

## **Gendered preferences**

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### **How women's inclusion in society shapes negotiation occurrence in intrastate conflicts**

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To what extent do gender relations in society influence the likelihood of negotiations during intrastate disputes? A substantial body of literature recognizes gendered inequalities as integral to understanding conflict, yet they have received little attention in systematic studies of conflict management. I argue that patriarchal gender relations that reflect a preference for masculinity over femininity influence states' propensity to negotiate with rebels. I draw on the concept of practices to explain how gender relations shape government preferences for negotiations. Specifically, I contend that practices of excluding women from fully participating in public life institutionalize violence as the preferred way of managing conflict. The implication is that countries with more patriarchal gender relations are less likely to engage in negotiations during intrastate conflicts. I test this argument on all civil conflict dyads between 1975 and 2014. The analyses show that countries that marginalize women's participation in public life are significantly less likely to engage in negotiations. The results provide strong support for my theoretical argument and offer systematic evidence in support of core claims of the feminist peace theory.

Keywords: gender inequality, conflict, negotiation,

## Introduction

How does women's status in societies influence how these manage violent conflict? Over the past two decades a substantial body of research has emerged supporting the link between gender and conflict. Studies show that men who subscribe to patriarchal values of honor and idealize masculine notions of toughness are more likely to participate in political violence (Bjarnegård, Brounéus & Melander, 2017), and that political organizations that have more gender-inclusive ideologies are more likely to employ non-violent tactics (Asal et al., 2013). States in which gendered inequality is prevalent are more likely to: go to war (Caprioli, 2000); use severe violence (Caprioli & Boyer, 2001); be the first to use violence in interstate disputes (Caprioli, 2003); suffer intrastate conflict (Caprioli, 2005); escalate to high intensity violence and are less likely to deescalate violence once it begins (Melander, 2005). An analysis of women's relative status and peacekeeping missions shows that peacekeeping missions in more egalitarian countries are more successful (Gizelis, 2009).<sup>1</sup> This however omits the critical phase of conflict management efforts. In other words, the question of how gender relations influence a state's preferences towards negotiations in intrastate conflicts has so far been left unexplored.

I fill this lacuna by developing an argument linking gendered inequalities with a government's propensity to enter into negotiations in intrastate conflicts. I argue that patriarchal gender relations, those that reflect a preference for masculinity over femininity, influence governments' predisposition to negotiate. Specifically, I argue that governments in countries with lower levels of women's inclusion in the public sphere, i.e. in societies that more extensively curtail women's inclusion and participation in education, commerce, and politics, are less likely to engage in negotiations to resolve armed conflict. Patriarchal gender relations normatively and structurally sanction the use of violence to manage conflicts because they embody and reinforce values of a violent hegemonic masculinity such as domination, subjugation, and denigration of women and

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femininity. Therefore, I expect that all else being equal, countries in which gender relations are more patriarchal are less likely to engage in negotiations. I identify practices as the missing link in explaining how gender relations influence state behavior. Practices diffuse between individuals, society, and formal state institutions; they thereby influence states' preferences, including how to manage armed rebellions. Gender relations manifest in inequitable gender practices such as restricting women's access to economic, educational, and political opportunities, which means these practices tangibly express a gender hierarchy that reflects individual and societal beliefs about masculinity's superiority over femininity, i.e. an idealization of masculinity. Consequently, this study presents an important refinement of the theoretical framework underpinning the majority of work on the gender-conflict nexus. Besides contributing to the burgeoning gender-conflict literature, this study also contributes to the emerging literature on social and political factors shaping negotiations in civil wars (Ogutcu-Fu, 2016; Ari, 2018).

To test this argument I use logistic regression models in 249 armed intrastate conflict dyads between 1975 and 2014 taken from the Uppsala/PRIO Armed Conflict dataset (Gleditsch et al., 2002). This involves 1,955 conflict dyad years, of which 521 feature negotiations. I rely on recently released data on negotiations (Ari, 2018), and gender relations in a society (Karim & Hill, 2018). This enables me to capture practices that reflect different levels of patriarchal gender relations within and between countries over time. The statistical analysis substantiates my argument, provides cross-national support for micro-level findings that patriarchal values and ideals of masculine toughness drive participation in political violence (Bjarnegård, Brounéus & Melander, 2017), and offers systematic evidence in support of some core claims underpinning the feminist peace theory (Hudson et al., 2012). Following the quantitative analysis, I present the Philippines as a crucial case study to illustrate the argument.

## **Conflict management**

### *Why and how do disputants manage intrastate conflict?*

Conflict management research largely focuses on conflict characteristics and dynamics such as the balance of power, relative rebel strength, number of actors, conflict costs and the power to hurt, and the role of external parties in bringing about negotiations and mediations (Ghosn, 2010; Beardsley & Lo, 2014; Greig, 2014; Thomas, 2014; Kaplow, 2016). These conflict dynamics are frequently presented as gender-neutral. However, gender is an integral organizing element of societal and governmental decision-making institutions (Chappell, 2010; Bjarnegård, Brounéus & Melander, 2017; Barnes & O'Brien, 2018; Webster, Chen & Beardsley, 2019) thereby shaping perceptions of threat, willingness to use or abstain from violence, and willingness to negotiate. In this article I focus on these overlooked gendered influences arguing that patriarchal gender relations expressed through practices of women's exclusion shape governments' preferences thereby affecting the likelihood of peace talks.

The balance of power between belligerents is an important factor influencing decisions to continue to fight or to seek a nonviolent method of managing conflicts (Beardsley, 2010; Clayton, 2013; Nilsson, 2010). The power balance between conflict actors is seldom seen through a gender lens, however, power and control are inherently tied to the masculine nature of governments. Constituents frequently expect masculinity from their leaders and challenge them 'when their policies fall short of characteristics associated with the states' masculinized strategic culture or state identity' (Sjoberg, 2013: 162). Coupled with governments' structural advantages such as greater economic and military resources (Gent, 2011) this frequently results in governments first pursuing a military victory rather than a diplomatic solution. This asymmetry means it takes stronger opposition for governments to agree to talks and agree to more concessions (Clayton, 2013; Gent, 2011; Hultquist, 2013).

Although relative power remains largely stable throughout a conflict episode (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan, 2009, 2013), belligerents have opportunities to shape conflict dynamics to

their advantage by leveraging their power to hurt as power to bargain (Hultman, 2012; Thomas, 2014; Wood & Kathman, 2014). The power to hurt argument suggests that insurgents do not need to win militarily to achieve their objectives; it can be enough to impose high enough costs to force the government to accept negotiations. This sensitivity to cost can influence the onset of conflict management as well as the duration and outcome of conflicts (Greig, 2001; Filson & Werner, 2007; Greig & Regan, 2008; Ruhe, 2015). The underpinning idea is that rebels change states' cost/benefit analyses of continuing armed conflict, for example by targeting civilians (Thomas, 2014). Feminist international relations research has illustrated the strong gendered dynamic that underpins this power to hurt logic and its effects on how governments manage conflict (Nagel, 2019; Sjoberg, 2013).

Although negotiations offer many benefits and are less costly than violence, they are not free either. Governments might be sensitive to the costs of fighting, but they are also sensitive to the costs of conceding (Filson & Werner, 2007). Governments' decision to talk can be interpreted as de facto acknowledgement that rebels are legitimate actors or have legitimate grievances (Svensson, 2007; Kaplow, 2016). Governments' structural advantage means that agreeing to talks under such circumstances effectively signals weakness; despite their structural advantage they are unable or unwilling to win outright (Melin & Svensson, 2009; Kaplow, 2016). Talks thus can potentially damage governments' reputation with important domestic or international supporters, who might lose faith in the governments' resolve and/or capabilities (Kaplow, 2016). Displaying strength and upholding its reputation are practices tied to a government's gendered identity, which frequently relies on masculinized notions of power and control over others (Sjoberg, 2013). Opposition groups benefit from talks because they confer legitimacy giving them a boost in domestic and international standing. For governments, however, talks cement their inability to withstand opposition pressure (Melin & Svensson, 2009). This can be problematic, particularly if a government faces multiple separatist movements, because legitimizing one group is likely to encourage others to further (violently) pursue their agendas (Walter, 2006). India is a good example of this as the government

continues to face multiple separatist movements in the northeast of the country. Talks with one group would undermine the government's ability to take a hardline stance on others. I argue that there is a gendered dimension to this: Patriarchal gendered relations, which are linked to the conflicts in Northeast India more generally (Forsberg & Olsson, 2013), can also help explain the comparative dearth of negotiations in them.

These arguments primarily consider battle-related factors. However, both the domestic and international context is important in shaping governments' propensity to engage in peace talks (Beardsley, 2010; Ari, 2018; Howard & Stark, 2018). The asymmetry in resources and importantly in legitimacy renders governments as de-facto veto players in deciding whether or not to engage in negotiations. Thus, understanding what shapes state preferences and therefore the likelihood of negotiations is critical. Governments fearing domestic backlash for deciding to engage in talks, are more likely to accept mediators because intermediaries provide political cover (Beardsley, 2010). Hence regime type is a particularly important domestic factor because government's level of accountability influences to what extent it requires political cover as well as how susceptible it is to hurtful tactics such as targeting civilians (Thomas, 2014). In line with this, states are more likely to engage in negotiations after becoming more democratic (Ari, 2018). Advancing this research focusing on how domestic factors shape state preferences for nonviolent conflict management, I argue in the following section that patriarchal gender relations influence governments' propensity to negotiate in intrastate conflicts.

### **Gendered practices**

Norms and values are intangible, difficult to measure, even invisible, only becoming apparent when violated. Thus testing an argument based on gender norms and relations is difficult and often has to rely on crude approximations that stretch the conceptual boundaries of the norms in question.<sup>2</sup> One possibility to overcome this epistemological problem is to use practices (Bigo, 2011). Practices

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<sup>2</sup> See Karim and Hill (2018) for discussion of concept stretching in relation to gender inequality

combine into one concept the different notions that are captured in a variety of terms such as: customs, tradition, tacit knowledge, ideology, framework and presupposition (Turner, 1994: 2).

Practices are patterned actions within an organized context, socially embedded through learning and training (Adler & Pouliot, 2011). Through repeating actions or reproducing similar meaning over space and time practices represent and reproduce the world in a specific way implicitly claiming that this is the world's natural state, that this is 'how things are done'. Practices, therefore, are ultimately what people use to explain their actions and rules; they are the system of reference by which they interpret events and behaviors (Stern, 2000: 61). Thus, practices are fundamental to any understanding of the world. For example, the democratic practice of voting results in the organizing of our lives through democratic institutions. Accordingly, practices bridge the perceived divide between tangible experiences and invisible norms (Adler & Pouliot, 2011: 17). Simply put: *practices are 'culture in action'* (Adler & Pouliot, 2011: 14, emphasis added). Practices perform, embody, challenge, and institutionalize the values and norms of a society.

Individuals perform practices. Collectively, however, practices are performed by communities in which they develop, diffuse, and become institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1990; Adler & Pouliot, 2011). Hence a society should be considered a community of practice. Gender is integral to practices, as Bourdieu argues that children construct their social identity 'at the same time as [they] construct their representations of the division of labor between the sexes, on the basis of the same socially defined set of indissolubly biological and social indices' (Bourdieu, 1990: 78). Communities of practice provide both the normative justification in which action is grounded and the habitual framework for any social interaction. For example, patriarchal societies are normatively upheld and behaviorally re-enforced by family structures in which sons experience preferential treatment over daughters, which in turn sets the tone for the oppression of women and others in general.

Gender practices are developed, diffused, and institutionalized, thereby playing a fundamental socializing role (Hudson et al., 2012). Women, men, girls, and boys are raised and

socialized to adhere to gendered roles. For example, soldiers' combat training socializes them to adopt certain behavior that possibly cannot simply be "turned off" outside of a military setting. This means associated practices diffuse into other areas outside the military into society and politics (Hudson, Bowen & Nielsen, 2015). This embeds the power imbalance in gender relations, which is expressed through both overt aggressions (for example: domestic violence, sexual assaults, or honor killings) and non-violent oppression (for example: exclusion from public life, relegation of women to "feminine" domestic work). On a societal level the practices idealizing masculinity include for example restricting women's access to education, commerce, and politics as these are deemed 'masculine domains'. These societal practices cement the gender power imbalance. The pervasive nature of practices means that they often become invisible and go unquestioned because they are part of the social fabric: practices become *naturalized through habituation*, for example in the investment bias towards sons in the allocation of food and education. As a consequence, women themselves not only accept these practices, but are co-opted in perpetuating them against other women or their own daughters, for example in cases of female genital mutilation or female infanticide (Hudson et al, 2012).

### *How do practices shape decisions?*

States are formal institutions and masculine entities 'defined, conceptualized, and structured in terms of a distinction between masculinity and femininity' (Peterson, 1992; Tickner, 1992; Britton, 2000: 419; Sjoberg, 2013; Enloe, 2014).<sup>3</sup> This gendering is embedded in institutions through practices that privilege certain behaviors and certain actors over others; in the security realm, these have historically been masculine (Chappell, 2010: 184). The values and behavior ascribed to masculinity and femininity that are expressed in daily interactions, social norms, and gendered

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to distinguish between the nation, which is often framed in feminine terms, e.g. 'motherland' (Yuval-Davis, 1997), and the state, which is the masculine, formal political institution

language, legitimate and encourage men's domination and women's subordination and oppression that create a power imbalance between the genders (Sideris, 2001).

The male-dominated composition of states as formal institutions is important because it shapes state preferences and practices. State preferences are inherently dynamic because the state is a representative institution that different coalitions of social actors constantly seize and re-construct (Moravcsik, 1997: 518). Consequently, these institutions and their practices are the “transmission belt” by which the preferences and social power of individuals and groups are translated into state policy’ (Moravcsik, 1997: 518). The identity and interests of those in power and/or capable of exerting pressure, i.e. primarily men, shape state preferences and practices. As the Philippine case study illustrates this provides an important dynamic element through which practices of inclusion can change policies. Practices diffuse from society into formal state institutions, thereby shaping states’ frameworks for how to govern, including how to deal with conflicts. Specifically, if society’s idealization of masculinity is expressed in practices of exclusion directed against femininity, then these practices influence the state’s policies, particularly its reliance on violence and militarism.

This gender power imbalance shapes state policies. As Sjoberg argues ‘policy options such as empathy, positive-sum collaboration, unilaterally deconstructing the cycle of violence, care, or empowerment are often missing from states’ toolboxes because the gendered system selects for power-over rather than power-to or power-with’ (2013: 95). Similarly Duncanson asserts that the warrior identity influences policy priorities preferring combat to nonviolence and de-escalation (2013: 137). This manifests for example in politicians’ reluctance to reign in military spending and in a preference of meeting threats with a “manly” response, i.e. violence. To exercise caution, to choose de-escalation and nonviolence, is perceived as feminine and thus not part of the warrior identity (Duncanson, 2013).

Another aspect that helps explain how societal practices shape governmental action is the selection of prototypical leaders. Groups commonly select prototypical leaders that epitomize practices that are held in high regard by group members (Hogg, 1996). For leaders this entails that

embodying these values grants them greater legitimacy because they are seen as representatives of the group. This is particularly relevant for political leaders as masculinity (power, strength, and control) is what is supposedly needed to defend the nation (Sjoberg, 2013: 199). This translates to citizens opting for masculine leadership because they expect and demand protection (Sjoberg, 2013: 162). The idealization of masculinity leads to a prioritization of men, whose masculinity is naturally assumed, over women, who have to prove their masculinity, because biological sex serves as a shortcut for identifying desirable leadership characteristics (Sjoberg, 2013: 141). Societies that idealize a warrior masculinity develop, diffuse, and institutionalize practices that harm and oppress women, making it seem that this is the world's natural state and that this is 'how things are done': violently. Thus the rejection of femininity and idealization of a warrior masculinity is associated with the selection of leaders that exemplify the desired masculine practices. This in turn influences their policies. If aggressive and violent practices are what leaders know and what they think are expected of them, then that is what they will employ.

### **Gendered conflict management**

Conflict transforms gender relations. It can lead to the militarization of everyday life and entrench power structures dominated by men who enforce their will through the military, paramilitaries, and militias (Enloe, 2000; Mazurana, 2005). Arguably this would exacerbate patriarchal practices and reduce the likelihood of negotiations. However, the impact of conflict is heterogeneous and can also positively affect gender relations (Buvinic et al., 2013). Women frequently mobilize in response to violence both during and after conflict (Kreft, forthcoming; Berry, 2015, 2018) and recent research shows that wars' disruption of social institutions leads to short and medium term increases in women's empowerment through shifting roles in society (Webster, Chen & Beardsley, 2019). Although increased women's activism and empowerment is neither guaranteed nor necessarily safe from backlash, such dynamics underscore the importance of gender relations within conflicts.

When societies do not subscribe to an idealization of masculinity this also shapes their practices. It is associated with practices of nonviolence, respect, and egalitarianism, which increase women's inclusion in the public sphere. Conflict can become the catalyst for such changes (Berry, 2015, 2018). Societal practices that reflect a greater gender power balance thus should result in greater sex parity in public domains. As women's inclusion increases this further promotes practices that reject governance through domination and coercion and instead emphasize and embody values of empathy, care, nonviolence and respect. Countries that experience an increase in women's inclusion in legislatures and executives are less likely to increase defense spending and initiate wars (Koch & Fulton, 2011; Shair-Rosenfield & Wood, 2017). Key here is, when violent practices of subordination are less dominant in gender relations one would expect society as a whole to be more peaceful as there is a greater normative constraint on the use of violence.

Practices rooted in a gender power balance recognize the other as equal, and thereby acknowledge the validity of one's opponent's interests and grievances. Sjoberg refers to empathy, care, and empowerment as policy options that more feminist states might integrate (Sjoberg, 2013: 95). This shapes states' internal structures and choice of conflict management tools. Within societies that do not idealize masculinity, i.e. no longer equate leadership skills with masculinity and men, this should result in increased women's inclusion and participation in the public sphere and decision-making positions. The inclusion of women should then lead to a self-affirming development in shaping societal practices that place a greater emphasis on collaboration and empowerment of marginalized groups.

At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that women's increased inclusion does not guarantee them greater power in these public spaces or the ability to change institutional power structures (Karim & Hill, 2018). Feminists argue that women's admission into these institutions and structures is often based on meeting established standards of personality and practicing masculinities. Thus women in decision-making positions cannot be simply equated with growing femininity in society as women often adopt masculinized personas in politics (Sjoberg, 2013).

Hence it is important to look at women's inclusion beyond the political realm to include different aspects of public life such as participation in commerce, formal economy, and education.

I argue that the idealization of masculinity expressed through the exclusion of women in the public sphere fosters the continued use of violence in managing conflicts and hampers the use of nonviolent conflict management. Patriarchal practices of excluding women from public life normatively and structurally sanction the use of violence to manage conflicts because they embody and reinforce values of a violent hegemonic masculinity such as domination, subjugation, and denigration of women and femininity. Countries with less patriarchal practices are shown to be less likely to experience violent conflict (Caprioli, 2000, 2005; Caprioli & Boyer, 2001; Hudson et al., 2012). If more equitable practices increase the likelihood of peace talks, this raises the question why did conflict occur in these countries in the first place? I contend that patriarchal practices vary over time and space; meaning while countries on the lower spectrum of patriarchal practices are more likely to defuse a potentially violent conflict before it erupts, those countries that do experience conflict should not be automatically conceived of as homogeneously patriarchal. Within the sample of countries experiencing conflict, there still is variation in terms of the extent of patriarchal practices, which influences the likelihood of negotiations in conflict (see Table I). Accordingly, I contend that patriarchal practices affect both the unconditional and conditional (conditional on conflict occurring) likelihoods of negotiations.

In more inclusive societies, practices should produce both normative and structural restraints against violence, which is associated with a lower value of military victory. Practices that reflect greater gender power balance through the inclusion of women should challenge the predominance of the warrior masculinity and thereby shape governments' assessment of conflict management tools including negotiations. The diffusion and institutionalization of practices expressive and reflective of greater gender power balance, i.e. greater levels of women's inclusion, should foster nonviolent conflict management. When deciding on how to manage conflicts, states in which there

is a greater gender power balance should be less constrained by a societal desire to adhere to a militarized warrior masculinity.

Theoretically states with more patriarchal practices are more likely to experience violent conflict in the first place. Rooted in practices of dominance, subjugation, power and control such states primarily enforce their will through strength and violence and are unlikely to engage in negotiations to prevent violence. I further contend that such practices shape governments' use of conflict management tools, increase willingness to accept risks, place a lower cost on continued violence and a higher value on military victory, thereby making negotiations less likely. The more patriarchal gender relations are the less likely the occurrence of negotiations. Once conflict has erupted, one might argue that only a marked change in these patriarchal practices would lead to negotiations. As recent research shows violent conflict has the potential to cause positive social disruption that increases women's political empowerment (Webster, Chen & Beardsley, 2019). I argue that such positive changes for women's inclusion increase the likelihood of negotiations in conflicts. From the above discussion I derive two testable hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* Higher levels of women's inclusion in society increase the likelihood of negotiations in intrastate conflict.

*Hypothesis 2:* Higher yearly improvement in women's inclusion increases the likelihood of negotiations in intrastate conflict.

## ***Method***

### *Data and models*

In testing this hypothesis, I draw on new negotiation data collected by Ari (2018), and UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict data (Gleditsch et al., 2002). The argument, however, is not specific to negotiations and could be extended to other nonviolent conflict management tools such as mediation. I use Ari's

data for two main reasons: (1) The unit of analysis is conflict dyad year, meaning it is more fine-grained than other available data; (2) Mediation depends on a third party's willingness to offer its services and disputants' willingness to accept the mediator and to give up some level of control over the process. Mediation processes introduce a third set of interests and accentuate both benefits and costs of negotiations, which can substantially change the incentives for conflict parties to participate in a peace process. Therefore, in line with the theoretical focus on patriarchal gender relations within a country the empirical focus of the primary models is on bilateral negotiations between governments and non-state actors.

As the dependent variable is binary, I use logistic regression models to estimate the probability that there will be a negotiation in a conflict dyad year. To control for a potential lack of independence of observations I cluster standard errors on the country. To account for temporal dependence, i.e. negotiations running for multiple years, or a negotiation process in one year prompting another round of negotiation in subsequent years, I include time since last negotiation and its cubic polynomials (Carter & Signorino, 2010). Logistic regression models evaluate how the log odds of an event change with the independent variable. The parameters of a logistic regression model cannot be interpreted in their raw form; hence I also provide the marginal effects of women's inclusion. Marginal effects measure the expected change in the dependent variable (negotiation occurrence), for one unit change in the independent variable (women's inclusion) while holding all other covariates constant.

### *Dependent variable*

Negotiation is defined as 'a meeting between a state-party and a non-state armed group that is recognized by both parties and that is held to fully or partly resolve the conflict through verbal communication' (Ari, 2018). Building on negotiation data for conflicts in Africa (Thomas, 2014), Ari formally coded peace talks for the regions Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. The data only include acknowledged negotiations, thus indirect or secret backchannel talks are not

included. *Negotiation* is coded as dichotomous (0 = no negotiation, 1 = negotiation). Table I displays the geographical distribution of negotiation occurrence in dyad years; the biggest share of observations (46% of all conflict dyad years in the sample) is located in Africa. Negotiations might also take place when fighting is suspended. Thus I follow Ari’s approach of including non-active years that do not reach the UCDP threshold of 25 battle-related deaths. I also run models using only active conflict dyad years.

Table I. Negotiation occurrence by region

		Europe	Middle East	Africa	Asia	Americas	Total
Negotiation	0	110	250	688	198	188	1,434
	1	89	28	204	129	71	521
	Total	199	278	892	327	259	1,955

### *Independent variables*

I argue that women’s level of inclusion captures societies’ idealization of masculinity, which is embodied and reinforced through the subordination, oppression, and exclusion of women and femininity from the public sphere. This concept is difficult, if not impossible, to capture through a single variable. Hence, rather than using a single indicator of equality such as fertility rates or proportion of women in the legislature, I rely on Sabrina Karim and Danny Hill’s latent variable approach (2018). In their measurement model they treat 37 observed indicators as ‘explicitly imperfect measures of an underlying latent variable, which causes the observed outcomes. Similar to factor analysis, the models produce estimates of the latent variables based on correlations among the observed indicators’ (Karim & Hill 2018: 20) – the latent variable being women’s inclusion. The 37 indicators include for example different measures relating to female participation in the legislature, judiciary, and executive, female labor force participation, female participation in education, and the proportion of female business ownership, thereby capturing two dimensions of

women’s inclusion: parity and visibility (see Appendix A for all 37 indicators). The values of women’s inclusion in my sample range from -5.90 on the low end to 2.62 on the high end (see Table II).

Karim and Hill construct the scale using Bayesian mixed factor analytical models, which allows for missing values in the component indicators (2018). This is important because even if information for some of the 37 indicators is missing their models enable them to produce scores for countries based on the available information. “Mixed” means that the models can combine indicators with different levels of measurement (continuous and binary) ‘by assuming different functional forms for the relationships between the latent variable and the observed indicators’ (Karim & Hill, 2018: 22). Further advantages of Karim and Hill’s approach are that it allows for uncertainty and that the ‘models estimate weights for the components based on the correlations among them’ (Karim & Hill, 2018: 20), which negates the need to make assumptions about component weights that might be hard to rationalize. Their scale includes the mean, standard deviation, and the values of both ends of the 95% confidence interval around the mean.

To test H1 I use the yearly mean of women’s inclusion. To test H2, I calculate the yearly change between a current year and the previous year ( $t_0 - t_{-1}$ ) of the mean. In an additional specification, I emulate Webster, Chen, and Beardsley (2019) using the yearly change in women’s political empowerment based on the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project variable V2X\_Gender (Coppedge et al., 2017).<sup>4</sup>

Table II. Descriptive statistics

	Observations	Mean	Min	Max	StD
Women’s inclusion	1,955	-0.3803166	-5.896863	2.615003	0.9316851

<sup>4</sup> Please see appendix for a detailed description of the V2X\_Gender variable

### *Control variables*

Democratic ideals and norms of non-violence also reflect more inclusive practices, i.e. the underlying mechanism is similar to the democratic peace theory (Maoz & Russett, 1993). Accordingly, I use the V-Dem data to control for the possibility that any observed relationship is driven by the pacifying effect of democracy (Coppedge et al., 2017). To ensure that women's inclusion in public life does not merely capture a strong civil society I include the core civil society index from the V-Dem dataset as a control variable. Further I include standard country controls for economic development (natural logarithm of GDP per capita) and population size (natural logarithm of the population).

Conflict intensity is a key factor in shaping conflict parties' decision to accept talks (Melin & Svensson, 2009). Thus, I include a measure for intensity based on UCDP data: For each year the intensity level is coded either 0 for inactive years (n of deaths < 25), 1 for conflict resulting in 25 - 999 battle-related deaths, or 2 for a war with more than 1,000 casualties. The longer conflicts persist the more information about resolve and capabilities belligerents can collect. Simultaneously, long-running conflicts are extremely costly (Filson & Werner, 2007; Greig 2001). Both increased information and persisting costs should increase the likelihood of negotiations. Accordingly, I include the natural log of the dyad duration.

Thomas (2014) finds that on the African continent negotiations are more likely to take place in ethnic conflicts. To control for the potential influence of ethnicity on negotiation occurrence, I include a binary variable based on Vogt et al. (2015) indicating if the non-state actor in the conflict dyad represents an ethnic group.

Previous studies show that relative rebel strength influences the likelihood of mediations (Clayton 2013). To account for this influencing negotiation occurrence I include a measure of relative rebel strength from the Non-State Actor (NSA) database (Cunningham, Gleditsch, & Salehyan, 2013). I use a binary variable that takes on the value of 1 if rebels are weaker or much weaker than the government and 0 if rebels are at parity with or stronger than the government.

Another way of operationalizing rebel strength is territorial control, which has been shown to increase the likelihood of negotiations (Kaplow, 2016). Hence I include a binary variable indicating rebel controlling territory based on the NSA database. External support for rebels can affect the likelihood of conflict termination (Sawyer, Cunningham & Reed, 2017), thus I include a variable indicating if groups received external backing.

Multiple conflicts require the government to divide attention and resources thus improving rebel's relative position and increasing the likelihood of talks and settlements (Nilsson, 2010). On the other hand, multiple conflicts can increase the recognition costs associated with accepting negotiations thus reducing the likelihood of negotiation onset. Furthermore, more groups mean more potential spoilers (Cunningham, 2006). To account for both possibilities I include a variable indicating the number of active groups in a country in each year.

Political support for rebels can create domestic incentives for the government to negotiate (Kaplow, 2016). Therefore, I include a variable indicating if rebels have a legal political wing based on the NSA database. Governments also consider rebels' credibility when deciding to engage in talks and rebels' cohesion is critical in signaling commitment to a potential settlement (Ogutcu-Fu, 2016). Hence I control for the strength of central rebel leadership's command.

## ***Results***

Model 1 presents the full model including all control variables. All other things being equal, women's inclusion shows a positive, statistically significant relationship with negotiation occurrence, i.e. greater levels of inclusion are associated with a higher likelihood of negotiation. The statistical results are reported in Table III (parameters are logistic regression coefficients).<sup>5</sup> When interpreting the results, it is important to keep in mind that studying only cases that have already entered into conflict has the empirical implication of creating a selection bias that should

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<sup>5</sup> All analyses were conducted using Stata 14.2

bias the results towards a null effect further strengthening the observed positive results and offering strong support for H1 (Berk, 1983).

The results indicate that the longer rebels challenge governments the more likely negotiations are, which supports both the notion of revealing information as conflict persists and the notion that costly conflicts that drag on are more likely to see negotiations. The variable for relative group strength also shows the anticipated negative relationship ( $p < 0.001$ ). Both GDP per capita and population size are statistically significant and negative. In line with Thomas's findings (2014), the results show that ethnic conflicts are more likely to see negotiations ( $p = 0.082$ ). Neither levels of democracy nor civil society's participation show a significant relationship with negotiation onset, suggesting that women's inclusion captures a distinct concept. Both the number of active groups and the intensity of violence do not show a statistically significant relationship with negotiations. Interestingly, none of the variables capturing different rebel group characteristics displays a statistically significant relationship with negotiation occurrence. This seems to challenge previous findings (Kaplow, 2016; Ogutcu-Fu, 2016) and highlights the importance of further research into rebel group characteristics and negotiations (Cunningham & Sawyer, 2019).

Table III. Logistic regression models

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Women's inclusion (WI)	0.400*** (0.111)			0.558*** (0.154)	0.483** (0.161)
Yearly change in WI		0.043 (0.141)			
Yearly change in women's political empowerment (WPE)			10.49* (4.347)	10.62* (4.182)	11.46** (3.891)
Interaction of WI & WPE					5.817 (4.479)
Democracy	0.809 (1.013)	0.414 (1.237)	0.381 (1.276)	0.845 (1.247)	0.816 (1.258)
Civil society	0.394 (0.819)	1.091 (0.925)	1.162 (1.053)	0.406 (1.039)	0.438 (1.050)
GDP per capita (ln)	-0.459*** (0.118)	-0.323* (0.138)	-0.250 (0.141)	-0.539*** (0.149)	-0.535*** (0.151)
Population (ln)	-0.184**	-0.217**	-0.231**	-0.183*	-0.188*

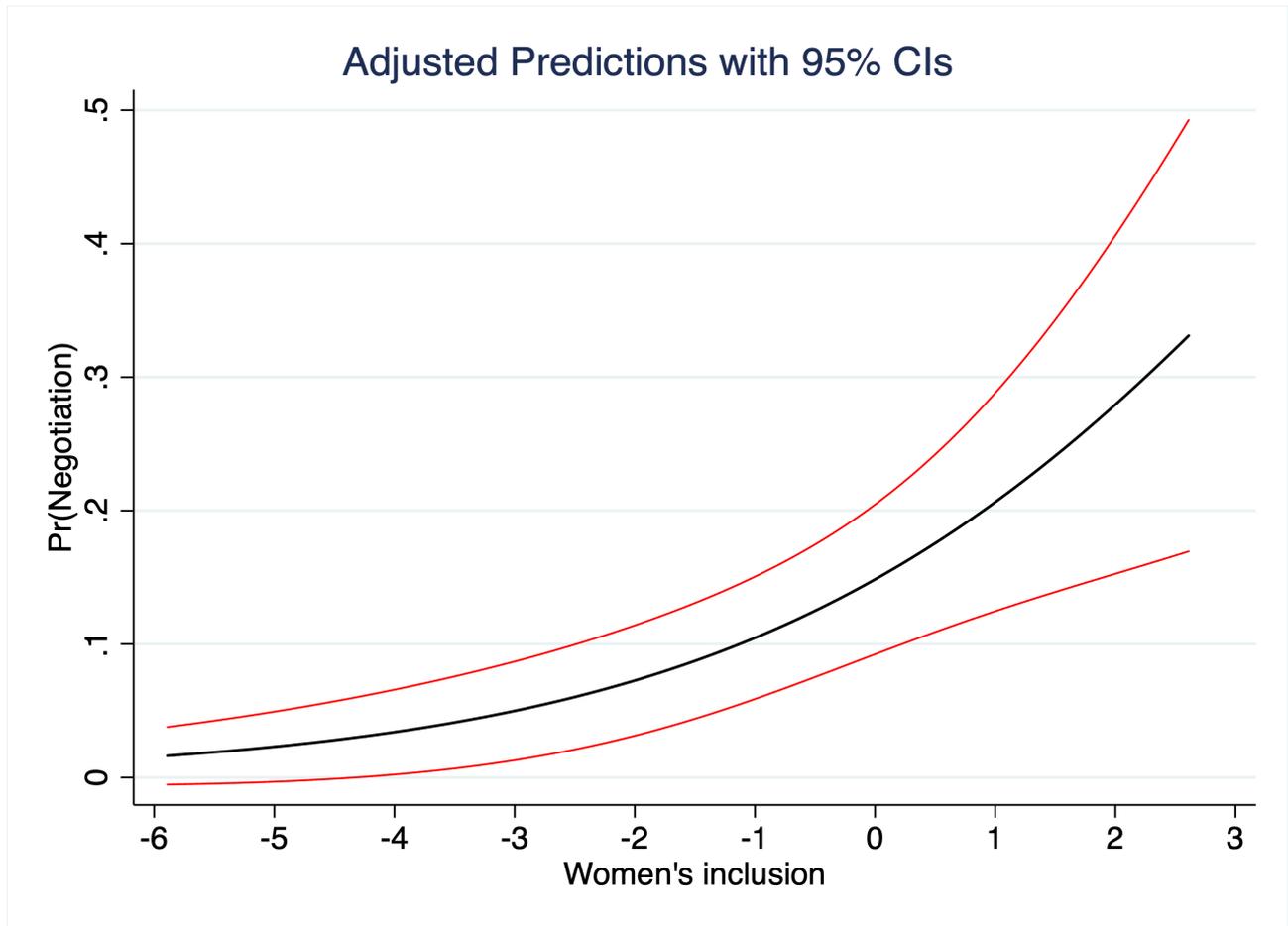
	(0.066)	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.078)	(0.079)
Dyad duration (ln)	0.573***	0.409***	0.415**	0.355**	0.357**
	(0.110)	(0.117)	(0.128)	(0.128)	(0.128)
Conflict	-0.144	-0.099	-0.151	-0.099	-0.093
	(0.232)	(0.241)	(0.254)	(0.250)	(0.252)
War	0.034	-0.109	-0.204	-0.193	-0.188
	(0.318)	(0.298)	(0.332)	(0.341)	(0.342)
Ethnic	0.309	0.153	0.213	0.311	0.324
	(0.178)	(0.195)	(0.211)	(0.199)	(0.202)
Weak rebels	-1.133**	-1.130*	-1.137	-1.315*	-1.298*
	(0.390)	(0.535)	(0.611)	(0.543)	(0.548)
Number of active group	-0.006	-0.065	-0.040	0.009	0.004
	(0.089)	(0.102)	(0.112)	(0.094)	(0.095)
Territorial control	0.149	0.046	0.041	-0.016	-0.015
	(0.229)	(0.229)	(0.251)	(0.235)	(0.235)
External support	0.215	0.294	0.219	0.156	0.147
	(0.186)	(0.183)	(0.211)	(0.210)	(0.211)
Legal political wing	0.081	-0.076	-0.167	-0.114	-0.122
	(0.261)	(0.222)	(0.233)	(0.237)	(0.237)
Central command	0.039	0.046	-0.045	-0.039	-0.025
	(0.282)	(0.305)	(0.325)	(0.335)	(0.333)
Constant	5.055***	4.785***	4.255**	6.516***	6.513***
	(1.285)	(1.450)	(1.509)	(1.575)	(1.597)
<i>N</i>	1,739	1,513	1,414	1,414	1,414
Wald Chi2	488.98(18)	651.74(18)	618.04(18)	691.65(19)	723.83(20)
Prob > Chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Log Likelihood	-693.450	-578.274	-517.433	-508.756	-507.373
ROC	0.863	0.876	0.882	0.886	0.886
AIC	1424.900	1194.548	1072.865	1057.512	1056.747
Cubic Polynomial	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Standard errors in parentheses

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

I provide the marginal effects to illustrate the substantive effects of the relationship between women's inclusion and the likelihood of negotiations. Based on model 1, Figure 1 shows a steady increase in the predicted probabilities of negotiations as women's inclusion increases.

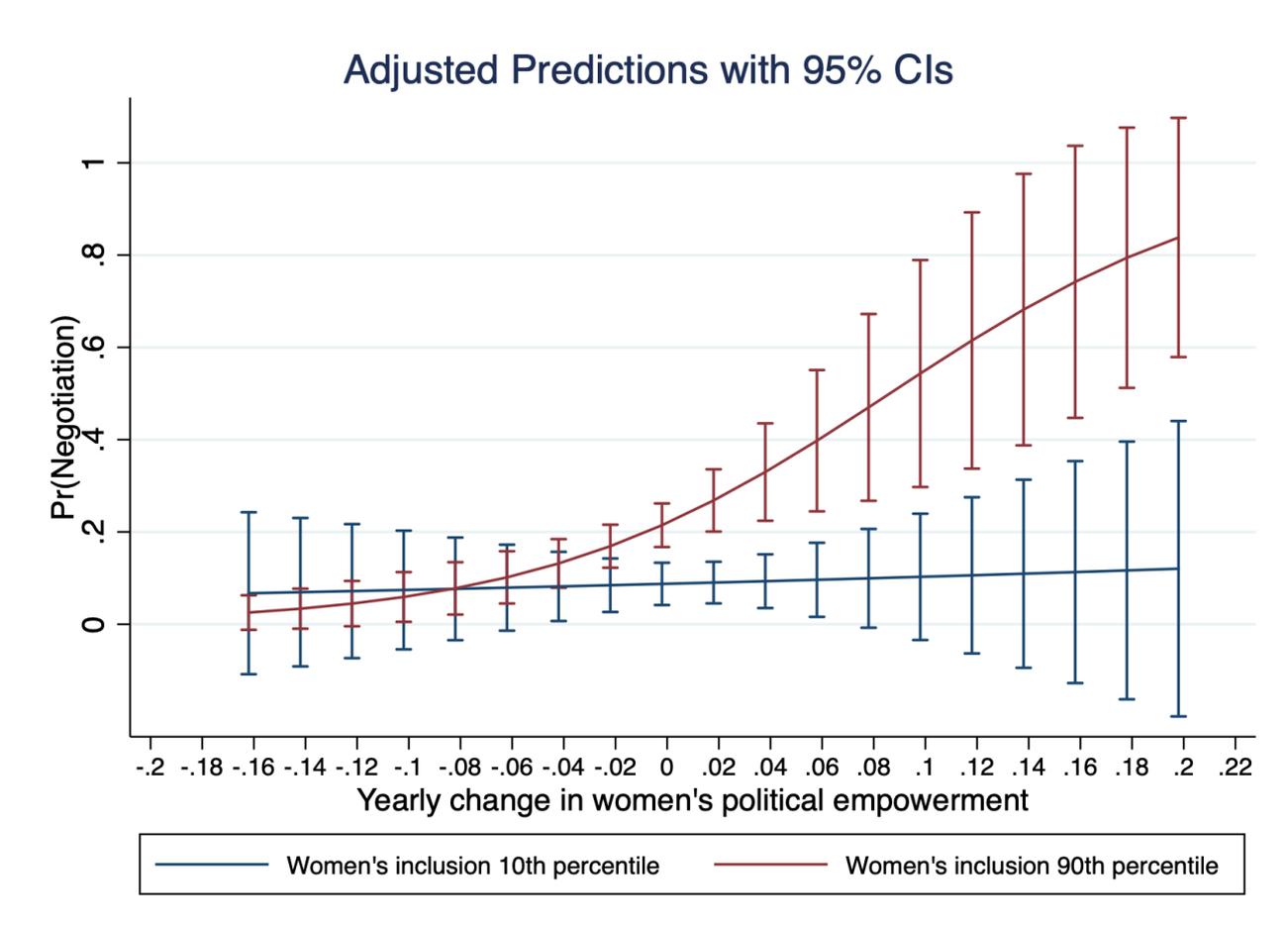
Figure 1. Marginal effects of women's inclusion



To test H2 I first replicate the primary model replacing the yearly mean of women's inclusion with the yearly change. The results show that a greater yearly increase in women's inclusion does not have a statistically significant relationship with negotiations. In Model 3 I instead use the yearly change in women's political empowerment (Coppedge et al., 2017; Webster, Chen & Beardsley, 2019). This demonstrates a strong statistically significant relationship indicating that negotiations are more likely the greater the increase in women's political empowerment is from the previous year. This result also holds when re-introducing the yearly mean of women's inclusion (Model 4). In Model 5, I run an interaction to examine if women's inclusion and yearly change in political empowerment interact to provide a strong push for negotiations. The interaction term does not reach statistical significance. Yet, when I compare increasing yearly changes of women's political empowerment for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of women's inclusion (Figure 2) the results clearly show that for women's political empowerment to be effective in bringing about negotiations

it requires a conducive environment of higher levels of women’s inclusion. This also suggests that these variables capture two distinct, but connected phenomena: Women’s inclusion captures ‘culture in action’ (Adler & Pouliot, 2011: 14), i.e. slow changing societal practices, whereas yearly change in women’s political empowerment reflects short-time changes in women’s political capacity to influence decision-making (Coppedge et al., 2017: 65). Combined these factors can increase the likelihood of negotiations substantially.

Figure 2. Change in likelihood of negotiation for increasing women’s political empowerment



*Robustness checks*

The introduction of control variables can introduce bias (Clarke, 2005), so I limit the first robustness check to just the independent variables (women’s inclusion and yearly change in women’s political empowerment respectively) without any controls. The results of the logistic regression models are significant ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) in the expected direction. In a second robustness check

I substitute the ordinal conflict intensity measure with the natural logarithm of battle-related deaths and introduce a control for the number of terrorist attacks (Polo & Gleditsch, 2016). Women's inclusion continues to show the expected positive statistically significant relationship with negotiations ( $p = 0.006$ ). The introduced estimate of battle-related deaths shows a positive statistically significant association with negotiations, suggesting that the ordinal variable is not fine-grained enough to capture fluctuating conflict costs and their impact on negotiation occurrence. Interestingly, the number of terrorist attacks shows a negative statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.091$ ), which provides another data point in the debate if such attacks benefit rebels (Thomas, 2014).

To account for the possibility that levels of women's inclusion or the occurrence of negotiations are shaped by geographical regions I replicate Model 1 including a control for geographical regions. Women's inclusion still demonstrates the expected positive, statistically significant relationship with negotiations. In comparison to the reference category, conflict dyads in Europe, only conflict dyads in the Middle East are less likely to see negotiations. The geopolitical context can influence conflict termination (Howard & Stark, 2018), hence I include a time period variable to further probe the robustness of my findings. When I run Model 1 with controls for the time periods as well as with dyad-fixed effects, it produces the same results concerning women's inclusion: higher levels of women's inclusion are associated with a higher likelihood of negotiations ( $p = 0.003$ ). Interestingly when controlling for dyad-fixed effects, both levels of civil society participation ( $p = 0.059$ ) and external support for rebels become statistically significant ( $p = 0.055$ ).

The consistently strong and significant results across different model specifications speak to the robustness and validity of the finding and offer strong support for both hypotheses and the underlying argument that societies' idealization of masculinity as expressed through the exclusion of women from public life has negative effects on how states manage intrastate conflicts. To complement the statistical analysis I turn to the illustrative case of the Philippines.

### *Evidence from the Philippines*

The Philippines is a crucial case for the proposed theoretical argument. Since ousting kleptocrat Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 two women have served as president of the country and many more have served throughout different positions in the executive, legislature, judiciary, and the private sector. At the same time, it has also faced multiple intrastate conflicts, which successive governments have repeatedly attempted to resolve through negotiations. This context makes the Philippines the most likely case to observe the causal link between women's inclusion, political empowerment, and negotiations. The evidence illustrates women's political empowerment took place in an environment in which women have wielded informal power for decades. Combined the informal and formal inclusion of women has and continues to shape state preferences and practices.

### *Women's informal and formal power*

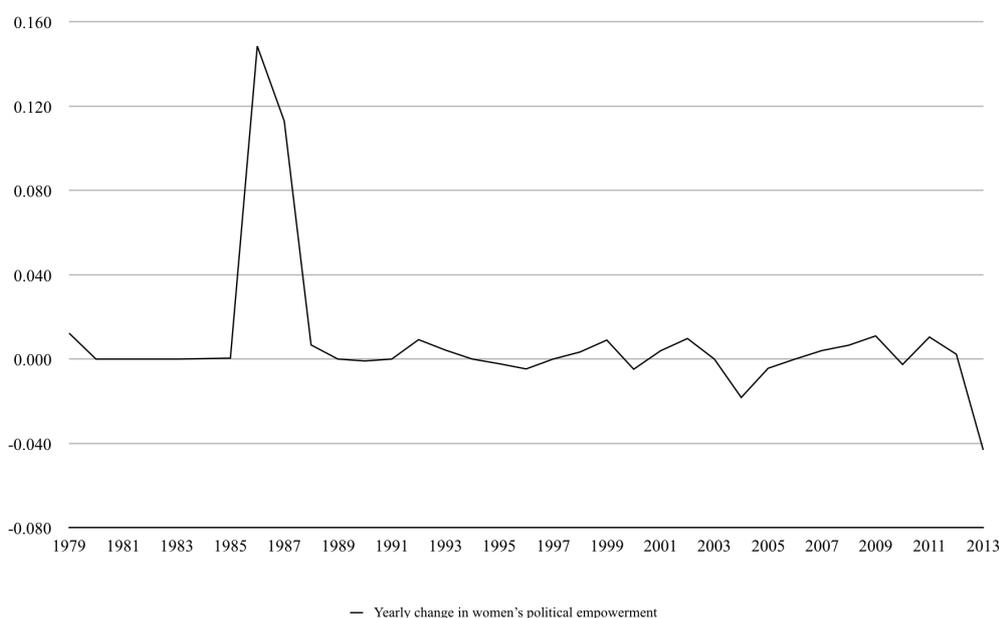
Traditionally, political power in Philippine society was rooted in kinship alliance groups meaning that not just office holders were powerful, but also people close to them. 'Looking at power through the local practices of the country, women emerge not only as active political agents, but as extremely powerful practitioners of kinship politics' (Roces, 1998). Kinship politics meant that women held power as mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters of men in formal positions of power. Women often organized their husbands' fundraising, dinners, speeches, or other campaign events, for example, Senator Benigno Aquino's mother Doña Aurora Aquino actively ran his campaigns (Roces, 1998).

The military's assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983 sparked a substantial proliferation of women's political groups defying the Marcos dictatorship and deliberately entering the spheres of official power (Roces, 1998). Building on high levels of inclusion women who exercised informal power transitioned into formal politics demonstrating the clear link between the two mechanisms. The country's first female president, Corazon Aquino embodies this path winning the presidency three years after the military had killed her husband.

Figure 3 illustrates this substantive change in women’s political empowerment in 1986 and 1987. Practices associated with high levels of women’s inclusion provided the fertile ground in which women’s political empowerment would be particularly effective.

Drawing on their experiences in kinship politics women exploited the democratic opening to advance. Within two decades women constituted 35% of administrators and managers and held almost 20% of legislative seats (UNDP, 2002; Hega, 2003). In addition to the two presidencies, women have held nearly every powerful cabinet position, including those that are generally male-dominated such as Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and Secretary of National Defense (Barnes & O’Brien, 2018). Two women have also held the cabinet position of Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process: Teresita Quintos Deles (2003-2005 and 2010 to the present), and Annabelle T. Abaya (2009-2010). Combined these changes in women’s political empowerment and the underlying practices help explain the relatively high number of negotiations. However, these changes are not irreversible and politics continue to be a largely male-dominated arena, which facilitates the rise of macho-authoritarian leaders like Duterte that goes along with a substantial negative change in women’s political empowerment from 2012 to 2013 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Yearly change in women’s political empowerment in the Philippines



### *Conflict negotiations*

Women's persistence in re-negotiating gendered practices within the formal structures has transformed politics, making it less patriarchal, especially in rural areas (Roces, 1998: 73). Women frequently use gendered tactics such as *cariño*, i.e. charming one's opponent, to garner support for their bills and resolutions, which are unavailable to men (Roces, 1998). Women's nonviolence was key in opposing and defying the 'ultimate symbol of machismo power – the military' (Roces, 1998: 74, 2006). The consultative nature of government processes can be seen as one of the successes of the vocal posture of the women's movement and the presence of a broad and active women's movement to keep the gender discourse alive continues to be crucial in re-shaping practices.

Benefiting from these slow moving changes of women's inclusion, women's political empowerment has shaped how the Philippine's government engages with its internal challengers. 'In the months following her accession to power, President Aquino initiated negotiations with Nur Misuari [MNFL leader]. Both parties agreed to cease hostilities and engage in discussions on the basis of the Tripoli agreement and regional autonomy' (Bertrand, 2000). In 1990, Aquino declared a decade of peace and appointed 'former Supreme Court Justice Cecilia Munoz Palma, to chair the National Peace Conference that produced a declaration called "Towards a National Vision for Peace."' (Santiago, 2015: 6). These talks were important confidence building measures between the parties and contributed to further negotiations under President Ramos (Bertrand, 2000). Successive governments continued negotiating ceasefires with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and women continued to play prominent roles in the peace efforts, for example, in 1997 President Ramos appointed a woman, Emily Marohombsar, as the first civilian peace negotiator in talks with MILF (Santiago, 2015). After 17 years of on-and-off ceasefires and negotiations the government and MILF signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2014. Notably, women were active negotiators on both sides (Santiago, 2015). Although women were directly involved in

negotiations, it is important to highlight that is not an argument about women's effect on peace negotiations, but about the country's changing patriarchal gender relations.

The Philippines case demonstrates how patriarchal gender relations influence belligerents' predisposition to negotiate illustrating how the changes in practices and women's political power combined to influence the government's conflict management approach.. Women's inclusion and increased political power embody both the change towards more collaborative and consultative practices that no longer normatively and structurally sanctioned the use of violence to manage conflicts and women's growing political capacities to affect policies.

### ***Conclusion***

This study sheds light on an aspect of the gender-conflict nexus that had so far received very little systematic attention. It provides robust statistical support and illustrative case evidence for the argument that countries that marginalize women's participation in public life are less likely to engage in negotiations. The paper contributes to the theoretical framework underpinning the majority of work on the gender-conflict nexus. It develops the general argument and through the introduction of practices offers an innovative step towards delineating the causal mechanism at work. The introduction of practices also helps bridge the perceived gap between a feminist IR theory and positivist analyses, as practices are both intangible norms and tangible experiences that are measurable.

This study also adds to the literature on negotiations in civil wars by offering a theoretical innovation through the introduction of domestic gender relations as a factor for negotiation occurrence. The decision to engage in talks is often considered in terms of conflict characteristics. This study points to the importance of practices that lead to the subordination and exclusion of others. The results indicate that conflicts in countries that exclude women from public life are less amenable to negotiations. Although these norms and practices are susceptible to outside manipulation and do change over time (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998), they are an unlikely lever for

third party influence within an ongoing conflict. The changing of a society's practices is not a quick fix for international actors looking to end armed conflict but should be a long-term process underpinning a comprehensive feminist strategy of bolstering values of equality, care, empathy, nonviolence, and respect. Women's inclusion and political empowerment need to be seen as intrinsic and fundamental human rights that have positive side effects, rather than through an instrumental lens as potential tools for peace.

Replication data: The dataset, codebook, and do-files for the empirical analysis in this article, along with the online appendix, can be found at <http://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets>

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