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Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

Mediation for peace

Pagpati'ut

Mediating Violence in SULU

Australian AID

ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
Working Group on Security Sector Reform

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Disclaimer

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Cover

"Pagpati'ut" is the Tausug equivalent of mediation. The meaning, however, is broader than just mediation as third-party intervention and encompasses the broader idea of mediation as handling or addressing as used in this research.

The main photo in the background is that of the town of Jolo and the island Municipality of Hadji Panglima Tahil. The three photos at the bottom are those of community dialogues facilitated by the HD Centre in the Peace Centered Community (PCC) of Barangay Silangkan in Parang Municipality (Left and Center) and in Barangay Niangkaan in Omar Municipality (Right).

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Pagpati'ut
Mediating Violence in SULU

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SURVEY AT BARANGAY SILANGKAN,
PARANG, SULU.

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MESSAGE

The Australian Government, through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), is pleased to have supported this research on mediating violence in Sulu, in partnership with the *Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue*.

Armed violence is often assumed to be a fact of life in the southern Philippines, and particularly in Sulu. This study shows that more than 50% of the population in currently peaceful areas has witnessed armed violence, with higher results for conflict-affected areas.

The long-running nature of armed violence is not, in itself, justification for accepting this as a normal state of affairs. Armed violence is both a symptom of the underlying currents of conflicts in parts of Mindanao, and a cause of ongoing development challenges. Instability and insecurity continue to act as a brake on development. Low-level insurgencies and difficulties in bringing the peace process to completion contribute to unrest. There is a large opportunity cost to not securing peace. Scarce government resources will continue to be sapped, investment will remain constrained and efforts to raise living standards will be diluted.

This inter-connected nature of conflict and poor development results underlines why it is important to understand the nature of such violence, to provide a platform for addressing both conflict and development challenges.

This study is an important piece of work, for while there is much research done on broad issues of peace and conflict in the Philippines, this paper focuses on the particular experience of six select communities in Sulu. Documenting the experience of these communities, and in particular some of the positive mediation interventions initiated by community leaders and members, will hopefully provide a deeper understanding of some of the critical factors of community resilience that can be replicated in similar challenging environments.

Peace and development in Sulu remains a long-term challenge for all concerned, but hopefully this publication leads us all a small step closer to understanding what needs to change for peace to be achieved at local levels. We are committed to continue to work with the Philippine Government and all peaceful stakeholders to address these challenges.

OCTAVIA BORTHWICK
Minister Counsellor
AusAID Philippines

DAVID GORMAN (R) WITH ABTAJIR TINGKASAN (L)

FOREWORD

In August 2010, the HD team in Sulu and I travelled to Silangkan, Parang Municipality, a once thriving regional port and fishing village, to meet with an MNLF commander who was at the center of a local rido. Our local mediation team had been asked to intervene and there was concern the conflict had the potential to draw in the MNLF, local clans, the AFP and even the ASG in a bloody conflict if not resolved. My staff and I took a banca to the Barangay and were warmly greeted by the MNLF Commander Abtajir Tingkasan and his small band of well-armed MNLF fighters. It was not a small village, but it was clearly one that had, at one time, seen better days. While we had travelled extensively throughout Sulu, Silangkan seemed to embody so many of the challenges in the Province. Its homes were dilapidated, there was little infrastructure, industry or development and barely any government presence aside from a school overladen with children with few opportunities to look forward to. Nonetheless, what struck us about Silangkan more than any of this was in fact a genuine desire of this commander to change the way business was done in Silangkan. During our meeting, Commander Abtajir confided in us that he could maintain some degree of security, keep the ASG in the surrounding hills in check and ensure clan violence in town was kept to a minimum. After all there was no police, no courts and essentially no government to maintain law and order so someone needed to take charge. But, he confessed, this was no future and they had failed the people. As a large group of high school children passed by, he pointed to them, noting they had little future in this town and the 30 or so years of fighting had not given them any better future. However, personally, he was prepared to swallow his pride and settle his rido unconditionally so that the village would not suffer for it. We departed with promises to follow up and when we returned to Jolo, we met with the young newly elected Mayor of Parang, Madzhar T. Loong. He was quite pleased to hear about our meeting with Commander Abtajir and his willingness to drop the rido but perhaps just as importantly, he echoed the same sentiments as those in Silangkan outlining the steps they have taken and are prepared to take to create a more stable environment for development and hopefully even investment. I think it was then that we all said to ourselves, here is a village that really wants to change and seems to have the willingness to do so. There are probably many other Silangkan's in Sulu as well but perhaps while we cannot address them all or certainly not any one sector, perhaps we can at least support communities that can be a model for others. Meaning if they demonstrate to the government, donors and hopefully private investors that they have the will and the commitment to support change and they are rewarded with comprehensive development and investment targeting all the key sectors then perhaps other communities will also try and emulate their example.

In Silangkan it became readily apparent that when we constantly point out or target what doesn't work we may often miss out what does work and what we can build on. We hope through this publication, we help point out what is in fact working and in the process encourage others to also take a fresh look at Mindanao and see how we can better target those people and places which demonstrated the courage and ability to build a better Mindanao.

DAVID GORMAN
Country Representative
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

HD TEAM AND MBLT-3 MEDIATION MEETING AT MASJID PUNJUNGAN, KALINGGALAN CALUANG

I. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

In March 2005, the HD Centre entered Sulu to understand more deeply the causes of violence and the reasons for the resurgence of the armed wing of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) and the MNLF had signed a Final Peace Agreement in 1996. However, this agreement never really brought peace to Sulu or to Mindanao more broadly. Following five rounds of informal discussions between the MNLF and the GPH, the two parties agreed to establish the GPH-MNLF Peace Working Group (PWG) in Sulu, whose goal is to prevent and resolve incidents between the two parties *as well as others engaged in conflict.*[1] The HD Centre was asked to oversee the group and stationed an expatriate in Sulu to assist the parties.

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1 The PWG had the following mandate:

1. Jointly identify existing and potential security problems;
2. Jointly identify and develop plans and programs for resolving security problems in Sulu for review by the respective GRP and MNLF panels;
3. Jointly resolve conflict when required and mandated to;
4. Identify existing and potential human rights concerns;
5. Engage with all stakeholders in identifying and reviewing security problems, resolving conflict and recommending programs for a long term and sustainable resolution;
6. Engage with all armed elements contributing to the conflict in Sulu;
7. Identify and help assist in resolution of humanitarian impact of conflicts such as IDPs.

While the PWG was initially successful at resolving and addressing conflicts between the two parties, the lack of political progress in the review of the implementation of the 1996 Agreement, coupled with other parties stoking conflict such as rival clans and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), continued to draw MNLF and GPH forces into conflict.

In 2007, the MNLF camps were overrun by government forces following a series of skirmishes and the HD Centre realized it was time to shift tact. The HD Centre conducted an extensive study of violence and armed groups[2] and based on its results reconfigured the PWG. Instead of just dealing with representatives from the two parties, it decided to work through credible, impartial, respected individuals who could reach out effectively to all groups engaged in conflict, and help mediate. The name of the group was changed to the *Tumikang Sama Sama* (Together We Move Forward) and members were added based on input from civil society, the provincial government, and latterly from parties to a conflict that would identify mediators to assist them. Alongside the TSS, the Preventing Election Related Violence (PERV) Initiative, a program supporting 25 field- based monitors was established. This body reports incidents of election-related violence to the TSS and conducts peace building activities in their respective districts.

Nonetheless, while it was apparent that the TSS and the monitoring operation were successful at preventing and resolving some local-level conflicts, marginalization, underdevelopment, poor governance, lack of private investment, among others prevented Sulu from sustainably getting out of the 'conflict trap'. Added to this, piecemeal aid and development projects had failed to make any comprehensive progress. These projects are all too often targeted at one sector or another but failing to address all the causes of conflict.

The HD Centre's initiatives had also often come up short as it seemingly tried to resolve all of Sulu's problems. Following the success of its mediation work in Barangay *Silangkan, Parang Municipality* and noting the drive of its local politicians, MNLF commanders and others to move away from 'business as usual', made HD Centre rethink its efforts in Sulu. The Centre thought that perhaps it is better to try and resolve conflicts that could be resolved in order to build up credibility in the efficacy of dialogue and also to draw the attention of donors and the government on a few

2 See Mirelle Widmer et al. 2011. Armed Violence in Mindanao: Militia and Private Armies. The Institute of Bangsamoro Studies and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

communities that were working and try to support these communities comprehensively as models. If communities such as *Silangkan* can resolve their conflicts and have the drivers in place to change, perhaps it can serve as a target for broader assistance that would address all the drivers of conflict. Moreover, they could be model communities for others to emulate. This is what came to be referred to as Peace Centered Communities (PCC).

Peace Centered Communities are those where conflicts were successfully resolved, albeit its sustainability is yet to be seen. The point, however, is that people in these communities *initiate interventions* to create a secure environment where government services can flow, and hopefully pave the way for development initiatives. Rather than simply accepting things as they are, people in these PCC *mediate* their everyday encounters with violence and create a conducive environment for development, governance and private investment.

This is the inspiration of the present project. The fundamental premise of the study is that communities are not passive receivers of violence, but are actively negotiating, mediating the everyday violence that come their way. **Mediation** here is broadly framed to include interventions – done by individuals, groups, or communities – that directly and creatively confront violent situations sans the use of arms.

The goal of the current research is to discover current community practices in mediating violence, and effective policies (customary and legislated) that support a positive environment for peace building. Its general and overarching intention is to document '*what works'* given the specific context of Sulu, with the intention of sharing these *'peace technologies'* to other communities in similar circumstance.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this project is to contribute to the reduction of violence in the Province of Sulu. It has, as its specific objectives, the following:

1. To understand, what is the problem;
2. To understand why violence occurs; and
3. To find out 'what works' or how communities mediate and prevent violence from escalating in communities

Significance of the Study

While a number of studies have already been done as regards peace

and conflict dynamics in the Philippines, literature specific to the Sulu archipelago remains scarce.

This research does not claim to be a trail-blazing work; instead, it offers to explore the dynamic play of history, institutions, interpretations, and governance in Sulu. In doing so, it attempts to bring to fore positive interventions initiated by community leaders and members, with the end-view of institutionalizing if not strengthening such efforts. It is hoped that such a study may in fact encourage other similar and more comprehensive studies.

The study also offers to determine factors for community resilience that can be replicated in similar challenging environments.

Theoretical approach and conceptual frame:
This is an exploratory study that is informed by the works of Ted Gurr[3], one of the pioneers in studying political violence.

The conflict in Sulu is a classic example of the dangerous dance between *state-building interests* versus *communal interests*. More accurately, the State has, for more than a century, attempted to impose its interest over a communal group, the Moros. Various modes have been utilized, from soft power (e.g. education and cultural imposition), to hard power (e.g. laws and policies meant to break the resolve of the Moros). But at the same time that it attempts to impose, it is also resists the various forms of articulation of the Moros of their interests.

The communal group, on the other hand, continuously resists the efforts of the state to impose state-building interests; in the process, the Moros also attempt to articulate their communal interest – this articulation ranges from legal, to extra-legal, to armed means.

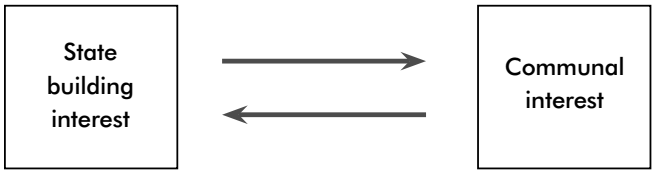

Figure 1: Theoretical and conceptual framework

3 Gurr, Ted Robert. 1993. Minorities at Risk. A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts. Washington: US Institute of Peace Press; and Gurr, Ted. 1974. *Why Men Rebel.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press

State building requires a cohesive national identity and the nascent Philippine state seems to be operating on the belief that this can be achieved by homogenizing the peoples of the archipelago into a cohesive unit.

Communal groups are "groups whose core members share a distinctive and enduring collective identity based on cultural traits and lifeways that matter to them and to others with whom they interact... (G)roup identification is reinforced by cultural, economic and political differentials between the group and others: treat a group differently, by denial or privilege, and its members become more self-conscious about their common bonds and interests. Minimize differences, and communal identification becomes less significant as a unifying principle." (Gurr 1993,3)[4]

Training its eyes on the Moros, the nascent Philippine state continued the futile efforts (and grave mistake) of the colonizers to pacify and *assimilate* the Moros, not only through education, but also, significantly by issuing state policies meant to break the resolve of the Moros to fight back. Sadly, the repercussions of these discriminatory policies not only strengthened and sharpened the Moro identity; they also developed deep-seated discontent that manifests itself in varying forms, the most dangerous of which is the resort to armed violence.

The Moro communities resisted the campaigns of the embryonic Philippine state. This resistance maintained the pride and honor of the 'homeland' but placed a heavy toll on the economic vitality of communities. More than this, the long-drawn struggle has also stretched the resilience of clans and communities that they eventually imploded. The clan-conflicts witnessed today are among the negative repercussions of this centuries-long struggle.

In other words, the armed resistance of the politicized Moro groups against the Philippine state, and the clan feuding that intersects with the politicized discontent are products of the historical push-and-pull of the two forces: the assertion of communal identity interests by the Moros, and the imposition of state-building efforts by the Philippine state.

This dangerous dance continues to this day.

4 Gurr, Ted Robert. 1993. Minorities at Risk. A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts. Washington: US Institute of Peace Press

FGD WITH COMMUNITY ELDERS AT BARANGAY PUNAY POBLACION, PANGLIMA ESTINO

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is an exploratory research that intends to appraise what happens in community- settings rather than make generalized statements.

Conceptually, the research process followed the flowchart below.

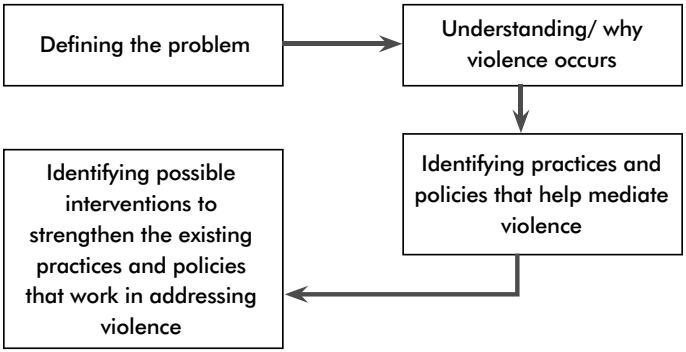

Figure 2: Research flow-chart

Stages 1 and 2: Defining the problem and *Understanding why violence occurs* serve as the database or the beginning position from which the remaining part of the research builds on. It hopes to define the problem

through the systematic collection of information about the magnitude, scope, characteristics and consequences of violence.

Stages 3 and 4: Identifying practices and policies that help mediate violence and *identifying interventions to support the practices and policies that work* are the central focus of this study. The study attempts to deepen understanding on why violence occurs as well as the causes and factors that increase or decrease the risk for violence. Likewise, it looks at what works to prevent violence, and henceforth, identifies mechanisms that can be made applicable in a wide range of settings.

Notice that each stage is supposed to be taken one step at a time rather than simultaneously. This is due to the assumption that the data builds on from the previous step and informs the direction of the next steps.

Research Method

In the absence of a comprehensive and authoritative data set as regards the armed violence and clan feuding in Sulu, the research team opted to start the study by creating a baseline information. This was done through a *quantitative survey* in six pre-selected communities. This is the first leg of the process.

Three Barangays from Districts 1 and three Barangays from District 2 were pre-selected. Of these communities, two communities have active conflict, two have dormant conflict, and two have entered peace settlements. The following is the operational definition of terms that this study used.

SURVEY AT BARANGAY PUNAY POBLACION, PANGLIMA ESTINO

The community selection is limited to those where the HD Centre has a presence i.e. where it extends or has extended mediation support. While the study acknowledges this inherent limitation, nonetheless, the selection of Barangays hopes to present the various states of conflict in Sulu.

Table 1: Classification of Barangays

Classification	Characteristics	Communities visited for the research
Peaceful Barangays	These are communities where there is no overt or latent armed conflict. Relative stability can be observed, and hence, services, investment, economic activities, and employment begin to flow in.	Barangays Punay and Silangkan
Barangays with *Dormant-conflict*	These are communities where the current peace is tenuous; while not currently active there is an unresolved issue between two or more warring parties that have escalated to armed confrontation in the past. Despite the absence of gunshot exchanges (for at least one-year), the probability of recurrence is high. A misstep from any of the parties involved could lead to the escalation of violence. Therefore, tensions are high.	Barangays Sionogan and Niangkaan
Barangays with *Active Conflict*	These are communities with on-going armed conflict and where the parties to the conflict are physically present in the Barangay.	Barangays Bunot and Masjid Pujungan

The quantitative survey aims to establish a broad overview of what is happening on the ground. (See Appendices: Survey Questionnaire) Note that the survey conducted was non-random and purposive, and is meant to explore and surface topics that need further investigation.

Sixty surveys were distributed to each of the six communities, yielding a total of 340 valid and 20 invalid survey forms. Six research assistants assisted the survey process.

Using the statistical data, qualitative questions meant to probe on topics that need deepening or more nuanced understanding were formulated. These questions were used in the second part of the research.

FGD AT BARANGAY SIONOGAN, INDANAN, SULU

The second-leg of the research process involves interviews with key informants (i.e. Barangay Officers, members of council of elders, informal community leaders) and focus-group discussions (FGDs) among community residents. To ensure that data are validated and/ or corroborated, the respondents in the quantitative survey are different from the respondents of the qualitative part of the research.

The initial findings of the study were presented in a validation forum attended by members of the academe and civil society organizations in Sulu and its environment (Zamboanga and Basilan). The forum helped identify areas that need further clarification and surfaced areas for further research.

HD TEAM AND MBLT-3
MEDIATION MEETING
AT SITIO TANDUH
PANUAN, OMAR, SULU

III. RESEARCH LOCALE

Sulu has 19 municipalities, divided into two (2) Districts. Based on anecdotal reports, dynamics in the communities' relationship with the military differ in the two (2) districts. Municipalities in District 1 are said to view the military with suspicion - these are also areas where the presence of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is more pronounced. Therefore communities are exposed to armed conflict between the military and the terror group. Ironically, it is in District 1 where the main military headquarters in Sulu is located (specifically, in the Municipality of Indanan). These areas also prove to be challenging environments for conflict mediation/facilitation.

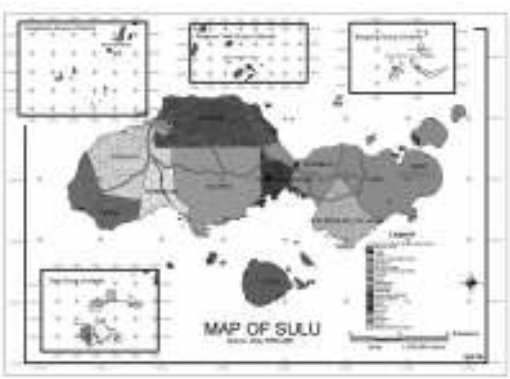

Figure 3: Map of Sulu
Source: JICA, PPDO-SEP

Community Profile
The community profile presented here is based on data generated from the survey and interviews with community residents and leaders.

1. DISTRICT 1
a. Barangay Bunot, Municipality of Indanan (Active-Conflict)

Community Profile
Barangay Bunot is a rural community about ten kilometers (10km) from the town proper of the Municipality of Indanan.

The majority of residents depend on agriculture, as confirmed in the survey. In Table 2, 58% of respondents listed agriculture as their source of income. A small percentage (5%) of survey respondents have small businesses such as sari-sari stores and peddling of homemade goods like sweets and rice cakes. There seems to be very little access to capital (82% answered that there was no access to capital) and other forms of livelihood (68% saw no other means of livelihood available to them).

The Barangay lacks basic services. While a health center exists, it's no longer being used. The Bunot Elementary School is the only available formal school that is present in the barangay. Nonetheless, there are other educational institutions that are accessible by foot to the residents of Barangay Bunot. The nearest are about 3 to 4 kilometers away. Only thirty two percent (32%) of the respondents have had formal elementary schooling, 25% had high school education, 12% college. (See Table 3)

It also is host to some internally displaced peoples who have eventually settled in the Barangay.

Conflict Profile
The current conflict is a result of the latest barangay elections, between the current Barangay Captain and his opponent. This, however, is not the beginning, but a continuation of conflict that began several elections ago when a power sharing agreement was violated.

When the then incumbent Barangay Captain passed away, the power sharing agreement regarding succession was not followed. This resulted in bad blood between the two (2) families, and the conflict manifests in succeeding elections. Alliances were formed but subsequently broken, resulting in the further degradation of relations between the families. In the

2010 elections, incidents have already escalated to violent armed clashes between the family of the incumbent Barangay Captain and the challenger.

The conflict, coupled with the urging and mediation of the leaders of the municipality and the Philippine National Police (PNP), eventually pushed the incumbent Barangay Captain to leave the community and move to Jolo, with all his allies and supporters. However, since the Barangay Captain is still the de facto incumbent official, he is the one who can access the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA)[5]. His transfer to Jolo therefore created an additional layer of complication before IRA funds can reach the barangay.

Note that the entire community is polarized between the two parties such that all those who opted to remain in the Barangay are considered allies of the opposition group. With the incumbent gone, the opposition group is now handling governance in the Barangay, with their leader de facto appropriating the Barangay Captain position, sans the IRA.

Interviews reveal that both conflict holders allegedly have their respective "financiers" (who are purportedly occupying positions in the government). These "financiers" feed the current conflict by supporting the parties financially and otherwise. It is unclear however, what drives the "conflict financiers" to continue supporting the warring families.

Given the availability of resources (i.e. IRA, financiers' support) that sustain both parties, the possibility of escalation is very high. The *Tumikang Sama-Sama (TSS)* is currently mediating the conflict. Respondents in the elite interviews and FGDs expressed that the conflict can only be settled through a power sharing agreement.

To this day *the* conflict remains unresolved. It is considered as an '*active conflict'* and has created deep-division in the community.

b. Barangay Sionogan, Municipality of Indanan (Dormant-conflict)

Community Profile
Barangay Sionogan is situated far from the town proper of Indanan. It is rich in both land and aquatic resources on which the people depend (50%

5 Based on Book 2, Title III, Chapter 1, Sections 284 – 286 of the Local Government Code, local government units (LGUs) like the barangay shall have a share in the national internal revenue taxes. The shares of LGUs are to be automatically released, without need of any further action, directly to the LGU treasurer.

of survey respondents). There is no access to other business/ financial capital, according to 98% of survey respondents. (See Table 2)

The Barangay is underdeveloped, has poor access to water and basic services, with an unpaved, bumpy and rough road.

The South Sionogan Elementary School is situated in the Barangay, hence the number of elementary schooled residents is higher in this community as compared with others (See Table 3). The community was also a recipient of the adult literacy program, Literacy for Peace and Development (LIPAD).

Conflict Profile
The conflict in the area stems from political contestation for the Barangay Captain position.

The transferring of domicile of the contending party outside of Sulu[6] greatly accounts for the dormancy of the conflict. The physical distance makes it more difficult for the contenders to resume the armed harassment against the Barangay Captain; it also lessens the possibility of face-to-face interaction between the two parties.

It is a *dormant-conflict* as no actual clash has happened for more than a year. This respite has allowed the incumbent Barangay Captain to play a major role in community concerns especially in mediation and settlement of other conflicts. However, it is acknowledged that there are still some areas where the authority of the Barangay Captain is not yet recognized. Nonetheless, a Barangay Ordinance has been promulgated prescribing fines and penalties for petty crimes. This Barangay Ordinance appears to be widely supported by the residents of the Barangay.

Based on anecdotes, there used to be a strong presence of the ASG in the community. This reportedly started in 2006 when the ASG's presence started to be strongly felt in Barangay Sionogan and the neighboring barangays. The operations of the Marines of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have pushed out the group. Incidentally, the current Barangay Captain is also a former officer of the military.

Barangay Sionogan is a "Lakbay Kapayapaan" site. Lakbay Kapayapaan is an activity that allowed for community dialogue where peace and security

6 The contender transferred to Zamboanga City

issues were brought to the fore and discussed in the open. This process diffused the tension in the Barangay. By chance or design, the Lakbay Kapayapaan tasked Barangay. Sionogan to serve as neutral ground for the conflict between the nearby Barangays of Sitio Talatak, Bato-Bato, and Malimbay.

c. Barangay Silangkan, Municipality of Parang (Peaceful)

Community Profile
Barangay Silangkan's beautiful beach makes it a tourist destination for locals of other municipalities. Residents' livelihood depends on aquatic resources while there are some who till their lands for agriculture. Table 2 shows that similar to the other Barangays, there is little or no access to business capital (85% of respondents declared to have no access to business capital) or alternative means of livelihood (confirmed by 75% of respondents).

Nonetheless, the Barangay has greater access to education compared to other Barangays studied. Both the Silangkan Elementary School and the Parang National High School Annex are situated in the Barangay. Table 3 shows the comparison of educational attainment of survey respondents in all six Barangays. Notably, Barangay Silangkan has the highest rate of high school educated (29% of respondents), though this is still significantly low when compared to national standards.

Conflict Profile
The community is situated near a Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) camp, and the entire community has previously been repeatedly displaced due to armed hostilities between the AFP and the MNLF. Respondents report that it was after two (2) years that the community began to re-settle and reclaim their lost time. This 'coming home' of the community was through the leadership of a former MNLF combatant/ commander-turned-community-leader.

In 2010, the former MNLF commander was drawn into an election-related conflict. However, the trauma caused by the repeated displacement was perhaps so severe that it made other conflicts seem trivial: through the mediation of HD Centre, TSS, and a congressman, the conflict was settled.[7] The relative peace created by the clan conflict settlement

7 Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, "Silangkan, Striving to be Better," *Preventing Election Related Violence (PERV)*, 2011, pp 23-24.

" In the name of Allah, Most Gracious the Most Merciful "

LETTER OF AFFIRMATION

" AFFIRMING SILANGKAN A PEACE CENTERED COMMUNITY BY ITS PEOPLE TOWARDS BUILDING A TOWNSHIP OF PEACE, PROSPERITY AND RESPONSIBLE LOCAL GOVERNANCE "

We, the people of Silangkan cognizant of our character in peace building and restoring progressive socio - political structure for the hope and future of our people and our community establish this consensus to affirm Silangkan as " Peace Centered Community " marked this 27th day of November 2010.

Recalling the past years of experience of ruthless armed conflict and prevalent devastation, countless people of Silangkan were displaced and suffered in the crossfires; ever since our community have been vulnerable to armed violence, and

Today, by the will and confidence of our people we must thrive to rebuild our community and improve our way of life, gleaming from a field of sufferings of so many Tausug in this part of Sulu province.

Towards our collective end of addressing family conflict, problems of human security, illiteracy, insufficient basic services and support, as well as poverty, we appeal to the effect of this popular affirmation in the soonest possible time, the earnest support of the Local Government of Sulu, multi stakeholders of peace and development, civil society organization and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue as its the most vulnerable intervention they can perform to make Silangkan a truly " Peace Centered Community "

" Inshaallah".

In testimony hereto/fore, we induct our names and initials upon this communique this 27th day of November 2010, at Silangkan, Municipality of Parang, Province of Sulu, Mindanao.

brought stability and normality in community life, and services from local government and private institutions began to flow in.

Having experienced how violent conflict disrupts lives and livelihood, the community organized itself into a *Peace-Centered Community*. The process was through the initiative and leadership of the former MNLF commander and was facilitated by the HD Centre. In November 2010, representatives from all families in the Barangay signed a Letter of Affirmation, pronouncing their support for the Peace Centered Community. The community has likewise developed its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to the Letter of Affirmation. A key feature of the IRR is the prohibition of Public Display of Arms (PDA). The Barangay has also developed a community-based grievance mechanism where misunderstandings between neighbors are resolved among themselves first, before these are brought to the Barangay leadership.

Presently, the residents hold the Barangay chairman and the community elders (the former MNLF commander) in high regard, affirming their key role in conflict resolution and mediation within the community.

2. DISTRICT 2 BARANGAYS

a. Barangay Masjid Pujungan, Municipality of Kalinggalan Caluang (Active-Conflict)

Community Profile

Barangay Masjid Pujungan is a remote community very far from the main road of the Municipality Capital of Kalinggalan Caluang. Table 2 shows that sixty-four percent (64%) of the respondents are dependent on farming. There is little or no access to business capital (93% of respondents claim to have no access to business capital) or alternative means of livelihood (affirmed by 74% of respondents).

The road is unpaved and the Barangay can only be reached by foot (approximately 10 kilometers of hiking). The inaccessibility of the community takes its toll on access and availability of public services - the community only has little public infrastructure, a non-functioning health center, and only a primary school is accessible to residents.

When viewed in comparison with the other Barangays, Masjid Pujungan has the highest number of respondents who have not had formal schooling (See Table 3).

Conflict Profile
An election-related conflict between two clans is the source of conflict. Four days prior to the conduct of the survey, residents have temporarily gone to evacuation centers for fear of an armed encounter between the warring camps. The escalation is due to the accusation of one group against the other to be the cause of death of a member.

The community, though, is not totally polarized between the two conflicting parties. A third force, more powerful in terms of arms, social capital, authority and resources is present in the area – an incumbent municipal councilor. The councilor seemingly acts as the umpire between the conflicting parties. He also acts as an effective deterrent because he holds more authority and power. His presence diffuses the tension in the community. The Marine Battalion Landing Team 3 (MBLT3) of the AFP has likewise helped diffuse tensions by enforcing ceasefires between the two parties and taking on the role of peacekeepers.

Though the Barangay has been classified as having an Active-Conflict, on 19 January 2012, towards the end of the research period, the conflict has been settled at the nearby municipality of Panglima Estino, through the facilitation of the TSS and the HD Centre, and with the support of the MBLT3.

b. Barangay Niangkaan, Municipality of Omar (Dormant-Conflict)

Community Profile
Similar to the other areas, Barangay Niangkaan is underdeveloped. The residents' livelihood depends more on fishing and cultivating seaweeds. Eighty five percent (85%) of respondents feel that they have no access to capital or other means of livelihood (See Table 2).

Roads are unconstructed and there are very few infrastructures. There is a public elementary school and an adult learning center in the Barangay. Thirty-seven (37%) of the respondents have entered primary education, 20% secondary, and 15% college (See Table 3).

Conflict Profile
Barangay Niangkaan is the site of a long-standing land dispute between two clans and their respective allies. The dispute has been under the mediation of the TSS. According to interviews, approximately 80% of families involved in the conflict have already agreed to settle, but the

remaining clan members are still not on-board the settlement process and hence, are still in 'active conflict' mode. With only a partial settlement, there are still a number of internally displaced persons in the community. The residents also fear that hostilities resulting from the dissatisfaction of those who are still not on-board may escalate anytime. Nevertheless, the Barangay is considered as having a *'dormant conflict'* since no armed hostilities has erupted for about a year.

However, sometime in January and just a few days after the conduct of the present study's survey, an improvised explosive device (IED) victimized two children -- one died while the other was severely wounded. Hence, the situation has shifted overnight from being dormant to being on the verge of escalating to 'active conflict' status.

c. Barangay Punay Poblacion, Municipality of Panglima Estino (Peaceful)

Community Profile
Residents of Barangay Punay Poblacion chiefly rely on land and aquatic resources. Their main sources of living are farming and fishing. While this is common among the barangays studied, residents of Barangay Punay Poblacion are set apart by their inclination to establish business. Moreover, a strong majority (95%) of the respondents declared that they have access to business capital while a considerable percentage (41.7%) of respondents affirmed that they have access to other means of livelihood. (See Table 2)

Barangay Punay Poblacion is the capital town of the municipality of Panglima Estino, the only municipality in Sulu that openly declares itself as 'Islamic.'[8] The residents of the entire municipality are very dependent on the municipal Mayor. The Barangay Captain of Punay is the son of the Mayor of Panglima Estino, giving the Barangay direct link with the powerful mayor.

It is interesting to note that the Mayor of Panglima Estino is, allegedly, the only mayor in the 19 municipalities of Sulu who is physically present and lives in his municipality.

8 The claim of being an "islamic" municipality is based on the short biographical account of Mayor Munib, the Mayor of Panglima Estino. Accordingly, the beliefs, practices, and rules of Islam guide the municipal government in the performance of its function.

The mayor is known to have his own style of governance, known as the "Munibian Style of Leadership" (named after the mayor, Hji. Munib Estino) or the "*Power of Love*" governance framework. Accordingly, it combines autocracy and democracy in managing the local government. The framework asserts that power should be used as an opportunity to pay homage to God and to uplift the welfare of the people. "'Power of love' brings you to power, 'love of power' removes you from it."[9]

Conflict Profile
The Estino clan will have been in power for 32 years by 2013. There is no existing conflict[10] within the Barangay, thus it is categorized as a *peaceful* community.

Socio-demographic profile of survey respondents
1. Age. The majority is in the age-range of 18 to 50 years old, with the age bracket of 30 – 40 years old having the greatest representation.

2. Gender. An almost balanced gender representation was achieved. It must be noted, however, that the survey team had some hesitations to ask married female respondents when their husband is around. (The hesitation is based on the assumption that the married woman might not answer the survey freely to avoid offending the husband.)

3. Civil status. A strong majority of the respondents are married.

4. Education. The number of those who attended formal schooling is dismally low. (See Table 3) For the elementary level, none of the Barangays have even achieved a 50% level of attendance. The data in fact presents an inverse relation – as the educational level goes higher, the level of attendance to it goes down, except for Silangkan, where attendance to high school level is higher than attendance to elementary level. (A major limitation of the research is that it did not probe whether the respondents were able to actually complete each of the education level they reportedly attended.)

9 FFC. "Hj. Munib S. Estino 'A Cornerstone of Sulu Political Leadership': 'Power of Love'", undated, p. 32.
10 The absence of conflict may have been due to the fact that the Estino clan has been in power for a generation, and hence, has successfully overwhelmed its opponents.

In all Barangays, the percentage of unschooled respondents is quite high.

The interviews and FGDs revealed that there are Madrasah schools in some Barangays (e.g. Masjid Pujungan , Silangkan, and Punay). However, in the Philippine liberal-capitalist economy, the Madrasah/ Madaris schools can only complement the mainstream formal schools, and has no added advantage if one intends to secure a job in the mainstream capitalist market within the country.

5. Social mobilization. Membership to organizations (CSOs, NGOs, Associations) is very low. The affiliations are based solely on kinship.

During the interviews, respondents from Barangays classified as 'peaceful' (Silangkan and Punay) claimed high interest in joining civil society organizations; the other Barangays also claim interest but are more restrained, obviously coming from a not-so-positive experience with joining CSOs (e.g. respondents made qualifications like organization should not be a one-shot deal, there has to be sustainability, the people must be united).

All respondents, however, claim that the clan/ family can best protect and articulate their needs and hence, there is no urgent and compelling reason to create organizations.

6. Source of income. Majority of respondents rely on farming as their main source of livelihood (See Table 2). Others find ways to enter into small businesses such as putting up sari-sari stores or peddling goods, usually food (rice cakes, banana cue, etc.). Livelihood through regular employment (salaries) is uncommon mainly due to the absence of business establishments in the areas studied. Notably, a strong majority of the respondents feel that they have no access to capital to jumpstart their own business, except for respondents from Punay Poblacion. (It's reported that the municipal mayor provides start-up capital for those who wish to put up their business, provided that the municipal government closely monitors these.)

SURVEY AT
BARANGAY NIANGKAAN,
OMAR, SULU

IV. PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

"Where states, markets and social institutions fail to provide basic security, justice and economic opportunities for citizens, conflict can escalate." Hence, "strengthening legitimate institutions and governance to provide citizen security, justice, and jobs is crucial to break cycles of violence" (World Development Report 2011: 7, 2)

While it is true that the Sulu archipelago has been an active participant in resisting the state building efforts of the colonial government and later on the independent republic, the conflicts have morphed over the years and have taken the character of being privately- motivated rather than state-directed. Thus, *rido*[11] or clan feuding is more prominent in the conflict dynamics of the island. However, the implosion of clan feuding creates an atmosphere of insecurity internally, and creates an image of anarchy externally. This greatly affects the development of the province, and consequently, constricts the spaces of opportunities available to the people. A situation of underdevelopment most often creates a fertile ground for radicalization of dissent. This is where private conflicts converge with state-directed conflicts – politicized groups use the tenuous

11 See also Torres, Wilfredo Magno (Ed.). 2007, Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao, Makati: The Asia Foundation.

security and development context to galvanize support for their respective political agenda. Hence, groups like the MNLF and the ASG continue to operate and have proven to be resilient in Sulu.

At the risk of sounding simplistic, but the formula that seems to be emerging is simple -- for as long as the armed hostilities among clans continue, state and social institutions will have limited capacity to provide services and opportunities in the affected communities. The net effect of underdevelopment and insecurity is that communities become the breeding ground for radicalized dissent, which politicized groups use to recruit members and galvanize support for their cause. Using this formula, it becomes easier to identify the players who would want to preserve the existing status quo in Sulu – those who benefit from the war economy, and those who benefit from the political windfall of the conflict.

It is therefore delicate and complicated to label the nature and character of the conflict dynamics in Sulu.

I. The beginning of conflict: Control of Resources

The conflict situation in Sulu escapes the purview of the current peace process. Technically, most of the ingredients considered in the peace process are present – there is conflict involving armed groups, who are fighting over scarce resources, with the conflict affecting communities for generations, and holding back the progress of the province for decades. Only two crucial elements are missing – one, most of the groups are disparate, and are not operating under one command; and two, in most of the conflicts in Sulu, the agenda on the table is neither identity nor self-determination, but the self-motivated agenda of warring families.

The issues at the heart of the existing conflicts in Mindanao resonate with the same theme: control of land. In the present context, the source of conflict has morphed and taken on a broader theme, control of economic resources and political power. But the heart of it begins with control over land.

Note the 'nuancing' over the terminologies *'control'* and *'ownership'* when discussing land disputes. Moros have always valued communal/ clan ownership versus individual ownership of land. It was the colonial government, and later on the Philippine state, that instituted and imposed the concept of individual ownership through its official policies. Thus, while families are in conflict over land, it must be noted that seldom will one hear

a fight over sole *ownership*; rather central to the conflict is the family's *control* over parcels of land.

Historical review: The antecedents. The *regalian* doctrine during the time of the Spaniards declares that all land within the jurisdiction of the colonial government is the sole property of the state. Significantly, this principle has been embedded in the post-colonial republic's constitutions (1935, 1973, and 1987), and hence, continues to this day. (Rodil 2003,149)[12] Subsequently, the Torrens system under the American rule was instituted, requiring the "registration and titling of privately owned lands…Forest lands, bodies of water and so on which used to be sources of daily food and other needs for (sic) indigenous communities… have become state owned and could only be made use of with the consent of the government." (Ibid 151)

The colonial government, to further assert its authority over the territory and people, has passed discriminatory policies with regard to land, but this discussion will only center on four of these policies:

(1) The Philippine Commission Act 718, passed on 4 April 1903, made void "land grants from Moro sultans or dattos of from chiefs of Non-Christian tribes when made without governmental authority or consent." (Rodil 2003, 152)

(2) The Land Registration Act 496, passed on 6 November 1902, requires the registration of land, and the application for registration must be done "in writing, signed and sworn to by the applicant." (Ibid 152) [Note that at the time that this Act was instituted, only very few are educated, nor familiar with complying with official documents.]

(3) Public Land Act 926, passed on 7 October 1903, limits the land size that an individual can possess – a Christian can acquire 16 hectares each, while non-Christians cannot exceed ten hectares, with an additional condition for non-Christian owners to cultivate and improve the land within six months from the date that the land permit was granted. The permit expires every five years, and hence a re-application is necessary.

The ten hectares allowed for non-Christians would eventually be reduced to four hectares under Commonwealth Act 41, as amended, passed on 7 November 1936.

12 Rodil, Rudy. 2003. A Story of Mindanao and Sulu in Question and Answer. B.R.Rodil & Mincode

(4) The Philippine Commission Act 2254, passed in 1913, created "agricultural colonies aimed officially at enhancing the rice production effort already started in the Cotabato valley. Specific sites selected were Pikit, Silik, Ginatilan, Paidu Pulangi and Pagalungan, the very heart of Maguindanao dominion in the upper Cotabato valley, and Glan at the southernmost coast of the present South Cotabato Province." In the course of the American period, and carried over by the Philippine independent republic, several policies were passed promoting the resettlement program for the residents of Luzon and Visayas to move to Mindanao. These programs, in the process, opened up the following Moro areas: Cotabato (Koronadal Valley and Ala/ Allah Valley, Buluan, Tacurong, Isulan, Bagumbayan, Sultan sa Barongis, Ampatuan), Bukidnon-Lanao border (Maramag and Wao). During the administration of Pres. Quirino, resettlement areas were opened "for surrendered or captured Huks (insurgents) in … Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, and Maguindanao… carved out in the heart of Maguindanao and Maranao ancestral domains."[13] (Rodil 2003, 157-160)

Fast forward to the present study. These historical errors and structural wrongs are major contributors to the conflict formation in Sulu, as confirmed by both qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the present study.

According to interviews, given the imposed policies of the colonial government, the then Sulu-based clans faced a quandary – they worry that they will also experience the same legal harassment that other Moros from Central Mindanao have experienced in as far as land is concerned; but they also want to continue resisting the impositions of the colonial government. They also fear that once the clans succumb to the 'land registration' requirement, the government can use it to 'profile' the Moro clans. As a way out, they have decided to adopt a *compromised arrangement*: they will register the family-controlled land, but instead of doing it individually, they registered the land under the name of the clan leader. [It must be noted, though, that this may be true to some families, but not necessarily true to all families in Sulu.]

Over generations, layers after layers of contestations between the state (asserting its authority) and the Moros (asserting their freedom and identity) ensued, and conflicts began to shape and morph into their present form.

13 Owing, Peter. 1977. Mandate in Moroland. The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920. Quezon City: Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, UP System. Cited in Rodil, 159-160

The State. The state, as part of its state-building efforts, has used a variety of means to 'win-over' the Moro communities. Using the carrot-and-stick formula, it has instituted programs and allocated resources meant to *win over and co-opt key Moro leaders*, with the hope that these key personalities can significantly help in convincing their people to work with and accept the authority of the state.

Simultaneous with the 'winning-over' the key leaders strategy would be the state's '*acculturation'* strategy through (a) an imposed standardized education, (b) forced connection between Christians and Muslims by creating Christian settlements carved in the heart of Muslim communities, and (c) government policies meant to break the economic power of the Moro clans.

Completing the triad strategy of the state are the *military pacification* campaigns meant to silence the more vocal and assertive Moros who continue to openly resist the state's appropriation of authority in Muslim communities.

These state efforts would later prove to be major concerns, if not major debacles. Foremost would be the fact that the discriminatory policies enforced by the state further incensed the Moros, and consequently, strengthened their communal (political) identity.

The Moros. Over time, clans grow and their interests also expand. From a cohesive, unified interest of a clan, a multiplicity of interests begins to appear. And as family interests begin to fork in different directions, the perception of insecurity over the control of resource – land – also begins to manifest. This is compounded by the fact that the extent of land controlled by Moro clans has significantly been reduced due to the downright biased policies of the Philippine state against the Moros, the continued parceling of land among families over generations, and the state-sponsored Christian resettlement in used-to-be Muslim-dominated areas.

Some key Moro leaders have joined the nascent Philippine republic beginning in the 1950's to advance the interest of the Moros in the government (yet there were others joined the government to advance and protect their own personal interest). This move is viewed harshly by other Moro leaders and is considered as co-optation and succumbing to the easy-way-out. These leaders opted to cast their fate in efforts that assert the communal identity and rights of the Moros and resist the continued

impositions of the state. Suffice it to say, while there are those who joined the republic, others remained pessimistic.

In other words, by political design of the power brokers, and partly due to the seeming unpopularity of joining the state, the space for Moros in the political landscape has been, and continues to be limited.

So, while the spreading-out of interests within a clan is a natural consequence of a growing, expanding community, there were additional, external, and imposed ingredients that complicated the process. The pressures created by these external and imposed factors, in certain cases, would cause clans to implode, and hence, the beginning of clan-based conflicts.

It must be noted however that a major contributing factor to the conflict in present-day Sulu is the underdevelopment of the province. While history created the context, the Moro leaders of the succeeding generations are also at fault since they failed to help their people to improve their lives. In other words, while the state-building impositions had an effect in the underdevelopment of Sulu, to a large extent, its lack of progress is also the fault of the clan leaders.

In fact during the beginning days of the republic, the state had waned in its state-building efforts directed to the Moros. Concentrating on putting the infrastructure of the republic in place, the government practiced 'benign neglect'[14] as regards the efforts, or lack of it, directed to the Moros.

This is the context and the milieu in which the present study builds on.

Main Actors

The main players in the conflict are mostly those with access to both political and economic resources. However, there are also other players who, while seemingly having peripheral roles, are in fact significant in the conflict formation and dynamics.

There are the *'conflict holders'* or those that usually serve as the public face identified with the conflict. The conflict holder(s) can either be a singular person/ leader or a lead family.

There are the *'conflict financiers*' or those who financially support the conflict. The motivation of the financiers depends on where they sit in

14 Cited by one of the reviewers

the conflict -- (a) for those who benefit from the status quo, to quell the opposition by ensuring victory if not a stalemate; (b) for those who feel aggrieved by the current arrangement, the motivation is to reclaim in whole or in part the contested resources.

In most cases, the conflict financiers are actually the behind-the-scene conflict holders. Rather than be directly involved or identified in the conflict, they conduct proxy wars and designate (manipulate) representatives to carry on the armed hostilities on their behalf. They sustain the conflict, but since they cannot be directly linked to it, they enjoy a level of deniability when push comes to shove.

There are the *'conflict entrepreneurs.'* They are the ones who profit from the conflict. These are those who support the conflicting groups with arms, ammunitions, and other instruments and materials that are used in threatening or neutralizing the opponent. They don't side with anyone in the conflict, but are "friendly" to both sides since they are the supplier of arms. These entrepreneurs also have access to decision makers and power holders that they often escape the attention of the public even during conflict escalations.

It is to the advantage of the entrepreneurs if conflicts continue, hence, some of the conflict entrepreneurs are also the *'peace spoilers.'* They devise ways so that conflict remains active and/ or that no settlement is forged between conflicting groups.

Sadly, the *'pawns'* in the conflict are the less influential members of the family/ community. Since these clans reside in the same community, the conflict expectedly polarizes the community – the pawns are therefore drawn into the conflict and become the de facto recipients of the adverse effects of the conflict.

On the other side of the continuum are the *'peace holders.'* They are the key players in forging and nurturing peace agreements. Peace holders can either be part of the families in conflict, but respected by most if not all of those involved; or a person or group outside the family but also commands respect and deference from both parties to the conflict.

There are the *'peace sponsors'* – they are respected individuals who use their name and stature to support the peace settlement. Their function is to bring the parochial, limited concerns of parties into the attention of the

broader public, and if need be, concerned policy makers.

There are *'peace supporters.'* The peace supporters can come from the members of the families in conflict (or those who refuse to take sides between/ among conflicting groups); or concerned individuals or groups outside of the families involved. Civil society groups usually fall in this category. While not in the forefront of conflict settlements, the peace supporters nonetheless play a key role in advocating for the settlement and individually or collectively can exert some level of social pressure on the conflict parties to settle.

There are the *'spectators'* – these are individuals outside of the groups involved and are physically detached from the actual conflict happening on the ground. They are significant since they are the ones being manipulated by the peace spoilers to drum up negative public opinion on a settlement currently being worked out. Conversely, they can be enthused by peace supporters to join calls for the peaceful resolution of conflict.
At the national level, spectators are influenced by peace spoilers in order to galvanize public opinion supporting an all-out-war or the use-of-force policy to quell the conflict, putting defense spending as priority in the scheme of things. They are also the target audience of the peace supporters, similarly, to sway public opinion to support the government's peace agenda.

Finally, there are the *'political actors.'* They are the decision makers who can change the direction of the conflict if they so desire. There are two kinds of political actors – the first are the *policy makers*. They have the access to state resources – both coercive and economic – that can be used to mitigate if not decide the fate of the contestation. This is done through policy pronouncements. Political actors are most often sensitive to public opinion in issuing their policy decisions; hence, they are the ultimate target of both peace supporters and spoilers. Elected local and national government officials fall under the category of policy makers.

The military and police are instruments of policy. While they seemingly have a direct participation in conflict, they only act when instructed by policy makers.

The second type of political actors is the '*traditional leaders/ elders/ persons of stature.'* The resources to which they have access to are the non-tangible resource: the respect and recognition as authority figures notably by the parties in conflict. Their position on issues and public

pronouncements can sway or influence the direction of conflict or peace formation.[15]

II. Current configuration of conflict: It's still control of resource

More than the vertical conflict of government forces *versus* rebel groups (MNLF, MILF, ASG), conflict in Sulu has a more horizontal character – i.e., it is families, clans who are fighting each other over control of resources. This nature of the conflict makes it more insidious and hence escapes national scrutiny as it operates below the radar of the peace talks.

Based on interviews and focus-group discussions (FGD), control over land and political position are the two main causes of conflicts in Sulu today.

Table 8: Perceived Causes of Conflict

Causes of Conflict	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Land	√	√		√		√
Political Position	√	√	√			√
Employment/business					√	
Abuse of Power	√					

The six communities investigated, on surface, have different 'flavors' to their respective conflict dynamics. Yet, the conflicts have a common wellspring – a family feud over control of land that has been carried over through generations, and have been complicated by the wide proliferation of firearms. The conflict has now spilled over to the political contests.

Political contestation seems to be the natural consequence of land dispute since it carries with it a crucial ingredient - access to the IRA (internal revenue allocation).

The IRA is the share of local government units in the national income. Using the principle of subsidiarity, the national income is divided among the different provinces and cities, municipalities, and Barangays. The local chief executives (LCE) – the Governors, Mayors, and Barangay Captains of the respective areas - are the administrators of the IRA funds. In other words, a Barangay Captain who is a conflict holder or financier would have an added leverage over his/ her opponents.

> "The Barangay Captain position becomes hotly contested due to its control of the IRA (internal revenue allocation) as well as other

15 The power and authority of traditional leaders, however, have considerably waned, in the face of 'competing authority lines,' i.e. political authorities (Barangay officials), and authority-based on force (armed groups)

> goods and resources in the community. The Barangay is the tier of government that is most relevant to the people, and the unit that receives the government's IRA intended for, supposedly, community development. In Barangays where the officials are involved if not sustain the conflict, the IRA remains with the Barangay Captain, and the people suffers a triple whammy – a prolonged conflict, no IRA being used for community development, but instead used to secure more guns and sustain the armed groups involved in the conflict." (Oreta, J. 2012. The Sulu Equation. Business World, January 24.)

Political contestation is not exactly for the position (or the authority and the responsibility that comes with it) but more for the access to resources it offers the holder. Elective positions are seen as personal properties and are even part of the "estates" of clans, to be passed on from one generation to the next as a birthright.

A common scheme used by competing clans is "power sharing." Power sharing is an arrangement where two clans agree to either alternately occupy the coveted position (usually Barangay Captain); or to divide the positions between competing families (e.g. the Barangay Captain position is given to one clan while the Sanggunian members will be filled with members from the other clan).[16]

The conflict also manifests in other issues, i.e., seemingly non-political issues like "tanan" (elopement). But there usually are underlying rifts between families, such issues serve as the spark for the conflict to manifest and sometimes, to escalate.

It is interesting to note that of the six communities, only Silangkan, a community categorized as 'peaceful' has listed '*employment/ business*' as the cause of conflict. On one hand, this can be viewed as respondents looking only at what is observable on the surface and not really analyzing the root of conflict. But another way of interpreting this is, as a Peace Centered Community, the usual blinders in the imagination of the people, such as land and political contestations, have apparently been lifted – they are no longer the chief concerns of the people. Therefore, the people's imagination of what causes conflict in Silangkan has been broadened.

In other words, the people's imagination in Silangkan has been broadened and is not just fixed on land and political contestations as possible

16 When a political position perceived to be "rightfully owned" - by winning in the election or through power sharing agreement - is taken, it is seen as an affront to the honor (*martabat*) of the entire clan.

causes of conflict. Since 'imagination' is greatly influenced by observable realities, the space created by the relative peace in Silangakan perhaps allows people to now look at issues from a different light. A deeper probe, however, is necessary to pursue this claim.

III. The socio-economic effects of conflict

1. Exposure to violence
Barangays Bunot and Masjid Pujungan register a relatively higher number of respondents who have personally witnessed and experienced conflict (See Table 9).

Barangays with dormant conflict are in the mid-range in terms of the percentage of respondents having witnessed or personally experienced violence.

Expectedly, peaceful Barangays registered the least percentage of respondents who have witnessed violence. However, it must be noted that Barangay Silangkan ranks second in terms of respondents having personally experienced violence (40.7%). This reflects the community's history of having been displaced for two years during the height of fighting between the government and the MNLF.

2. Dealing with everyday violence
Notably, in all Barangays, few respondents feel that they have the option to fight back when confronted with violence. Motivations for not fighting back, however, differ. In communities with active-conflict, victims of violence feel a sense of helplessness, admitting that they do not have the capacity to fight back.

Peaceful communities, however, have other mechanisms available to seek redress. In Barangay Silangkan, for instance, the community has developed its own mechanisms to raise concerns to the community-level. It is interesting to note, though, that in Barangay Punay, the option of 'keeping quiet' is significantly high. This may be related to the way the municipal government is managed in Panglima Estino town, where Baranagy Punay is situated.

A considerable number opts to '*speak up'* when confronted by violence. Notably, however, there are less who will *'inform the authorities*.' It is therefore unclear to whom the respondents intend to 'speak up' to or to report the incident. (See Table 10)

A high percentage of respondents also expressed their inclination to leave it up to God (Allah). In fact, this is the second option that the respondents are more inclined to choose, next to speaking up.

In all the Barangays, the prominence of the notion that the individual is responsible for his/her own safety is strong. This is significant in a context where the security situation is tenuous. In such a case, the demand for instruments of protection, like firearms, becomes especially relevant. In other words, the primary motivation for acquiring instruments of protection[17] - guns – is fueled by the fragile security environment, and the dominant view that the individual must look after his/ her own safety. (See Table 11)

Note that the 'individualistic' view is something alien to a society that has strong communal ties. This may be a result of the continuous bombardment of the state (and the dominant majority it represents) to impose not just its policies, but also its value system; a valuing system that has been shaped by the long experience and exposure to foreign standards.

Significantly, reliance to the military is lower when compared to that of the *Barangay*, *Council of Elders*, and the *local government*, clearly giving clues to policy makers on which institutions to strengthen and capacitate in as far as security and safety are concerned. (See Table 11)

Yet, when Table 11 is compared with the results of Table 12, it's interesting that the respondents seem to be in agreement that *'individuals arming themselves'* is not the answer to ensuring safety. Skeptics would perhaps look at this as a classic case of a 'socially desirable' answer, that is, giving answers which the respondents *think* others want to hear.

But the other item where there seems to be an agreement (i.e., getting the majority's nod in all Barangays) is the statement *'government should impose stricter measures on civilian gun ownership.'* Clearly, the respondents are making a statement here – they do not approve of civilians arming themselves, and they expect the government to initiate a gun control, gun management scheme.

In the Barangays with active conflict and dormant conflict, there is a strong sentiment for *'more military visibility'* and *'more police visibility;'* this is not

17 Guns or firearms have a socially constructed meaning, that is, protection.

shared by the two peaceful Barangays. These two, instead, prefer the BPATs (Barangay Police Auxilliary Teams) and Barangay Tanods. While these are all government units, the fundamental difference is that the police is armed, while the BPAT and the Barangay Tanod are not.

This reflects a fundamental difference between barangays that are exposed to ongoing conflicts and those that are more peaceful. Barangays with active and dormant conflict reflect a higher reliance on security forces in ensuring safety. On the other hand, peaceful communities give more importance to the role of the government in mitigating conflict.

Again, this creates the impression that as a community achieves peace settlement, the preference also changes – from an armed security to non-armed security personnel. More study, however is still needed to authoritatively claim this to be true.

But between the police and the military, there is greater expectation given to the police. In other words, law enforcement and not military action is more preferred by the people.

The respondents also seem to have stronger sentiments towards community-based actions (e.g. community organizing), but are less decided on individual-actions (e.g. going out alone; wearing expensive things, going out without a companion). Again, this seems to suggest that a community-based response appears to be what the people want, and hence efforts must be exerted to help the communities organize themselves. But similar to the statement earlier, a deeper study is warranted in this regard.

Finally, among the Barangays, Masjid Pujungan stands out for giving more decided answers (i.e., reaching a 50%+1 majority in most answers), as compared to the other Barangays that gave middle-of-the-road or seemingly safe answers. Barangay Bunot comes next. Note that both have active conflicts. Perhaps the insecurity created by the armed engagements of the conflicting groups greatly shaped the opinion, and perceptible assertiveness of the respondents.

3. Direct Effects of conflict

The armed conflict has far reaching effects in communities. Survey respondents were asked to check the services and economic activities affected by conflict. Table 13 in the Appendices section summarizes the opinion of the respondents.

It is hard not to notice that the scores (that is, the frequency of respondents who agree with the statement) in communities with 'active-conflict' – Bunot and Masjid Pujungan – are significantly higher than the other Barangays (See Table 13). Conversely, the opposite can be noticed in Barangay Punay, a community classified as 'peaceful.' In other words, the people in conflict-ridden Barangays are feeling the negative impact of conflicts the most.

Recall that Masjid Pujungan is remote and hard to reach. The active-conflict status of the communities makes it even harder for government and concerned agencies to bring in services.

"These conflict-ridden communities are the most difficult to reach and hence very limited local government services are poured in. People in these communities are trapped not just in violence, but more insidiously, trapped in the mindset that they need to take sides between the two warring factions. The sad part is, most often, these warring groups are part of the same, extended family clan.

"It is in these communities lawless groups proliferate, get support, and get recruits as the seeming hopelessness of the situation leaves people with no option. The cycle of violence, victimization, and radicalization of dissent is carried over for generations." (Oreta, J. 2012. The Sulu Equation. Business World, January 24.)

IV. Exacerbating Factors

1. Proliferation of firearms and high tolerance of people to gun proliferation
"In the study done by Philansa (Philippine Action Network on Small Arms)[18] in 2007, "farmers from Mindanao… have described…(an) impressive range of weapons in circulation in their respective provinces: AK-47s, M-16s, M-14s, M-1s, .38 and .45 pistols and revolvers, paltik (locally-manufactured guns), rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), M-79s, PV-49s, landmines, machine guns (30/50/60), and 81mm mortars." (PhilANSA 2008)[19]

*"If you don't have a gun here in Sulu (*Mindanao*), if your home is not armed, you will be crushed. Instead we use our guns for defense, so that*

18 PhilANSA is now called PhilANCA or Phil. Action Network to Control Arms
19 2008. *"Voices to Silence Guns"* PhilANSA (Phil. Action Network on Small Arms) Publication, p.12.

when people give us trouble we can fight to our deaths."[20]

It is an open secret that most if not all residents in Sulu have firearms – not so much due to the derogatory and discriminatory claim that Tausugs love their guns more than their wives, but more as a reaction to the physical safety concerns created by the layers of conflicts on the ground. As security forces – both police and the military – have proven to be ineffective in making the people feel safe – both in their homes, and in public domain, civilians take it upon themselves to protect themselves, their family, and their property. Recall that when asked who is responsible for security, there was a strong agreement on the statement '*the individual is responsible for his/her own safety*.' (See Table 11)

"The feeling of insecurity among civilians juxtaposed with a perception of a weak state[21] motivates people to secure arms for protection. "The demand for small arms and light weapons is often fuelled by conditions of insecurity, oppression, human rights violations and under-development." (UNDP Essentials No. 9, Nov. 2002)

"The paradox is that "…countries and regions with the highest level of firearm violence and ownership are less able to address them than countries with low rates of firearm violence and ownership." (Cukier, Sidel 2006) Still, legal and illegal gun-trade thrives because of the continued and increasing demand for arms by civilians. Lawlessness, criminality, banditry, and insurgency, and a culture of impunity, coupled with the inability of enforcers to address these concerns create the impression of chaos and danger in society. A number of civilians look at guns as provider of security. The irony, however, is that while gun possession makes people feel secure, its proliferation can also make people feel more insecure. More guns in circulation can further exacerbate the already volatile social, political, and economic divides that exist in Philippine society." (Oreta, J.S. *Gun Proliferation and Violence Complicating Conflict Dynamics and Peace Building.* P. 71. For publication)

Interestingly, the communities do not equate the current armed groupings of clans as a private armed group (PAG). Participants in FGDs and

20 De Guzman, O. (2008). "Guns in southern Philippines." PRI's The World. Audio File. Retrieved March 2008 from <http://www.theworld.org/?q=node/16981>, cited in *Voices to Silence Guns."* 2008. Phil. Action Network on Small Arms Publication

21 Weak state here means the inability of authorities to enforce rules and laws impartially and consistently

elite interviews were asked about their views on PAGs. Interestingly, respondents from four Barangays expressed that there are no PAGs in their community (See Table 14).

The two Barangays who are quite conscious about PAGs have differing opinions on them - in Barangay Niangkaan where a dormant conflict exists, PAGs are seen as threats to the community, recognizing that these may cause conflicts. Conversely, residents from Barangay Punay Poblacion view PAGs as necessary in ensuring the security of the community. This sentiment mirrors the style of governance in the municipality. As chronicled by a local media practitioner writing on the mayor's leadership style, maintaining an armed security group is a "political necessity to sustain good governance at the local level."[22]

2. Lack of economic opportunities

To a large extent, interest in business ventures are influenced by (a) one's exposure to the market dynamics of the larger society, and (b) his/her capacity to organize and plan possible responses. This capacity, while not dependent on formal schooling, can be greatly enhanced by it.

The situation in the six Barangays clearly shows how the limitations caused by the external environment greatly limit both the actual opportunity, as well as the imagination and risk-taking capacity of residents. Tables 2 and 3 are telling. When the level of schooling (See Table 3), and source of income (See Table 2) are juxtaposed, it comes as no surprise that the interest in business ventures is very low.

In other words, the sources of livelihood remain limited and entrepreneurship is not an available option. The said context obviously does not contribute to creating economic opportunity spaces.[23]

3. Road network

The lack of economic activity is not only due to the limited capital and the presence of armed hostilities between groups; it is also due to the limited if not lack of access roads. The common adage that '*rebellion ends where the road begins'* is very true in this setting.

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22 FFC, Hj. Munib S. Estino 'A Cornerstone of Sulu's Political Leadership': ' Power of Love", n.d., p. 39

23 As such, a large pool of resource – the youth – remains untapped. Anecdotes claim that the youth are now being targeted for recruitment by the politicized armed groups, as well as criminal/terror groups

Barangay Masjid Pujungan is inaccessible to motorized transportation because of the poor road condition, making mobility of people and goods extra taxing. The 'peaceful' communities, Barangays Punay and Silangkan, are both accessible. Silangkan, in fact is considered as a 'mobility corridor' since it is located strategically as an entry point to other localities.

Moreover, remote communities are attractive to armed groups as the presence of government in these areas is scarce. This translates to the dire lack of basic services delivered to the community, which in turn increases the vulnerability of the members of the community to being radicalized and recruited by armed groups.

Furthermore, since the ability of government forces to initiate rapid response (in times of conflict) is severely limited, rebels / armed groups can enjoy relative physical safety in these communities. Add the fact that some armed groups traverse identities – as private army of clans involved in conflict (most of them are members of warring clans), and as members of rebel groups (MNLF or MILF) – usually, their membership is based on convenience. Given that they are embedded in communities (as sons, fathers, and husbands) it is even harder to dissociate these armed groups from the local population. Anecdotal reports even link some groups with 'terror' organizations (i.e., organizations whose main strategy is to terrorize civilians), like the ASG, or the more recent addition, the "Lucky 9," a break-away group composed mainly of sons of (former) Abu Sayyaf members. Whether or not true is not the issue here. The point is, it is always to the advantage of armed groups to keep their lairs (or communities near their camps) inaccessible especially to state security forces.

This is the main reason why roads and bridges are almost always the target of bombings.

4. Absence of dominant political leadership

Respondents claim that most of the municipal Mayors of Sulu live either in Jolo or Zamboanga.[24] With the physical absence of a state authority figure, or due to the intermittent government presence in some municipalities, the people seem to be given a free hand to appropriate the notion of 'governance' according to a re-interpretation of rules. Note that while the municipal Mayors are themselves Moros, the framework of governance follows that of the 1987 Constitution, a framework that until today is being questioned by some Moro nationalist.

24 Sulu has a total of 19 municipalities

This physical absence of the local chief executive gives groups the opportunity not only to assert their authority but also to operate unadulterated. In almost the whole of Sulu, respondents claim, that there is little, in some parts even no government presence, save for the military. It is the military (marines) that serve as 'credible deterrent' that prevents some of the armed groups from attacking each other.

Without a dominant political leadership that inspires, there seems to emerge a *free-for-all game* to claim 'authority.'

In the local level, members of the council of elders are regarded as the traditional and customary community leaders; these days, their function has largely been relegated to influencing policy makers/ decision makers. The Barangay Captain and other elected officers are the political leaders recognized by the state, for the simple reason that they are duly elected. As mentioned earlier, they have control over the IRA. Finally, there are the armed groups whose source of authority is the barrel of the gun

These three groups – the elders, the Barangay, and the private armed groups – exist parallel with each other, virtually or actually competing to get the respect of the people and be recognized as the *legitimate*[25] authority.

5. Limited political space available

Especially for the young and educated Moros, the political system apparently provides little space for them. An interesting claim posed by a young Moro scholar connects education with radicalization of dissent. Accordingly, when young and idealistic Moros who are raised in a limiting environment are given a chance to pursue higher education (in Jolo, Zamboanga, Manila, or abroad), they will be exposed to the vast possibilities of opportunities. When they come back and are confronted with a stiflingly restrictive political and economic terrain, the level of frustration can be so severe, and hence possible actions can also be extreme. Another respondent, likewise a college graduate, claims that he actually entertained the thought of joining a rebel group out of frustration and resentment.

25 Legitimacy is different from legality. The former pertains to the recognition of the people that the leader or the policy is morally or ethically right or acceptable. It is therefore a subjective notion that can be bestowed, but can also be recalled. Legality concerns the compliance with existing constitution, laws, and jurisprudence.

While this claim may be big and unsubstantiated, it actually conforms to the 'progressive deprivation' theory of Tedd Gurr. Accordingly, when there is constant rise in expectation, and when suddenly confronted with a sudden let-down, the level of frustration can be so severe that succeeding actions can also be extreme.

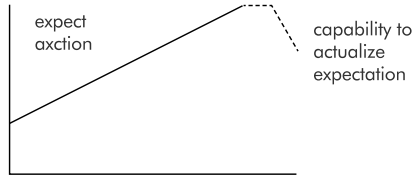

Figure 4: Progressive Deprivation (or the inverted "J curve") of Tedd Gurr (1971) [26]

When young Moros are given a chance to study in a higher educational institution, it raises their expectations. When they come back and find no opportunity or space to use their new found skills and knowledge, the level of frustration can be so severe, that they can either migrate (where they can find a space and opportunities), or join idealistic, progressive groups.[27] Obviously, more research is needed to prove this claim. The topic can be the subject of future study.

[Note that the framework of *'progressive deprivation'* can also be used to analyze situations where the expectations of people are raised. The new ARMM is a good example. It is therefore more crucial for the new regional government to perform since uprisings usually occur in situations that create an inverted "J-curve" (see Figure 4), where following a steady upward movement of expectations, a sharp reversal happens – usually when the institution(s) fail to perform and fail to provide spaces for the expectation to be realized.]

V. Mediating Violence

Three Barangays have mediated their conflicts and relative peace is now apparent. These are Barangays Silangkan, Punay Poblacion, and Sionogan.

Data below shows the perception of safety of the community, relative to the probability of the current conflict escalating into violence.

26 Gurr, Ted. 19741. *Why Men Rebel*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press

27 This can become precarious since these young, educated Moros (especially those educated abroad) can serve as additional link of local armed groups with international groups.

There is no existing recorded conflict and/or clan feud in Barangays Silangkan and Punay Poblacion. On the other hand, there is an existing unsettled conflict in Barangay Sionogan. Nonetheless, one of the parties to the conflict has moved outside of Sulu, greatly reducing the probability of confrontation, and hence, conflict escalation. This has also allowed the current Barangay captain to perform his duties and for services to be facilitated.

The other three (3) Barangays studied are still considered *fragile* since the threat of conflict escalation is very real. In Barangay Niangkaan, the partial settlement of the parties did not prevent a violent act from being carried out, and two children were the most recent and unfortunate victims of this violence.

This is somehow validated by the response of respondents – Barangays Sionogan, Silangkan and Punay Estino seem to experience less of the adverse effects of conflict than those from Barangays Bunot, Masjid Pujungan and Niangkaan (See Table 13). This also translates to the perception of fear/safety of the communities. In Table 15, respondents from Barangays Sionogan, Silangkan and Punay Poblacion are more confident of their safety outside of their homes, regardless of the time of day. Contrast this with respondents from Barangay Masjid Pujungan, a community with an active conflict, where 46.6% are afraid to go out during the day and 55.2% at night (See Table 15).

The freedom of movement felt by respondents from Barangays Sionogan, Silangkan and Punay Poblacion suggests a relatively safer and more secure environment, allowing people to go about their daily lives. A safe and secure environment is defined as "one in which the population has the freedom to pursue daily activities without fear of politically motivated, persistent, or large-scale violence". (United States Institute of Peace, n.d.)[28] In other words, in these communities, lives are not disrupted and families are not displaced.

Noticeably, in these three Barangays (Sionogan, Silangkan, and Punay), there is an observed movement towards rules-based and community-based mechanisms, and a clear decline in reliance on force.

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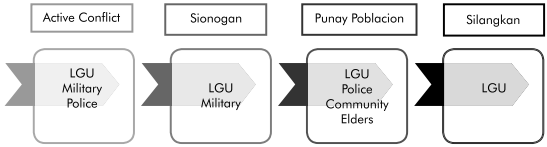
28 United States Institute of Peace, Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction (The Web Version), accessed at http://www.usip.org/files/GP_46-70_Safe_Secure_Environment.pdf

Addressing Violence

In matters involving the direct use of force to inflict harm on another, respondents were asked on who should address incidents of violence or conflict in their area. Table 19 shows that in areas where conflicts are active, majority of the respondents pointed to the municipal LGU, and security forces, specifically the military and the police. Violence is addressed when someone with more authority or with more firepower enters the picture and arbitrate between the two parties. In other words, there is reliance on force as a means of deterrence.

Figure 5: Who addresses violent conflicts?



In contrast, respondents from peaceful communities increasingly preferred going to civilian authorities and community leaders rather than relying on security forces. For Barangay Sionogan, those identified as primarily responsible for addressing conflict are the LGU (67.2%) and the military (53.4%) (See Table 19). This explains the reliance of the Barangay captain, a former military officer, on the presence of the Marines to drive away lawless elements and the ASG from the community.

In Barangay Punay Poblacion, an overwhelming majority pointed to the LGU (98.3%), the police (76.7%) and the community elders (56.7%) as their preferred institution to address the conflict (See Table 19). This reflects an increasing reliance on civilian authorities and community leaders, as opposed to opting to have the military involved. Moreover, it must be noted that the police are not identified as separate entities to address violence per se, but as “operating units” of the municipal LGU.

Lastly, respondents from Barangay Silangkan exhibit a higher reliance on the local government unit as an institution (59.3%) (See Table 19). Respondents see the LGU as the proper authority to impose the rules of the Barangay in relation to peace and security, as spelled out in their Letter of Affirmaton-Implementing Rules and Regulations.

This is echoed in the results of the survey when respondents were asked about available mechanisms to address conflict.[29] Figure 5 represents the

29 Survey respondents were asked to provide multiple answers

opinion of the respondents, showing the options that were chosen by the majority.

Figure 6: Available Mechanisms to Address Conflict

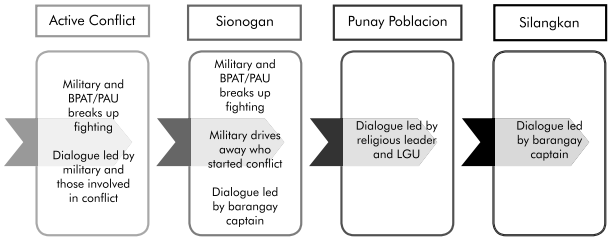
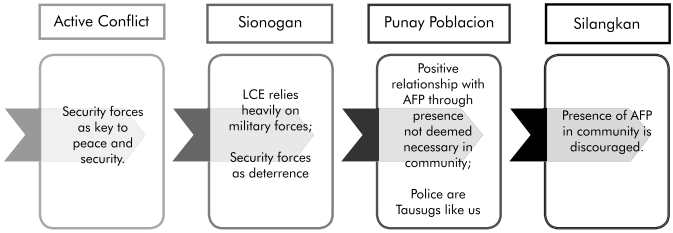


Table 16 shows that in areas with active conflict, reliance on security forces is high, specifically for the military and BPAT/PAU to break up the fighting and impose a de facto ceasefire. The military has active involvement even in dialogues. In Barangay Sionogan, perhaps due to the reliance of the Barangay Captain on the military, the military is given a greater role in addressing conflict.

On the other hand, in Barangays classified as peaceful, few respondents saw the military and the police as active players in addressing conflict. The mechanism chosen by majority of respondents is still dialogue, but led by civilian leaders in the community.

Figure 7: Reaction to Security Forces



Security forces, as deterrent force, are key to peace and security in areas with active conflict. Primarily, they enforce ceasefire among warring parties and protect communities from the ASG and other lawless elements. However, the participation of security forces goes beyond the realm of security. A case in point is Barangay Niangkaan where, according to interviews, the military "actively participates in all Barangay activities." The same is reflected in Barangay Sionogan. However, it must be noted that the presence of the military in the area is upon the initiative of

the Barangay Captain. The fact that it was the Barangay Captain who initiated the request created a semblance of civilian supremacy over the military (i.e., the military are there upon the local chief executive's behest). Moreover, their presence is called on to protect the community against the ASG and lawless elements rather than to be directly involved in the resolution of conflicts and mitigation of violence. In other words, their role in the community is confined within the boundaries of security concerns.

Among 'peaceful' communities, there is a remarkable shift on how people view security forces. In Barangay Punay Estino, the police are viewed positively, not because of their direct contribution to mitigating violence but because they are recognized as members of the community. They are seen as "one of us" (a Tausug). On the other hand, they look at the AFP favorably but its presence is not deemed necessary. The community feels that violence may be addressed/mitigated with mechanisms available within the community; and there is no need to bring in outside forces.

Lastly, residents of Barangay Silangkan vocally discourage the presence of the military. Being a Peace Centered Community, the presence of security forces is in fact seen as a threat to the peace enjoyed by the people. Bringing in arms and the option of force to the community could only invite conflict and the use of force. Moreover, soldiers who enter the community may be targeted by the ASG and other lawless groups, making the community vulnerable to being caught in crossfire between conflicting armed groups.

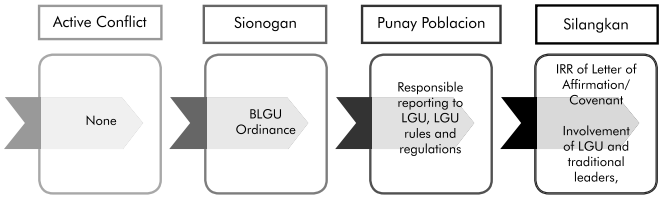
In sum, while all respondents recognize their individual responsibility to ensure their own security, they also recognize the role of institutions in addressing violence. It is apparent that in areas where the use of force in conflict is pronounced and palpable, residents expect more from state security institutions to serve as effective deterrents to conflicting groups. On the other hand, in 'peaceful' communities, the people rely more on civilian institutions and tend to move away from security forces, especially the military.

Amidst this dichotomy, however, is the central role of the LGU in the eyes of all respondents. Majority of respondents, regardless of whether they come from barangays that are peaceful, with active conflict, or with dormant conflict, point to the LGU as the institution primarily responsible in addressing violence in the area.

Having identified which institutions were seen as responsible for addressing violence, the respondents were probed to identify recourse/ mechanisms used by people not involved in conflict. This question was designed to look deeper into the availability of mechanisms, their accessibility to the community, and the inclination of the community to use such mechanisms.

Available recourse to those not involved in conflict?

Figure 8: Available mechanisms in community to address conflict



Respondents from Barangays with active conflicts saw no available recourse to protect and promote their interests in the context of conflict. This points to a sense of helplessness that the community has developed. In the words of residents from Barangay Bunot, “the people in the community don’t get involved, they are ignored”.

For the residents of Barangay Sionogan, they see the importance of the imposition of rules and regulations. The Barangay has promulgated a Barangay Ordinance imposing fines and penalties on certain crimes. This gives the residents a legal recourse for redress if ill is done to them.

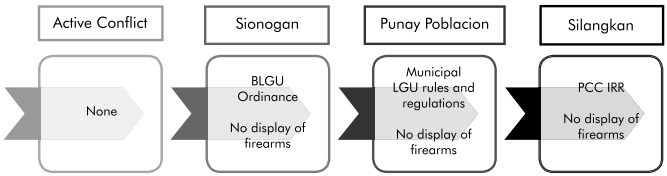
Similarly, residents of Barangay Punay Poblacion refer to the rules and regulations imposed by the municipal LGU. In addition, however, residents recognize their duty to responsibly report to the LGU cases of conflict and violence. This implies a communication line between the community and the LGU. The communities feel that they have access to their leaders and if conflict or violence erupts, they can always run to their municipal Mayor. The municipal Mayor, in turn, is expected to enforce the set rules and regulations, and in the process, mitigate the effects of the violence to the community.

On the other hand, the residents of Barangay Silangkan recognize their own personal roles as “agents” of conflict mitigation. The members of the community signed a Covenant or a “Letter of Affirmation” declaring themselves as a *Peace Centered Community*. To ensure that this

declaration translates to actions in their daily lives, an Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) is crafted. A significant portion of the IRR is the setting up of a "quick response mechanism" where neighbors are organized in case conflict or misunderstanding arises. They are empowered to address it and nip it at the bud. In every ten houses, one is chosen as the "leader" of the group, and this leader is expected to lead dialogues to defuse tensions. If this fails, then the issue is raised to the attention of the Barangay and community leaders, and subsequently, the LGU. The process that the community has undergone towards transforming itself to a Peace Centered Community is an interesting study that should be further explored.

It must be noted that in the established rules and regulations in the communities, an important portion deals with arms control.[30]

Figure 9: Acceptable Community-based Arms Control/Management Mechanism



There is no such mechanism for arms control or management in Barangays with active conflict. However, when inquired further as to possible means of collective enforcement of community-based arms control/management, respondents agreed that there should be an agreement or a policy against the display of firearms (in Sionogan, this is with the caveat that authorities should be allowed to display their firearms). This is to be strengthened through seminars/trainings on proper arms management, and community agreements on how to respond to violations of the policy.

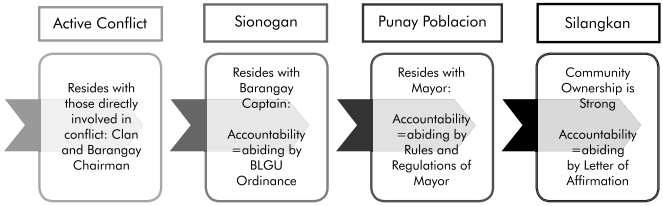
For Barangays Sionogan and Punay Poblacion, existing policies discourage individuals from publicly displaying their firearms. On the other hand, respondents from Barangay Silangkan recognize the IRR of their covenant. This is taken a step further when they suggested that the promotion of the awareness of the IRR could strengthen collective enforcement of the arms control/management policy.

30 Note that it is no longer prevalent among Sulu residents to display firearms. The AFP and PNP are the main drivers of this move. Moreover, people are also concerned that by openly brandishing firearms they might be mistakenly taken to be members of lawless groups or the Abu Sayyaf Group.

Community Accountability

The matter of community "agency" and accountability is further explored. Respondents were asked as to the characteristics of a possible "community accountability" mechanism and the possible holders of community accountability.

Figure 10: Community Accountability



In areas where conflicts are active, the community believes that only those involved can address and mitigate its effects. For instance, residents from Barangay Bunot said that the parties involved consciously try to avoid each other by taking another route where there is less chance to bump to members of the other party.

Respondents of Barangays Sionogan and Punay Poblacion recognize the existence of institutions (rules and regulations and authority figures) that could hold the parties to the conflict accountable for the damage they inflict on the community. However, this signals a reliance on an institution outside of the community.

On the other hand, for the respondents of Barangay Silangkan, the community holds the parties to the conflict accountable for the damage they inflict on the community. This shows that the community believes that they could actually do something about the situation.

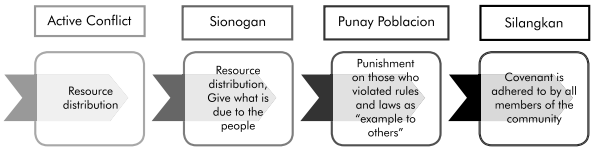
Accountability resides on the community. Rather than relying on external forces, the residents have taken it upon themselves to ensure the peace and security of their area. This includes mitigating the effects of violence and conflict and even resolving misunderstandings and conflicts.

Community Understanding of Conflict Resolution and Justice

Justice and conflict resolution are closely linked concepts in the mediation of violent conflict and its effects. It is important however that efforts be done to understand how these concepts mean to people; how these concepts come alive in people's lives.

Respondents share a common definition of conflict resolution. A conflict is considered as "settled" when the parties involved sign a Covenant. Added features are the signing of persons in authorities as witnesses, and "pagsapa" or when parties swear on the Quran that the conflict has been settled and that no further action will be taken by either party.
On the other hand, there are differences in how justice is understood by the communities.

Figure 11: Understanding of Justice



In some areas, justice is seen in the form of resource distribution. Justice is seen in the context of punishment in Punay Poblacion. It is viewed as a social control mechanism, where people are expected to comply with the notion of an ideal, and deviance is meted out with punishment.

In Barangay Silangkan, justice is seen as a social consensus, where a covenant/letter of affirmation signed by members of the community symbolizes the agreement. Justice is therefore within the power of community members.

Contributory Factors
In the course of the study, several factors have been identified that are present in the peaceful communities but absent in communities where conflict is active/dormant. While the limited data and scope of the study preclude generalizations, it is nonetheless important that attention is directed to these contributory factors.

1. Presence of "peace holders"
In Barangays Sionogan, Punay Estino, and Silangkan, the peace being presently experienced by the community is brought about by the initiative and/or efforts of "peace holders". The 'peace holder' is the Barangay Captain in Sionogan. Though directly involved in the conflict, he is able to perform his duties and is in fact central in the maintenance of peace and security in the area.

The municipal Mayor of Panglima Estino is the "peace holder" in Barangay

Punay Poblacion. The powerful mayor is feared and appears to have full control of Barangay Punay and most of Panglima Estino municipality. He has developed his own style of governance and this comes with its own rules and penalties. In fact, one can go as far as presupposing that the power and arms that the Mayor has are his primary cards to be a "peace holder."

For Silangkan, while the community has moved towards shared mechanisms, the entire process towards community accountability and ownership was initiated and is currently being sustained by a community elder who is a former MNLF Commander. All members of the community hold the MNLF Commander in high esteem. He brings with him not just power-based-on force, as a former combatant, but also power-based on social capital, as a community elder. He chose to lead the community towards a more inclusive and peaceful community that Silangkan is today.

The *peace* in these communities is obviously tenuous given that in each, there is a 'peace holder.' The moral ascendancy of each of the 'holder' is thin – most of them are or had been involved in the conflict dynamics of their respective community. The source of power, on the surface, is the legitimacy of the position they occupy – as government official or as community elder – but the underlying and perhaps more insidious source of power is still the firepower they hold.

In other words, while the paper regards the three communities as best exemplifying what 'mediating violence' thesis is about, the circumstances surrounding their 'peacefulness' is debatable, and the sustainability of the relative peace they experience is at best fragile.

2. Mechanisms for communication/dialogue

Another feature of peaceful communities is the presence of mechanisms for communication and dialogue. These mechanisms are both vertical (between leaders and the constituents) and horizontal (among community members).

These communication mechanisms lead to a stronger sense of inclusiveness in the community, facilitating a more active participation of members of the community.

COMMUNITY MEETING OF PEACE CENTERED COMMUNITY OF SILANGKAN, PARANG, SULU

HD TEAM AND MARINES ON A BOAT BOUND FOR BARANGAY KAN LAGAY, KALINGGALAN CALUANG, SULU

CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the contrasting difference among the three clusters of Barangays – those with active-conflict, with dormant-conflict, and those that are already considered peaceful. Several lessons, in fact can still be generated from the parallel journeys of the Barangays who are struggling to create stability and peaceful co-existence in their locality.

But there is an elephant in the room, and it must be recognized.

(1) In both Punay and Silangkan, the two Barangays hailed for being peaceful communities, the holder of peace is not really the community, but individual leaders. In the case of Silangkan, it was a former combatant-turned-statesman that initiated efforts to make the community as 'peace-centered community.' In the case of Punay, it is the mayor – not so much the Barangay Captain – who is mainly responsible for ensuring peace.

In other words, while the research team wanted to see concrete community-based, bottom-up examples where the collectivity of peoples are the ones that initiate the journey to peace, the reality is that *the peace holders are male leaders, with warrior backgrounds.* (In the Punay case, an additional ingredient is present – the mayor belongs to the elite class.)

While, all things equal, there is nothing wrong with this set-up, the question that comes to mind is sustainability and rootedness of the settlement. If the holder of peace lies with the individual, what happens if the individual has a change of heart? What happens if the holder succumbs to illness? It is to the advantage of both the leader/ peace holder and the community to strengthen existing mechanisms so that the responsibility in sustaining peace would be with the people rather than individual leaders.

(2) The style of leadership of these leaders is something to reflect on. The mayor of Panglima Estino to which Barangay Punay belongs to is said to practice his own style of leadership. The combatant-turned-statesman of Silangkan also has his leadership style that endears him to his people – a style where, accordingly, he will not hesitate to return to armed fighting if need be, to protect and advance the interests of his people.

Whether these styles of leadership comply with the democracy and good governance tenets of the national government is something that perhaps needs a second look. But the more relevant question here is – what is the most appropriate style of leadership and governance framework for localities like Sulu, taking in serious consideration the historical context of its people, the conflict dynamics and configuration, and the socio-economic condition of the people, their level of education, and the level of political sophistication (i.e., the level of appreciation as regards the intricacies of the political system).

A generalist and sweeping imposition of a prescribed brand of political system might not work. A very localized and relativist brand might not also be ideal. A middle ground position, one that takes in serious consideration the history and context of the peoples, but at the same time is concerned with developing common and agreeable political standards and rules, is what is needed.

The authors believe that the Moros have proven their resilience in resisting the direct imposition of the state. A clear proof of this is the fact that until now, while state institutions exist and are acknowledged in Moro communities, they are appropriated and reinterpreted in most cases, according to how the leaders and communities see fit. In a lot of Moro municipalities, the leader (whether Mayor or Barangay Captain) performs the function of executive, legislative, and judiciary. While this practice may seem questionable in the eyes of someone who is brought up to believing that “check-and-balance” should be observed at all cost, the counter

argument provided by interviewees is – "but it works for us."

Such becomes the dilemma of national state officials (as is the dilemma of all well-meaning 'outsiders' looking-in). Given that ARMM is still being molded, should outsiders impose the standards and brand of political governance as practiced and observed by the national state? Or should the Moros be allowed to define what type of organization and political valuing system that are best for them? And if so, where is the meeting point?[31] Laws and policies are said to be the great equalizer – what is the best arrangement that is fair and non-preferential, but is context dependent and historically grounded?

(3) It is quite apparent that some Barangay officials treat the IRA as their 'entitlement.' The people from one Barangay were reportedly ecstatic when the Barangay Captain provided the community with a sound system. Other than that, little has often been provided to the community by the official using the IRA. The people, hence, thought that the IRA is the salary of the Barangay Captain, and hence, they owe him debt of gratitude if the Barangay Captain, out of his 'magnanimity,' uses his *own* money to buy something for the community.

The IRA is in the full control and discretion of the local chief executive, and the institutional checks if the money goes to the community are very weak, if not nil. This is the reason why, despite the development support that the national government and international agencies have poured in ARMM, very few infrastructures have been done, and very few development initiatives directly benefit the poor.

In Sulu, allegations that IRA has been used to sustain conflict are common – to buy arms and to provide financial support for the armed groups involved in conflict. If correct, then this is where the security reform agenda and the political and electoral reform agenda converge. How can the regional government check the performance of the local chief executives, most especially in terms of development and infrastructure support? What mechanisms must be instituted to ensure that the IRA goes to the people and not to sustain conflicts?

(4) There is wide proliferation of arms in Sulu. While having arms is not the cause of conflicts, its easy access, however, makes conflicts deadly.

31 Note that this is also the heart of the 'autonomy' agenda of the peace talks

There is a need for an arms control and management that is rooted on the political context of the people, and reflective of the security situation of the place.

These issues are the *elephant* that everyone sees, but no one wants to acknowledge. Serious reflection and nuanced discussion are necessary to address these issues.

To strengthen the community resilience to violence, community-empowerment interventions are direly needed. Efforts towards community organizing, skills training (in organizational development, as well as skills training for employment), providing economic opportunities, opening political spaces are some of the big words and motherhood statements one can make when discussing interventions. While sounding too general, these are actually what are needed to accompany the people's effort to wrestle out of the decades long conflicts. These interventions serve as the pillars that would support the relative peace that has been planted in the communities.

Concretely, the following interventions are recommended.
(1) Where 'peace' is lodged in the hands of 'peace holders': A symbolic community assertion of their collective agenda is necessary. The people of Barangay Silangkan did this by declaring themselves a Peace Centered Community, and by going through the process of everyone signing the Letter of Affirmation. Other communities can use this example as a model in finding their collective voice in asserting their agenda for peace.

The community must also initiate the formulation of a *community-based conflict management program.*[32] This process will contribute in empowering the people; it will also help fill one of the current institutional gap, i.e. a community-based conflict management.

(2) Document and study the governance style of the 'peace holders,' with the twin goal of understanding *'what works,'* and finding out *'what's fair.'* While the style of governance and power management of some leaders seem to be effective, it may not pass when scrutinized under the '*fairness and justice'* lens. Moreover, the people from the community must be

32 This suggestion came from the Sulu-based researchers, informed by their involvement and deep knowledge as regards the power play and conflict dynamics on the ground.

consulted as regards their view on what is the right mix of an *'effective and just'* leadership and governance style.

(3) The local government must institute clearer and firmer measures to monitor the utilization of Barangay IRA. These measures must be communicated to all Barangays. If 'information facilitates power,' then informing the people on the amount of Barangay IRA, and providing them with information on its proper utilization will give them an institutional weapon to hold the Barangay officials accountable.

(4) Finally, a study has to be done to determine the best scheme for an *arms control and management program* that is rooted on the political context of the people, and reflective of the security situation of the place.

Mediation is often looked within the frame of facilitating the settlement between or among parties to the conflict. However, cast in the broader frame, mediation not only deals with the parties involved in conflict; it also considers the role of the 'third wheel' – i.e., the people affected by the conflict. Framed in this manner, mediation hence looks at the contestation and assertion of this 'third wheel' in addressing and mitigating the effects of violence. In other words, *mediating conflict* is really an attempt to break-away from the violence victimization syndrome. As aptly put by one civil society group, *"We are not victims; we are resource,"* [33] indeed the people have a vast array of mechanisms available to them to get out of the 'victim-trap.'

The different Barangays have, in varying degrees, attempted to address the challenges posed by the decades-long conflict. Some communities were more successful than others. Barangay Silangkan, a Peace Centered Community, began with a simple but powerful agenda – to settle the conflict in the Barangay. Just as in any undertaking, the first step is always the hardest. But the people realized that once the momentum of moving forward is achieved, the succeeding steps are no longer as painful.

33 This byline was coined and popularized by the group, Balay Mindanao Foundation Inc., at the height of the great flood that affected Cagayan de Oro in 2011

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Parallel to these recommendations enumerated are long-term and broader interventions to address the immediate, as well as the long-term issues of security and conflict:

(a) How do Moros define "security?" The term 'security' is a social construct and can be reframed, interpreted, and appropriated in different context and in different situations. It is necessary to understand the deep meaning of 'security' from the point of view of Moros, so that program and policy interventions on security sector is fit and relevant to the needs and realities of the people.

(b) The ARMM must develop a comprehensive security plan – with special consideration of Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi tawi. This plan must consider not just internal security, but also border security and management to prevent the movement of terror groups and criminal syndicates plying the unpatrolled borders.

The presence and leadership of the ARMM government in terms of a security agenda must be underscored. Both the military and the police are simply instruments of policy; they simply follow the dictates of policies, as defined by elected officials/ political leaders. It is the LGU that is most relevant when it comes to security.

(c) Empower the Sharia'h courts. Carefully study how the Sharia'h can handle both criminal and civil cases, similar to their function during the American period (through the tribal ward system).

(d) Create clear, reliable, and accessible mechanism for grievance, in the Barangay, municipal, and regional levels of government. A periodic consultation must be instituted to facilitate dialogue between the local government and the peoples.

(e) The new ARMM must invest on roads to improve mobility of peoples and products. As mentioned earlier in the research, the famous adage claims that *'rebellion ends where the road begins.'*

(f) An effective and enduring peace settlement can hold if institutions are in place and are proven effective. It is therefore crucial for the ARMM to work together with the different tiers of government, as well as civil society institutions to institutionalize processes relevant to peaceful settlement of conflicts. But more than this, it is crucial for the ARMM to ensure that institutions perform according to how they should work, since the legitimacy of institutions is based on their performance, and approval of the people.

The authors believe that if state efforts continue to be done within the frame of 'homogenizing' and 'capitulation,' nothing good will come of it.

APPENDICES

Table 2: Source of Income (%)

Source of Income	Active-Conflict		Dormant-Conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Salary		1.7	3.4	5.0	1.7	1.7
Farming	58.3	63.8	50.0	30.0	25.4	18.3
Business	5.0	1.7	5.2	6.7	6.8	13.3
Access to Capital	8.3	1.7	1.7	11.7	3.4	95.0[1]
Alternative Livelihood	21.7	25.9	29.3	26.7	16.9	41.7

Table 3: Educational Level

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Elementary	31.7	25.9	44.8	36.7	20.3	35.0
High School	25.0	13.8	15.5	20.0	28.8	26.7
College	11.7	5.2	10.3	15.0	10.2	10.0
Unschooled	15.0	41.4	24.1	23.3	27.1	11.7

• some respondents did not answer this item in the survey

Table 4: Age Distribution (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
20 – below	16.7	19.0	34.5	23.3	23.7	25.0
21 – 30	28.3	20.7	25.9	15.0	16.9	10.0
31 – 40	30.0	15.5	25.9	31.7	20.3	16.7
41 – 50	8.3	20.7	8.6	16.7	13.6	28.3
51 – 60	8.3	12.1	5.2	10.0	16.9	11.7
60 - above	8.3	12.1		3.3	8.5	8.3

Table 5: Gender representation (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Male	45.0	58.6	56.9	40.0	44.1	46.7
Female	53.3	41.4	41.4	60.0	55.9	53.3

Table 6: Civil Status (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Married	76.7	77.6	79.3	65.0	72.9	61.7
Single	11.7	13.8	12.1	25.0	16.9	28.3
Widowed/Separated	1.7	1.7	8.6	3.3	1.7	

1 This is an obvious outlier. Considering that the percentage of those engaged in business in the same Barangay is very low, this figure must be regarded with caution.

Table 7: Membership to Organizations (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Yes, I am a member	7	19	17	0	12	8
No, I am not a member	67	53	41	66	45	57
No Answer	26	28	42	34	43	35

Table 9: Exposure to Violence (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Niangkaan	Sionogan	Punay Poblacion	Silangkan
Witnessed	80	87.9	78.3	70.7	51.7	69.5
Experienced	61.7	36.2	36.7	39.7	28.3	40.7

Table 10: What Respondents would do when confronted with violence (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Fight back	11.7	8.6	20.7	11.7	11.9	8.3
Keep Quiet	16.7	48.3	12.1	33.3	25.4	41.7
Speak Up	**83.3**	**51.7**	**87.9**	**66.7**	**74.6**	**58.3**
Inform the authorities	28.3	32.8	32.8	33.3	22.0	41.7
Leave it to God	43.3	46.6	50.0	33.3	47.5	33.3

Table 11: Responsible for Safety (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
The *individual* is responsible for his/her own safety	77	83	77	85	66	74
The *family elders* are responsible for the family's safety	63	76	60	72	53	48
The *local government* is responsible for the people's safety	63	76	60	72	53	48
The *Barangay* is responsible for the people's safety	58	79	85	87	61	71
The *police* is responsible for the people's safety	60	72	50	67	41	41
The *Council of Elders* is responsible for the people's safety	62	83	55	58	59	50
The *religious leaders* are responsible for the people's safety	53	69	45	65	37	38
The *military (marines)* is responsible for the people's safety	45	60	45	38	25	41
The *CAFGUs* are responsible for the people's safety	18	19	20	18	9	0

Table 12: Means to ensure safety (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Individuals must be armed	20	24	17	8	17	29
More police visibility/ presence	73	83	68	73	42	48
More military visibility/ presence	47	88	55	35	34	66
More CAFGU visibility/ presence	18	31	18	20	14	12
More BPAT visibility/ presence	55	50	38	43	32	72

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
More Brgy. Tanod visibility/ presence	50	76	48	45	44	57
Community must organize itself	52	71	47	57	51	40
Don't go out when dark/ at night	45	67	42	48	32	31
Don't bring/ wear expensive things	48	55	42	48	32	29
Don't go out without a companion	43	57	40	45	32	29
Government should address root cause of conflict	62	86	67	85	63	62
Govt should impose stricter measures on civilian gun ownership	58	81	60	72	51	64

Table 13: Direct Effects of Conflict (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Schooling of children are disrupted	83.3	91.4	60.3	73.3	71.2	43.3
Medical/ health services don't reach the community	83.3	74.1	50.0	53.3	54.2	23.3
Roads are damaged/ destroyed	73.3	67.2	63.8	25.0	45.8	16.7
Local officials don't visit community	55.0	62.1	39.7	28.3	39.0	18.3
Schools used as evacuation centers	66.7	74.1	39.7	50.0	52.5	26.7
Displacement of people	73.3	75.9	58.6	65.0	57.6	43.3
Very few invest in community	75.0	82.8	60.3	56.7	59.3	43.3
Source of income of people are disrupted	61.7	75.9	53.4	60.0	52.5	40.0
Limited visits from those who deliver services	65.0	70.7	53.4	45.0	47.5	20.0
People are always living in fear	65.0	81.0	58.6	73.3	62.7	38.3

Table 14: Perception/trust level of community towards the private armed groups (PAGs)

Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
No PAGs	No PAGs	No PAGs	PAGs may cause conflict	No PAGs	PAGs are of great help to the community in terms of security

Table 15: Afraid to Go Out of the House(%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant- Conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
During day	15.0	46.6	5.2	5.0	5.1	3.3
At night	25.0	55.2	8.6	11.7	15.3	5.0

Table 16: Available community mechanism to address violence (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Dialogue led by Religious leader	37	55	40	58	36	35
Dialogue led by Barangay Captain	37	66	93	93	54	93
Dialogue led by Military	45	74	47	38	19	45
Dialogue led by CAFGU	8	16	15	18	7	3
Dialogue led by CVO/PAU	40	36	23	32	15	29
Conflicting parties are physically separated by military	50	67	47	37	25	43
Conflicting parties are physically separated by BPAT/ PAU	52	38	23	30	17	41
Military dirives away the instigator	40	48	42	32	17	38
BPAT/ PAU drives away instigator	20	14	7	13	22	3

Table 17: What affected parties do when there is conflict

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Fight	33	35	18	2	9	26
Go to the Police	35	67	37	68	25	16
Go to the community leader	60	79	68	87	68	55
Go to Barangay Officials	42	57	77	80	39	53

Table 18: What people do to solve the conflict (%)

	Active-Conflict		Dormant-conflict		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
Seek the help of LGU	33	90	57	73	36	31
Seek the help of Police	55	71	32	70	34	26
Seek the help of Military	40	72	47	43	22	50
Seek the help of Ustadz	38	57	42	63	34	33
Barangay Officials mediate	53	78	85	93	59	88
Community leaders mediate	67	72	50	65	54	62

Table 19: Who Addresses Violence?

	Conflict-Ridden		Dormant		Peaceful	
	Bunot	Masjid Pujungan	Sionogan	Niangkaan	Silangkan	Punay Poblacion
LGU	65.0	89.7	67.2	81.7	59.3	98.3
Military	50.0	77.6	53.4	51.7	20.3	45.0
Police	56.7	67.2	22.4	30.0	27.1	76.7
Community Leader	41.7	48.3	31.0	40.0	33.9	56.7
Imam	21.7	46.6	27.6	35.0	33.9	30.0
NGOs	18.3	19.0	6.9	26.7	6.8	30.0

SURVEY QUEATIONNAIRE

Nobyembre 2011

Kapayapaan. Kasalukuyan kaming nagsasagawa ng pag-aaral ukol sa isyu ng karahasan (violence) at mga pamamaraan ng komunidad na tugunan at ayusin ito (community responses to address violence). Ang pag-aaral ay isinasagawa sa pakikipagtulungan sa *Center For Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD)* at *Prevention of Election Related Violence (PERV).* Nilalayon ng pag-aaral na mapalalim ang pag-unawa sa mga positibong kasanayan o *practices* na epektibo o nagdudulot ng magandang resulta lalo na sa pagpapababa ng masamang epekto ng karahasan. Magtiwala po kayo na ang mga sagot sa survey na ito ay mananatiling lihim at ang tanging mga researchers lamang ang makakakita. Hinihikayat po ang iyong kooperasyon. Maraming Salamat po.

Good day. We are currently conducting a research on the issue of violence, and how the community responds to address it. This is under the auspices of Center For Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) at *Prevention of Election Related Violence (PERV). The study aims to deepen the understanding on the positive interventions that address/ mediate violence in the hope that these can be further strengthened and improved. Rest assured that the answers remain confidential. Your cooperation is earnestly requested. Thank you very much.*

Edad _____ Lalaki ____ Babae _____

Civil Status _____ Bilang ng anak _____

Probinsiyang pinagmulan ng Pamilya _____

Pangalan ng mga ninuno (family origin) _____

Relihiyon / Paniniwala _____

Ilang beses magdasal

_____ isang beses sa isang araw
_____ limang beses sa isang araw
_____ tuwing biyernes lamang
iba pang sagot _____
_____ tuwing hariraya lamang (eid adha/eid fitri)

Trabaho/ Pinagkakakitaan:_____

Ikaw ba ay miyembro ng organisasyong-pang komunidad? ____ Oo _____ Hindi

Kung "Oo" ang sagot, isulat ang pangalan ng organisasyon_____

Posisyon sa Organisasyon _____

Antas na natapos sa paaralan (highest educational attainment) _____

(ilagay ang pangalan ng paaralan at lokasyon) _____

Alam na mga wika (language(s) / dialects) _____

LAGYAN NG *CHECK* ANG MGA KASAGUTAN

1. Ang lupang inyong tititirhan ba ay pag-aari na ng komunidad (e.g. ancestral domain? CLOA)?
   _____ Oo _____ Hindi
2. Ang lupang iyong tinitirhan ba ay pag-aari mo / ng iyong pamilya? ___ Oo ___ Hindi
3. Ano ang mga karaniwang pinagkakakitaan ng mga tao sa iyong komunidad?
   _____
4. Meron bang pinagkukunan ng puhunan o pangkapital ang mga tao? ___ Oo ____ Wala

Kung "meron", saan o kanino kumukuha ng kapital ang mga tao?
_____

5. May iba pa bang maaaring pagkakitaan sa inyong lugar? _____ Oo _____ Wala
   Kung "Oo" ang sagot, ilista ang mga ito _____

6. Ano sa palagay mo ang mga sagabal sa negosyo/ pagtatrabaho ng mga tao?
   _____

7. May karahasan ba o violence ka bang nasaksihan sa inyong lugar? ____ Oo ____ Wala
   Kung "Oo", sinu-sino ang mga kasangkot dito? Isulat lahat ng natatandaang kasangkot sa nasaksihang karahasan (Hal. Magkapitbahay, gangs, MILF, military, Abu Sayaff, CAFGU)
   _____
   Kung "wala" ang sagot,
   - ano sa palagay mo ang dahilan kung bakit walang karahasan sa inyong lugar?
     _____
     _____
   - ano sa palagay mo ang dahilan kung bakit hindi ka nakakaranas ng karahasan sa inyong lugar? _____
     _____

8. Nagiging sanhi ba ng pag-aaway ang (i-tsek **lahat** ng sagot)
   _____ lupa (taniman/ sakahan na pinagkakakitaan/ income source)
   _____ trabaho
   _____ tirahan (property rights)
   _____ utang (o di pagbabayad ng utang)
   _____ abuso ng kapangyarihan
   _____ sugal
   _____ alak
   iba pang sagot _____

9. Ano ang gagawin mo kung sakaling ikaw ang biktima ng krimen/ karahasan?
   _____lalaban ako
   _____ ipag-bibigay alam sa autoridad
   _____ mananahimik na lang
   _____ ipapasa Diyos na lang
   Iba pang sagot _____

10. Sa panahon ng inyong paninirahan sa komunidad, ilan ang natatandaan ninyong karahasan/ violence na nangyari sa inyong lugar ?_____ *
    Maaari bang ilista (enumerate) kung anu-ano o kailan ang mga ito _____
    _____

11. Anu-ano ang mga epekto ng karahasan o violence sa inyong lugar?
    _____ maiistorbo (o nahihinto) sa pag-aaral ang mga bata
    _____ hirap makarating ang mga serbisyong medical (health workers, doctors, supplies)
    _____ nasisira ang mga kalsada
    _____ hindi nakakarating ang mga taga-munisipyo
    _____ ginagamit na evacuation center ang paaralan
    _____ lumilipat sa ibang lugar ang mga tao
    _____ limitado ang nagtatayo ng business sa aming lugar
    _____ naiistorbo ang pinagkakakitaan ng mga tao
    _____ limitado ang pagbisita ng mga naghahatid serbisyo (hal. Social workers)
    _____ palaging may takot ang mga tao
    Iba pang sagot _____

12. Sa ngayon, ligtas ba ang pakiramdam mo kapag lumalabas ka ng bahay sa araw ____ Oo _____ Hindi

* This survey questionnaire was translated to Tausug and data gathering was done through assisted survey

Bakit (ipaliwanag ang sagot) _____
sa gabi _____ Oo ____ Hindi
Bakit (ipaliwanag ang sagot) _____

13. Sa iyong palagay, sino ang may responsibilidad sa kaligtasan ng indibidwal at/o pamilya? (i-tsek **lahat** ng sagot)
____ ang indibidwal ang may responsibilidad sa kanyang kaligtasan
____ ang mga nakatatanda sa pamilya ang may responsibilidad sa kaligtasan
____ lokal na pamahalaan ang may responsibilidad sa kaligtasan ng mga tao
____ ang Barangay ang may responsibilidad sa kaligtasan ng mga tao
____ ang mga pulis ang may responsibilidad sa kaligtasan ng mga tao
____ ang mga nakatatanda sa komunidad (elders) ang may responsibilidad
____ ang mga religious leaders ang may responsibilidad sa kaligtasan ng mga tao
____ ang Marines ang may responsibilidad sa sa kaligtasan ng mga tao
____ ang CAFGU ang may responsibilidad sa sa kaligtasan ng mga tao
Iba pang sagot _____

14. Sa iyong palagay, ano ang epektibong paraan upang maging ligtas ang isang tao sa karahasan? (i-tsek **lahat** ng sagot)
____ ang indibidwal ay dapat may gamit/ armas upang ipagtanggol ang kanyang sarili
tulad ng _____ baril _____ pocket knife _____ iba pang armas _____
____ dapat ay mas maraming nakikitang pulis sa komunidad
____ dapat ay mas maraming nakikitang militar sa komunidad
____ dapat ay mas maraming nakikitang CAFGU sa komunidad
____ dapat ay mas maraming nakikitang BPAT (Brgy Police Action Team) sa komunidad
____ dapat ay mas maraming nakikitang Brgy Tanod sa komunidad
____ dapat mag-organisa ang komunidad upang tugunan ang usaping pang kaligtasan
____ huwag lumabas ng bahay pag-dilim
____ huwag magsuot o magdala ng mamahaling kagamitan
____ huwag lumabas ng bahay na walang kasama
____ tugunan ng pamahalaan ang mitsa or 'root cause' ng karahasan
____ higpitan ng pamahalaan ang patakaran ukol sa pagkakaroon ng baril ng sibilyan
Iba pang sagot_____

15. Sa kasalukuyan, ano ang mga mekanisno or pamamaraan na umiiral sa komunidad upang tugunan ang mga problemang-karahasan? (I-tsek lahat ng umiiral)
____ nagda-dayalogo ang mga kasangkot sa problema sa pamumuno ng
____ religious leader
____ Brgy Captain
____ Civilian Volunteer Org/ Police Auxiliary Units (PAUs)
____ military
____ CAFGU

____ pumupunta ang militar upang paghiwalayin ang mga nag-aaway
____ pumupunta ang BPAT/PAUS upang paghiwalayin ang mga nag-aaway
____ pumupunta ang militar upang itaboy ang mga nagsisimula ng gulo
____ pumupunta ang BPAT/PAUS upang itaboy ang mga nagsisimula ng gulo
Iba pang sagot _____

16. Ano ang karaniwang ginagawa ng mga taong kasangkot kapag nagkakaroon ng hindi pagkakaunawan)

____ agad naglalaban
____ inilalapit ang problema sa pulis
____ inilalapit ang problema sa community elders
____ inilalapit ang problema sa Brgy officials
Iba pang sagot _____

17. Kung may di pagkakaunawaan, ano ang mga mekanismong umiiral sa komunidad para maresolba kaagad ang di-pagkakasundo
____ dumudulog sa Kalinggalan Caluang
____ lumalapit sa police
____ lumalapit sa Marines/ military
____ lumalapit sa Ustaz
____ namamagitan ang mga pinuno ng Brgy
____ namamagitan ang mga community elders
iba pang sagot _____

18. Epektibo ba ang mga pamamaraan ng komunidad sa pagresolba ng pag-aaway? __ Oo __ Hindi

19. Sino-sinu ang mga kinikilalang "mediator" o tagapamagitan sa away sa inyong lugar?
____ local na pamahalaan/ LGU
____ military
____ lider ng komunidad/ mga nakatatanda sa komunidad
____ Imam
____ police
____ CAFGU/ CVO
____ NGOs
Iba pang sagot _____

20. Ang mga di pagkakaunawaan ba ay humahantong sa karahasan? ___ Oo ___Hindi
Ipaliwanag ang sagot _____
21. Anu-ano sa palagay ninyo ang ugat ng di pagkakaunawaan/ pag-aaway sa inyong lugar?
_____
22. Ang mga kasangkot sa kaguluhan ba ay sumusunod sa desisyon ng 'mediators' o mga kinauukulang pinag-dulugan ng problema? _____ Oo _____ Hindi
Kung Oo, bakit? _____
Kung hindi, bakit? _____

23. Sa inyong palagay, anu-ano ang ugat kung bakit patuloy pa ring may nagre-rebelde?
_____
24. Sa iyong palagay, ano ang nararapat na gawin upang matigil na ang pag-aaway? Ang karahasan?
_____

25. \Sa inyong palagay, matitigal ba ang pag-aaway kung (I-tsek **lahat** ng sagot)
_____ mas maraming trabaho/ pinagkakakitaan ang mga tao
_____ mas maraming paaralan
_____ mas malakas na presensiya ang local na pamahalaan
_____ mas malakas na presensiya ng Brgy officials
_____ mas malakas na pamumuno ng mga nakatatanda/ elders
_____ mas maraming military
_____ mas maraming pulis
_____ mas maraming CAFGU/ CVO
iba pang sagot _____

Maraming salamat po sa inyong kooperasyon

PEACE CENTERED COMMUNITY WEEKLY DIALOGUE AT MOSQUE IN SILANGKAN, PARANG, SULU

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MICHAEL FRANK A. ALAR, Project Officer
MILAGROS SON, Finance Officer
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The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre)

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (the HD Centre) is an independent mediation organisation, based in Geneva, Switzerland, dedicated to improving the global response to armed conflict.

It attempts to achieve this by mediating between warring parties and providing support to the broader mediation community. The HD Centre is driven by humanitarian values and its ultimate goal to reduce the consequences of violent conflict, improve security, and ultimately contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflict.

It maintains a neutral stance towards the warring parties that it mediates between and, in order to maintain its impartiality it is funded by a variety of governments, private foundations and philanthropists.

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