchal gender power relations.

7-3   Lessons Learned for Advancing Women's Leadership

Having identified that, to support peacebuilding efforts, a transformative style of female leadership is required, the following section discusses several key recommendations for advancing gender-sensitive transformative female leadership in Mindanao's peacebuilding processes.

1)   Provide training on gender-sensitive transformative leadership for female leaders

At present, many women in leadership positions lack knowledge and awareness of the gender dimensions of peacebuilding, and the requisite communication, negotiation, and networking skills to engage with various interest groups. Consequently, female leaders' understanding of the status and needs of women at the grassroots tend to be limited. The study also identified that some female leaders tend to focus on preserving class power rather than challenging structural inequalities,

do not listen to the needs and concerns of women of other social classes, including the poor and marginalized.

Within this context, opportunities must be provided for female leaders to increase their capacity for transformative leadership. Capacity building efforts should focus on leaders' knowledge of gender and diversity, equipping them with skills for strategic planning, gender and diversity analysis, facilitation, management, communication, collaboration, and collective decision making.

Mindanao's forthcoming peacebuilding processes would also benefit from increased training for female leaders, aimed at increasing their understanding of the international normative frameworks they can utilize, and the thematic post-conflict issues, such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; elections; legal reform; and macro-economic planning.

2) Support female leaders to promote more dynamic transformational social change

i. Promote women's leadership at grassroots level

Currently, the wife, daughter, or sister of a politically influential man is often regarded as a potential leader, and there is little space and opportunity for women to exercise grassroots level leadership. In addition to the cultural and religious resistance of the patriarchal perspective, Mindanao's prevailing power structure is influenced by elite clans and ethnic groups who tend to allow only elite women connected to influential men to access leadership positions. Consequently, the majority of women, lacking such connections, are virtually absent from the leadership sphere.

To promote transformational social change for peacebuilding, promotion of grassroots leadership is indispensable. Leadership is not linked to an appointed position, and anyone can lead in any given situation. In the prevailing circumstances in Mindanao, more attention and support should be given to women's grassroots-level initiatives for leadership in peacebuilding processes.

ii. Promote Strategic alliances among diverse female leaders

The study found divisions among Mindanao's women, drawn along cultural and religious identity lines: e.g., some female Muslim leaders tend to only pursue policies to preserve and expand their own religious identities, while indigenous women focus on demands for access to their ancestral domain and respect for their traditions. The long-term conflict has also created disparities based on women's socio-economic background. Within this context, efforts to reduce divisions among women must be facilitated, supporting them to establish linkages and convene dialogues among women and female leaders divided by ethnicity, religion, and/or class. Such facilitation efforts support women to build a common agenda, a unified platform of interests, and constituencies for social change toward peacebuilding. Providing opportunities to strengthen alliances among diverse female leaders would potentially close current gaps in knowledge and perceptions, alongside strengthening efforts to overcome differences and promote effective peacebuilding actions.

iii. Alliance with key male members

A key component of advancing women's leadership is to engage male leaders, thus avoiding their resistance and hostility and promoting more dynamic transformational social change. The study found that cultural and religious resistance rejecting women as leaders remains present in Mindanao: e.g., while a selected number of women in leadership positions – including the SWC, the BIWAB, the Women's sector, the Barangay Councils, and CSOs – have access to high-level decision-making meetings alongside male leaders, actual decision-making powers remain solely with the male leadership. Female leaders currently tend to be confined to traditional gender roles, with women subordinate to men; as identified at the community level, women's tendency to internalize ideology also hampers other female leaders' efforts.

Within this context, development assistance should strengthen alliances with male community members. A number of the interviewed men and women shared the understanding that, within Islam, female leadership as inappropriate and women cannot lead men. However, according to an interviewed mufti, a leader of the religious authority based in Mindanao, Islamic teaching allows space for women to exercise leadership: "Islam does not hamper women's duty for society, men should not prevent women to exercise their role and the law should ensure equality and equity of men and women."[184]

Donors and CSOs have devised ways to work with religious leaders to empower women and secure gender equality. For example, the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID) established a national network of male Islamic religious leaders (*Ulama*) and female Islamic religious leaders (*Aleemat*) to advocate human rights and peace at the community level by disseminating Islamic teachings.[185] It is considered strategic to nurture and expand relations and to network with these kinds of religious leaders, able to effectively reach out to communities using local terminologies. Thus, involving Muslim scholars and community religious leaders in the peacebuilding process – to reflect women's rights and needs within Islamic teachings – is considered especially helpful to promoting women's leadership and creating more dynamic social change.

iv. Support women in gender-responsive transformative leadership to scale up their initiatives

Female study participants in transformational leadership roles stressed the current lack of opportunity and resources to scale up their leadership. Some female leaders working at grassroots level identified a lack of funding and networking opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and expand their operations. Support should be expanded for women already exercising transformative leadership initiatives at grassroots level.

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[184] Interview No. 32, August 7, 2015.
[185] Interview No. 48, August 12, 2015.

Conclusion

8. Conclusion

Life within a conflict area narrows women's life choices. However, conflict and the subsequent transition period also provide unique opportunities for women by opening new spaces for agency and leadership. Pushed into previously unavailable options in the private and public spheres, women gradually increase their voice, mobility, and roles in the household and community to provide for family welfare, security, and the reconstruction of conflict-affected communities. Men in these communities also accept these changes.

Nevertheless, in the peacebuilding processes, because formal decision-making roles remain in the hands of men and a handful of elite women, the majority of grassroots-level women and their needs tend to be sidelined or invisible. The study shows that, despite Muslim and indigenous women participating in public forums during political peace processes or in socio-economic development during peacebuilding processes, they are often conspicuously silent, unable to speak up and influence decision making in male- and class-power-dominant structures in their communities. In particular, the participation of socially and economically vulnerable women was severely limited.

A range of actions is needed to eliminate various barriers around the lives of women at the household, community, and national levels, in order to advance their participation. Such measures need to support further education, access to basic needs, and livelihood support, addressing the fact that women are burdened with care work and lack access to the resources needed to participate in peacebuilding efforts. Women also need opportunities to network among themselves, enabling them to access information and social networks facilitating their participation. Actions to remove structural barriers by strengthening governance, as well as the formation of male alliances and collaborations, are also indispensable.

Relatedly, the barriers, needs, and level of participation differ according to the social categories into which a woman falls, including religion, ethnicity, class, age, and education level. To effectively advance women's participation, rather than treating them as a homogeneous group, it is important to understand the diversities among women, based on their social attributes, and to promote strategic assistance by examining their different barriers to and opportunities for participation. Without efforts directed at genuine empowerment of women, addressing the diverse practical and structural barriers impeding their access, voice, and influence, their participation can quickly become a token exercise.

Meanwhile, participation alone is not enough for peacebuilding: leadership should promote desired social change based on the positive peace theory. Women's leadership is considered a powerful driving force for integrating women's voices and experiences into peacebuilding processes and facilitating women's collective action to achieve positive peace, particularly for women. Conversely, merely ensuring that women are in leadership positions is insufficient to advance women's leadership. The case study found that female leaders have, in fact, sometimes done more than men to consolidate gender-blind authoritarian leadership, which does not seek change. The study revealed that female leaders must have a transformative perspective and the skills to work toward social justice, equality, and the collective well-being of women and men, by challenging structural inequalities in society. Within this context, the goal of advancing women's leadership in peacebuilding does

not concern changing a leader from male to female: rather, it involves promoting transformative leadership to achieve social change that eliminates structural inequalities in society; this structural change must address the patriarchal inequality of gender power relations in the peacebuilding processes by linking people, having leaders who raise their voices on behalf of vulnerable women, and promoting women's participation in peacebuilding processes.

During the case study, a number of women and female leaders in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao related concerns about the divisions among women in these areas, based on socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, and religion. As the conflicts in Mindanao are partly motivated by the preservation and protection of respective groups' nationalist, religious, ethnic, or clan identity, women's identities often emerge in relation to other factors, including class, religion, and ethnic identity; political positioning; and social status in relation to the identities of men. Within this context, women from marginalized ethnic groups may face additional discrimination and barriers to participation that women from political majorities may not understand. Furthermore, it was observed that, among women in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas, there is a feeling of isolation from other stakeholders, including the national level women's movements based in Manila. In particular, these women described feeling that the national level groups may not understand the complexities of the challenges they face. Such divisions and disparities among women from diverse backgrounds impede women from effectively voicing their interests and influencing peacebuilding efforts.

Within this context, one of the key considerations for development agencies' peacebuilding in Mindanao is to support actions at both the grassroots and national levels, aiming to tackle disparities among women when states and societies are especially divided by different interests and needs. In particular, attention should be paid to the needs of marginalized groups of women; their capacity and skills for uniting people with diverse backgrounds, focused on common goals for peacebuilding based on positive peace theory, should be enhanced.

In promoting a more inclusive, accountable, and cohesive society of positive peace for all, women hold a vital role and responsibility to make a positive, qualitative difference. The international community is critically positioned to support women's initiatives for peacebuilding: to do so effectively, it must carefully listen to the voices of women on the ground and support their challenge to promote dynamic social transformation.