

Multidimensional Peacebuilding: Local Actors in the Philippine Context

By

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Abstract

Key Words: Philippines, Mindanao, peacebuilding, peace, local peacebuilders, local actors, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), dialogue, peace processes, Bangsamoro

This study contributes to the discussion of local actors in a zone of protracted conflict. Much writing in the area of local actors and peacebuilding has focused on conflict contexts in which international actors are also present. The contribution of this study has focussed on uncovering the local peacebuilding resources generated in a multiethnic and protracted conflict context—the case study focussing on the Philippines and the Bangsamoro struggle in Mindanao. Intersecting considerations—including a colonial legacy, tri-peoples’ interactions, environmental issues, and economics—undergird the quest towards naming the peacebuilding assets of local actors or peacemakers.

Based on qualitative research and the interviews of thirty-six peacebuilders in the region, this study has traced two levels of peacebuilding work. Attention was given to peacemakers who have focused their peacebuilding work specifically towards addressing the movement of the peace processes pertaining to Mindanao as well as intersecting with those who have aligned their work with efforts towards enhancing peace, or building a culture of peace, in the region with activities such as education, awareness building, dialogues, or reconciliation processes. This study takes a collaborative approach grounded in the direct insights of those participating in peacemaking endeavours.

The research gathered contributes to the examination of the Philippines as a resource for multidimensional peacebuilding strategies in conflict impacted communities and the significant contribution of a local community of peacebuilders focussed on collaborative work and

intersection with the effected participants in the conflict. Although grounded in a particular context, it expands the research devoted to understanding the efforts of peacemakers in their own context and suggested directions for building the strength and resources of the local context. And importantly, it opens space to peacemaker voices, to those who have struggled for decades to realize peace in the complex and rich social fabric of Mindanao. This consolidation can have implications for national policy building and strengthening of relationships to overcome regional divides.

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Dedication

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

ARMM: Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

ASEAN: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is a regional organization comprising ten Southeast Asian states which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic integration amongst its members

Ate: a Tagalog term denoting respect and closeness, a big “sister”

Bangsamoro: Bangsa = Nation, Moro = Muslim; Muslim Nation

Barangay: the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village, district or ward

BBL: Bangsamoro Basic Law

BIFF: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters

BTC: Bangsamoro Transition Commission

CAB: Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro

CBO: Community based organization

CoP: culture of peace

CPLA: Cordillera People’s Liberation Army

CPP: Communist Party of the Philippines

CSO: Civil Society Organization

Datu: the title for chiefs, sovereign princes, and monarchs in the Visayas and Mindanao regions of the Philippines

DENR: Department of Environment and Natural Resources

GPh: Government of the Philippines

GRP: Government of the Republic of the Philippines

IDP: Internally Displaced People

Iftar: the meal at sunset that breaks the fast during Ramadan

IID: Initiatives for International Dialogue

IP: indigenous peoples

IPRA: Indigenous People’s Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA) (RA 8371) is a legislation that recognizes and promotes all the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines

Kanduli: Tagalog word for the thanksgiving festival to leads to peace

Lumad: Visayan/Cebuano word for indigenous people

Mamasapano: The Mamasapano clash was an incident that occurred during a police operation, which took place on Sunday, January 25, 2015, at Mamasapano, Maguindanao, by Special Action Force (SAF) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) (allegedly joined by United States Army Special Forces) against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The operation was intended to capture or kill wanted Malaysian terrorist and bomb-maker Zulkifli Abdhir and other Malaysian terrorists or high-ranking members of the BIFF.

MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MIM: Muslim Independence Movement

MINSUPALA: Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan

MNLF: Moro National Liberation Front

MOA-AD: Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain

Moro: the Muslim population of the Philippines

MPI Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute: an annual Philippine peacebuilding school held in Davao City

NDFP: National Democratic Front of the Philippines

NPA: The New People's Army is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines

OPAPP: Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process

PBCI: Peacebuilder Community Incorporated, a Christian peacebuilding organization, located in Davao City

PCEC: The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches

PeaceWeavers or Mindanao Peaceweavers (MPW): a convergence group of peace advocates in Mindanao

Rido: a Maranao term, feuding between families and clans, a type of conflict centred in the Philippine region of Mindanao, and characterized by sporadic outbursts of retaliatory violence between families and kinship groups, as well as between communities.

RWP-M: Revolutionary Worker's Party of Mindanao

RSD: Right to self-determination

TJRC: Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission

Ustadz: one of the highest Islamic honorific titles for a master (teacher)

Wahabi: a Muslim who is a member of the Islamic doctrine and religious movement founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab

Chapter One: Opening the Conversation

Introduction

In May 1996, my family and I ventured to the Philippines on a two-year assignment with the international development agency, Mennonite Central Committee. We were seconded to Silliman University in Dumaguete City in the southern part of the Visayas region. I had left all that was familiar, with two preschoolers. My partner, having grown up in Asia, was excited to return.

As our plane swung around for landing, it was just blue, very blue, ocean beneath us. Suddenly, the tarmac was in front of us and we swooped in for an abrupt stop, palm trees waving their greeting. At the door of the plane, about to descend the stairs, hot, humid air rushed in to meet me, welcoming me to a place that was, literally, to be home for the next two years but which has, figuratively speaking, become my heart's home over the past two decades. Life as I knew it had changed and I would change with it.

We were picked up and greeted by two Silliman University faculty members, Becay and Noriel Capulong, who took us into their home as we settled in and who have become dear friends. It was early morning but already the streets were teeming with people, the noise of the motorcycle-operated local transit zipped past and around us, and the smells of the fish and docks were strange and exotic. I scarce could take it in. I could not have imagined that this place would become one of my most influential teachers as I was invited to join groups of passionate people, all working on ways to contribute to the well-being of their communities. It was a gift that I had not anticipated.

Purpose

The attempt of this study is to understand the assets towards peacebuilding that local peacebuilders can contribute in a context of conflict and, in particular, reveal the approaches taken in the Philippine context. The focus on a particular set of peacebuilders, how they work, and their context is of importance to peacebuilding and can augment current literature regarding strategies for peacebuilding. This means that the focus is not geared towards particular answers but towards adding to a body of thought and creative ideas towards sustainable peacebuilding—ideas emerging through the stories shared in the process of this study.

The interviews conducted revealed significant understandings for peacebuilding in protracted conflicts and can inform the peacebuilding field and the practice of conflict transformation. The interviewees, as partners in this research, are Filipinos invested in peacemaking activities focused on the conflict dynamics on the island of Mindanao—and that impact the country as a whole—as an avenue to explore the role and strategies of local peacemakers. The conflict in Mindanao is complex and far-reaching and, thus, holds the potential to proffer new views to the contributions that can be made within the everyday spaces of peacebuilding. It is a region that delicately, but fiercely, holds both great beauty and deep pain together in one small piece of land. Many of the peacemakers interviewed within these pages are from Mindanao. As well, they represent various communities and perspectives: Christian settlers, Moro, Lumad (Indigenous), peace groups, and official peace process members. Some of the interviewees have immersed themselves in the specific work of supporting the peace process between the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and others have focused on the sustained work of building a Culture of Peace (CoP) in the war-torn region. It is these voices that I seek to privilege within this study.

I have sought to understand the specific role that those committed to building peace in their local environments can bestow in a context that is also impacted, and assisted by, international third parties. While many of these local actors have stumbled into this work of building peace and are, thus, utilizing skills and strategies honed serendipitously within the home context, there are those who have deliberately sought to assert local knowledge into the legion of issues existing in the conflict. Although research on the principle to include traditional wisdom within peacebuilding contexts does exist (Gunja & Korir 2005), I believe that there is value for a focused look at the possibilities that emerge directly from those born into the conflict space. What is the potential for augmenting the building of peace utilizing time-honoured local processes? The Philippine context is one that is rich with a history of resistance and creativity for peace and, as such, offers potential for new perspectives on tried strategies.

The importance of this study lies in the desire to open space for storytelling and reflection from those who have been absorbed by the need to discover ways to create opportunities for sustainable peace to become a reality in Mindanao. Although this study is in agreement with the literature indicating the importance of local knowledge, the aspiration is to provide a platform for discovering what that local knowledge entails by examining the work and voices of peacemakers in a specific context and listening to the nuances within this work to provide heightened awareness for fresh avenues of peacebuilding.

What will it add?

1. Highlight the Philippine voice. Philippine political scientist, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (1997), stresses that “imagining the kind of civil society that we want for the next millennium” is a crucial dynamic in setting forth new directions (19). Her scholarly work has been significant in analyzing the current events in the country. There are numerous Philippine writers whose work

will be highlighted within this study (Abinales, Abuza, Arguillas, Camba, Coronel-Ferrer, de Leon, Espejo, Eviota, Fuertes, Gonzalez, Iletto, Islam, Jocano, Jubair, Justino, Majul, Menguin, Nario-Galace, Leguro, Tacujan, Tan, Villalba, and Vitug) in addition to the thirty-six interviewees.

This study can reclaim local voices that have been seemingly silenced and thwarted within the colonial expansion, and the resulting marginalization for large sectors of people and communities. Bringing to light the strength of local peacebuilding efforts can strengthen the internal options for peacebuilding in a context that is often perceived to be hopeless. And this context, in particular, holds space for a driving force of everyday resistance that has resulted in efforts suited for the context. Many of the interviewees commented in the interviews that it is generally difficult for them to take time for reflection of their work and brokering extended networks. The interview opportunity offered them a window for reflection.

2. Open the range of options. Filipino resourcefulness, or *mapamaraan*, is widely acknowledged. Mapamaraan is an ability to work in the moment and utilizing what is available in order to create something constructive. Filipino author Jef Menguin describes “[b]eing mapamaraan [as] a Filipino core value. Filipinos are by nature mapamaraan. They find ways. Whatever resources they lack, their imagination creates” (Menguin December 2013). The Philippine context is a rich environment in which to pursue the possibilities for local actors in the area of peacemaking.

Civil society activities are strongly associated with the development and nurturing of intersectionalities and the analysis of spaces that can provide possibilities for action. The potential range is immense and can include community-based organizations (CBOs), religious leaders, student groups, women’s groups, revolutionary societies, professional bodies, and more.

Catherine Barnes' assessment is that civil society rose to greater prominence through the efforts of international NGOs during times in which donor agencies were employed to assist in the economic development of fragile regions, which could be nations, states, communities, or villages (Barnes 2005, 8). It is my belief that this point of view underrates numerous examples in which communities built their own capacities.

Barnes suggests that there are several types of orientations that motivate civil society organizations (Barnes 2005, 12). One of these motivations names organizations that emerge specifically to address the conflict of their region and respond in ways to involve civil society. The Philippine women's group, WE Act 1325, is an example of Barnes' second and third categories. This organization was founded by several passionate and determined Filipinas with the intention to work on defining the rights of women as impacted by the peace agreement between the government of the Philippines and the MILF. Jasmin Nario-Galace, the national coordinator—interviewed in this study—reports that the organization is focused on both capacity building and consultation (Nario-Galace 2014). The work emphasizes a focus towards enhancing women's abilities to engage in decision-making activities as well as ensuring that new laws promote the rights and security of women in conflict areas.

Another example of Barnes' assessment is the Bantay Ceasefire team formed in Mindanao, Philippines to monitor a ceasefire in the conflict between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2003. This began as an unofficial group but, at the same time, “mandated by grassroots people living in conflict areas” (Eviota 2005, 389). Its composition was broad-based across religious and ethnic lines and provided keen vigilance in order to prevent the outbreak of war. Diomedes Eviota, Jr.'s, assessment of the success of the Bantay Ceasefire group is based on the fact that, in addition to its local mandate, it was also

“underpinned by the participation of surrounding countries from the Southern Hemisphere,” and its partnerships in the monitoring activities with nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and humanitarian groups in Mindanao (Eviota 2005, 389).

Bantay Ceasefire has modelled the strength of grassroots initiatives and the capacity that can be enhanced through the creation of strong networks, networks that would not have emerged without local initiation and participation. Although Barnes’ framework of basic types of societal organizations is useful for identifying local actors in a given context, she has not identified the more radical and urgent aspects to the work in which local actors engage. It is those aspects that this study seeks to highlight.

The Philippine context has produced events and organizations that are willing to push at the urgent edges. The Bantay Ceasefire volunteers’ ceasefire monitoring activities have had significant impact on the local stakeholders. As a result of their work, the conflict parties have become more cautious in their actions on the ground given the presence of a civilian-led ceasefire monitoring team watching their actions. These volunteers work in the highly conflicted areas and risk their lives in order to hold the conflict actors accountable to the maintenance of a ceasefire. As well, community people have been empowered when realizing that they can do something to prevent the escalation of conflict. They do not need to wait until conflict approaches them, they can respond with the strength of their work (Mindanao People’s Caucus 2015). Local initiatives require both vision and courage in the process of organizing. The examples are numerous in the Philippine context and there are approaches with a distinct Filipino “flavour” to be examined.

Scope of the study

Attention to Local Actors: The local actors within a conflict context are important dynamics in the quest for peace. Indeed, asserts Timothy Donais, “deep-rooted, sustainable change of the kind peace building seeks to bring about requires the long-term support and commitment of a critical mass of domestic actors” (Donais 2014, 2). The terms “local actors” and “civil society” are complex ideas without definitive consensus in the field for the particularities of their uses (Paffenholz and Spurr 2006; Pouligny 2005). The challenge towards clear definitions is evident, but it is clear that if peacebuilding is without a clear attention to the roles and necessities for local spaces, it will not have its intended durability.

How is the term “local actor” being used within the literature? Peacebuilding includes a wide array of actors with diverse goals and methodologies. There is no one agreement regarding the correct terminology in terms of referring to the variety of actors possible within a conflict situation. The Peacebuilding Initiative website differentiates between these actors on the basis of the position of the actors—that is, are they local or external or insiders or outsiders, local or international—the roles they play in the conflict situation, and the sectors into which their activities fall (Peacebuilding Initiative 2015). Béatrice Pouligny (2005) asserts that in reality, “while pretending to work with the local civil society, outsiders actually collaborate with other outsiders—in other words, with themselves” further complicating the categories (501). John Paul Lederach’s “pyramid of actors” framework builds on the complexities of this discussion.

Although most of the literature distinguishes among “local,” “state,” and “international” actors, these adjectives “can be problematic” in various settings (Peacebuilding Initiative 2015). It is important to not be too fixed on these distinctions and to operate with fluidity of space in mind. One only need imagine the different perspectives possible when considering the

participation of a national actor coming from an urban centre to the rural area of conflict to understand that delineating a person as the local or outsider is complex. Different regions will also have different perceptions of these distinctions. Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olson prefer the terms “insider” and “outsider” as categories for distinguishing the roles of various actors within a conflict (Anderson and Olson 2003, 36). They define insiders as “those vulnerable to the conflict,” living with the experience of the conflict (Anderson and Olson 2003, 36). Outsiders are those who have the option to choose whether they become involved in the conflict situation and for how long they are immersed in it. Consequently, this discussion is a matter of degrees rather than clear, diagnostic boxes. Jodi Dueck-Read’s (2016) work on border justice speaks of those who are “affected persons” in a particular context and defines them as those whose work “stems from a personal conviction to live and create possibilities for survival” (139). This is only a sampling of the nuancing possible.

The Philippine context reveals complexity and not understanding that each situation or context implies this level of complexity in order to understand the roles that various actors can play has the possibility of further exacerbating the conflict or negatively impacting the relationships of people in the region. The term insider in the context of this study does have a number of nuances. Insider, at times, is a Filipino grounded in peacework and seeking to bring out a culture of peace that encompasses the broad range of identities but who is not living in Mindanao. Other insiders might be Mindanaoans who come from the settler group and still others who are Moros or Lumads living in the area under consideration for autonomy in the peace negotiation. This is, admittedly, a complex scenario for an exploration of local actors in peacebuilding. In light of this, absolute definitions will not be laid out as a way for those interviewed to create the parameters acceptable to them.

This study will utilize the term “local actors” as a way to describe the insider, and affected, perspective in the conflict scenario and acknowledge that these actors emerge out of civil society, have an attachment to the issues, and a particular set of values. In the study of languages in the Philippines, the descriptor “deep” is attached to traditional words not often used in everyday speech. When those words are used, the listener will invariably exclaim, “Ahhhh, you speak *deep* Visayan/Maranao/Ilongo.” In the same way, each of the persons interviewed in this study is Filipino and is “deeply” focused on their peace work as a decision to contribute to the well-being of their communities and nation. The definition of “local actors” in this study underscores that these are “deep” reflections from invested local peacebuilders.

Significance of the Study

This study focuses directly on the voices of “deep” locals involved in peacebuilding and therein lies the importance of this study. They are the ones who have recognized the need to create opportunities for sustainable peace to become a reality in Mindanao. These are passionate peace workers whose work has been enhanced by a deliberate acknowledgement of the legacy of resistance and trauma in the face of ongoing colonialism and attempts to pacify. Their voices have not before appeared in the literature on local peacebuilding. The aspiration is to provide a platform for discovering what that local knowledge entails in the Philippines by examining the work of peacemakers in a specific context and providing examples of work that could invigorate the larger peacebuilding sector in the Philippines and even beyond through the evidence of their multidimensional work.

The significance of this study is the attention to the “unofficial arenas” and those for whom the results are of immense personal and community importance. Given the historical development of peacebuilding, discussing space for local actors requires rethinking on many

levels and for many participants in peacebuilding efforts. Peacebuilding is a complex task that requires analysis of the context at the level of root causes and indicates that a creativity that looks beyond surface structures for its answers is imperative. Including the writings of colonial and postcolonial theorists, and highlighting Filipino writers, creates new space for discussion surrounding the impacts of oppression, the breakdown of cultures and communities, and both structural and direct violence—all issues of relevance for the local peacemaker.

Paul van Tongeren's (1999; 2005) books, *People Building Peace* and *People Building Peace II*, stress that "peacebuilding from below" is a necessary part of the success for the actualization of peace processes via the examination of successful stories from civil society regarding responses to conflict (1). There is considerable literature within the scholarly world regarding "Track One" interventions but a dearth of writing that highlights the roles and opportunities for civil society and local communities to play. Author van Tongeren holds strongly to the belief that civil society actors should be seen as "a necessary and irreplaceable complement to the activities" of Track One actors within conflict situations and the work of peacebuilding (2).

Nathan Funk's (2012) work proposes "privileging the local" in peacebuilding (397). Privileging indicates commitments beyond the traditional confines of previous peacebuilding methods. This assertion acknowledges the uneven ground between the different parties involved in the peacebuilding work. This is not a simple "switch of the button" to move from privileging the voices and work of international third parties to that of local actors. It will be important to ensure that the "privileging" process is not paternalistic in nature or a romanticizing of particular players and their contributions. Peace will need to be viewed as a construct that is a vital local reality, as more than a necessary constraint, and acknowledged that the appropriate role for

outside parties will be as supporters and facilitators, not instigators, of the peace. Caution must be exercised in order to avoid forms of cultural imperialism.

Mac Ginty (2008) asserts that Indigenous practices, together with western approaches, could serve to strengthen peacebuilding methods by incorporating the “affective dimension of peacemaking” (128-129). Peacebuilding needs to engage a multi-layered approach and this study will focus on raising the voices of those impacted at the local level. Traditional approaches are not static and it is not possible to go back to a pre-colonial moment for the “pure” wisdom of these approaches. Mac Ginty highlights the existent “danger that observers [can] over-homogenize the ‘traditional’” (151). William Zartman (2000), in regard to his work in Africa, asserts that “[c]onflict management practices are considered traditional if they have been practiced for an extended period and have evolved within African societies rather than being the product of external importation” (7). Mac Ginty, similarly, evaluates Indigenous approaches as “techniques that are based on long-established practice and local custom” (145-146). Indigenous practices assume time-tested approaches that will enhance the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts.

Laara Fitznor, a Canadian Indigenous scholar, writes of the daily struggle to assert an aboriginal philosophy while living in the dominant culture. The dominant culture is a difficult context in which to gain recognition of the traditional (local) perspectives because of the potential for misunderstandings and assumptions. A significant aspect of this is the challenge to communicate through the Western/colonial worldview and, in the case of Canada, the overlay of the Christian religion. The colonization process can distort the local perspective, making it difficult to discern within the multiple challenges of Indigenous struggles in a colonized context.

The interviews in this study generate a knowledge base grounded in local contexts and sensitivities to inform effective peacebuilding practices for enactment at the local level through the efforts of peacemakers immersed in the conflict dynamic. It is crucial for practitioners entering a conflict situation, as third parties, to understand the particular assets that the local participant—ones grounded, immersed, impacted, and deep—in peacebuilding will contribute to enhanced dynamics. It is important for governments and third parties to recognize the skills available for the task of peacebuilding.

This study indicates that significant abilities are already in place in the Mindanao context. And, in this way, this study provides the opportunity to profile the Philippines as a context for the examination of local peacebuilding assets. The hope is that by highlighting the voices of those working unrelentingly, that peacebuilding theory can emerge from these stories and this place, adding much needed reflection for crucial situations.

Context of Study

Chapter Two will probe more deeply into the historical context of the Philippines as a way to highlight the impact of the colonial legacy on Philippine peacebuilding. A brief telling here will emphasize the significance of the Philippines as a case study for this study. Salvatore Schiavo-Campo and Mary Judd have asserted that “the Mindanao conflict is the second-oldest on earth” (Shiavo-Campo and Judd, 2005). Given the multiplicity of issues and historical challenges, it is a complex environment for peacebuilding. Mindanao, in particular, is rich in resources and natural beauty yet struggles with corruption, abuses, economic disparities, and discrimination between peoples. In many ways it is an overwhelming context for peace work. As I work on revisions to this thesis, there is a new source of heartbreak for the people of Mindanao. On May 23, 2017 a military offensive began near Marawi City when the government tried to

capture a senior leader within the Abu Sayyaf. The siege on the city continues and thousands of civilians have been displaced. It is necessary to voice the learnings and experiences of peacebuilding to promote avenues for peace in the midst of violent conflict.

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century, the archipelago now known as the Philippines was a collection of at least 70 distinct horticultural and fishing-based ethno-linguistic groups across a relatively homogenous ecological and cultural zone. In the area of Mindanao, beginning around the tenth century, regional chiefdoms or proto-states began to emerge, ruled by figures variously called *datus*, rajahs, or (eventually) sultans. In the fourteenth century, through trade-routes with the Middle East, China, and south-east Asia, Islamic influence began to spread throughout the archipelago—mostly in the islands of the Sulu Sea and in the lowlands of Mindanao. By the sixteenth century, the Sultanate of Sulu and the Sultanate of Maguindanao were firmly established in the southern Philippines (Constantino, 1975).

Conquest and colonization emerged as key themes when the Spanish entered the Philippine islands beginning in the sixteenth century. Spain's conquest was initially successful in the northern and central regions (Luzon and the Visayas). The (Muslim) Sultanates of the south, however, were able to mount a stronger resistance, resulting in what is now called the Spanish-Moro conflict from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. In this context, the Muslim peoples of the south came to be referred to as the "Moro," by analogy to the earlier Spanish conflict with the Muslim "Moors" of Africa. In response to Spanish incursions, the Sultanates mounted raids on Spanish military garrisons and their associated Catholic missions, resulting in Spanish reprisals. It was not until the final decades of the nineteenth century that the Spanish were able to gain control of the main Moro areas of Mindanao.

Colonization continued following the sale of the Philippine islands to the Americans as part of the settlement of Spanish American War (1899 Treaty of Paris). It was now the Americans' turn to subdue the islands. The result was a protracted military campaign that lasted two decades in areas of native resistance throughout the islands, especially in the traditional areas of the Muslim sultanates (Constantino, 1975). The issue of land runs, as a thread, throughout the telling of this narrative.

Strong efforts were made to subdue the Moros of Mindanao. Schools and hospitals were established with the specific agenda of pacifying these peoples. Also introduced were commercial interests. Logging and plantation concessions were granted to companies to exploit the many resources of Mindanao and Sulu. By 1910 there were ninety-seven major plantations one hundred hectares or larger in Mindanao, 62% of which were owned by Americans and 19% by Europeans. Perhaps an even more potent force of colonization was the colonial government's policy encouraging "Christians" to settle Mindanao. In 1903 the Moro population comprised 76% of the total inhabitants in Mindanao, by 1939 was reduced to only 34% (Rudy and Leguro, 2010). In the 1940s and 1950s waves of poor migrants from across the central and northern islands moved to Mindanao.

During the government of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos (1965 to 1986) the frustrations of the Moros erupted into the national consciousness, especially after the Jabidah Massacre in March 1968. Moro recruits were taken to Corregidor Island to be trained by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to lead the Philippine effort to recapture Sabah in Malaysia. There was a rebellion spurred by the non-payment of their monthly allowances. According to the lone survivor, Jibin Arula, anywhere from eleven to sixty-eight recruits were gunned down and died on a nearby airstrip tarmac for that rebellion. This event catalyzed Moro nationalism as Moro

students held protest vigils in the streets of Manila. In May 1968, Moro politicians in Cotabato organized the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM). The MIM declared independence and initiated attacks to recapture Moro lands from Christian settlers. “Christian” politicians retaliated by organizing their own army. The Philippine army sided with the Christian army and the conflict heightened with much ensuing bloodshed. In 1971 the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was organized, seeking comprehensive economic and political changes in Mindanao and Sulu. Eventually, the Tripoli Agreement was brokered (1976), recognizing the Moro people’s right to a homeland with the establishment of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Rifts emerged within the Moro ranks over the agreement and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was established, emphasizing a more religiously framed nationalism. Since then the ongoing conflict has resulted in significant loss of life and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people (Rudy and Leguro, 2010).

On March 27, 2014, after seventeen years of talks and ceasefires the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB). The CAB serves as the basis for the Bangsamoro Basic Law, aimed at enabling a sustainable peace and development for Mindanao and the whole country. This document initiated concentrated efforts at finalizing a peace agreement in a context of fear, discrimination, and inequality and opened space for Filipinos to advocate for peace. Although the Aquino administration was not able to enact the legislation resulting from the CAB, the current Duterte administration has indicated that it is continuing efforts to finalize a peace agreement.

Amid issues and histories of colonization, resource exploitation, clashing ethnic identities, periods of war, poverty, forced migration, and settler privilege is the work of vast

networks of local and international peacebuilders and peacebuilding organizations. From activist and local educators in small fishing or agricultural communities to inter-faith leaders, significant peace work is happening in the grassroots that has importance for the enhancement of local peacebuilding strategies.

Overview of the Chapters

I have learned much through the undertaking of this study. Thirty-six peacebuilders gifted me with their stories and learnings from the peacebuilding field. Long, meaningful conversations ensured that book knowledge merged with heart knowledge. Philippine peacebuilders take their cues from the historical context and their relationships. Without the grounding of their faith traditions, reliance on social capital, resourcefulness, and desire for a new future they might be without hope. What was revealed was a particular methodology effective for their context and, likely, a potential guide for others.

The journey and efforts of peacebuilding work in the Philippine require a deep and foundational understanding of the frameworks and context impacting the work of peace. The long history of violence and unwavering efforts for peace over the centuries needs to be grounded in an analysis befitting the complexity. Sustainable responses emerge from a depth of conversation and research. The literature review topics regarding the historical context, colonization, culture and identity, and trauma were carefully chosen to support the themes that emerged from the peacebuilder interviews and function as windows into the dynamics of peacebuilding espoused within the findings chapters.

This effort towards understanding the hopes for sustainable peace begins in Chapter Two (following this introductory chapter). The historical context is set within this chapter. Understanding centuries of conflict, violence, colonization, and settlements is imperative for

considering the ebbs and flows of political and cultural landmarks and the efforts towards peacebuilding. This is requisite background when attempting to resource, and collaborate with, the communities and people in this region. Relationships are of utmost importance in this context and, thus, it is crucial to identify the factors that built the relationships impacting the conflict dynamics.

Chapter Three examines the context through the lenses of colonization and power usage by describing the vast landscape of literature in this field. Included in this section are the voices of key Filipino writers and thinkers in the area of Philippine colonial history to ensure the continued focus on local voices and contributions within this study and authentic revelations of the impacts of colonization on this region.

Chapter Four lays out the research defining the key terms of this thesis. It is challenging to speak of local actors, peace, and peacebuilding given the complex terrain of peacebuilding work today. In order to highlight the significance of the voice of those interviewed for this thesis it is necessary to examine the terms as utilized in the broader peacebuilding field, thereby underscoring the heuristic benefit of exploring the importance of the conversation created in this study regarding the dimensions of peace and peacebuilding emerging from lived practice and experience.

Trauma results from suffering and hardship. Each of the peacebuilders interviewed for this study has their story of family and community pain. Chapter Five explores the research on trauma resulting from protracted conflict and violence. Given the experiences of communities and the peacebuilders interviewed in this study over the past decades of war, violence, and uncertainty it is crucial to view the development of peacebuilding approaches in the Philippines through the lens of experienced trauma.

Chapter Six relates the methodology utilized for this study and highlights the process for discovering the learnings of the peacebuilders interviewed. Many of those interviewed encouraged me, over the span of many years, to write about peacebuilding in the Philippines specifically because they didn't have the time to devote to writing when doing was so urgent. Thus, this chapter also examines the role and impact for the researcher in this type of research. Utilizing the grounded approach to research required a continued focus on privileging space for theory building to emerge from the voices of the interviewees in the study.

The findings related in Chapter Seven indicate the themes that emerged out of the stories and reflections from thirty-six Philippine peacebuilders devoted to sustainable peace for their communities and nation. Each are passionate students of the historical narrative of their region, desiring to ensure that the peacebuilding approaches undertaken serve to validate the experiences of those impacted by violence and enhance the relationship building possibilities between communities. Their efforts have created an approach to peacebuilding firmly lodged within the Philippine needs and realities.

Chapter Eight concludes the study with recommendations for the Philippine context that materialized through the thirty-six conversations. These honest conversations included reflections pertaining to how to improve the mechanisms for peacebuilding and musings regarding future directions of peacebuilding. The conclusion seeks to draw out the areas of significance for local peacebuilding.

Chapter 2: Setting the Context

Introduction

In Sungko, Lantapan, Bukidnon, on April 9, 2012, the leaders of the Talaandig tribe, the representatives from the Office of the President on Political Affairs and the top executives of the Unifrutti Group of Companies joined together to dialogue, tell their stories, share their aspirations, and search for healing for their wounded past.

Unifrutti Group of Companies (UGC) is one of the major corporations operating in the Bukidnon region and employs members of the Talaandig and Manobo tribes. UGC has been part of the environmental devastation of the tribal areas. Recently, though, UGC has begun a “Rain forestation” campaign, looking primarily to the Indigenous Peoples (IP) as the “guardians of the mountain.” This sparked the initiative for the groups to gather together and to address the wounds of the past in order to envision the possibilities of beginning to work together towards the future.

Datu (Chief) Migketay Victorino Saway introduced the Talaandig ritual invoking the spiritual world and Magbabaya to be present in the dialogue. “Our ritual is really a peacebuilding ritual, we are reconciling the good and the bad and invoking the keeper of the balance of negative and positive in order to find harmony.” The dialogue began with the Talaandig elders and mothers for peace guiding the traditional ritual. As the prayers came to an end, the dialogue began, initiated by three guiding questions: “Who are we?” “Where are we?” and “Where are we going?” The conversation began with four Talaandig tribal women explaining who they were, the pains they have suffered over the years and a desire for those grievances be addressed.

As the microphone circled the room, the participants all laid forth their primary issues, grievances, and hopes for the future. Datu Vic then explained that, for the Talaandig, identity is centred on self-governance and customary law, stating cultural integrity as his primary concern. He also brought forward the historical injustices which began in 1591, undermining the cultural integrity of the Indigenous tribes of the Philippines. Though the Talaandig are the guardians of the mountain and of the forest, they and their land became victims of big agriculture. Today, they are actively working to preserve, promote and restore their cultural identity and integrity—including ecological and environmental protection as part of their role as guardians of the mountain.

When Datu Vic finished sharing, John Perrine, the Chair and CEO of Unifrutti, began to explain who he is and what inspired him to join the dialogue, namely environmental conservation and rain forestation—to restore the forests of Bukidnon. John explained that today the water levels are 25% of what they used to be thirty years ago because of deforestation. Though he did not start out as a conservationist—to the contrary, he was a hunter—he has now become a passionate conservationist. He admitted that his, and the company's, understanding of the Talaandig is still lacking and that their desire to increase their understanding and build a strong partnership with the Talaandig tribe is a primary reason why he brought his team to Sungko for the dialogue: “to listen, to learn and to strengthen and rebuild the relationship. That is my commitment to you.” John also asked for forgiveness for harms caused by his company and committed, once again, to strengthening the relationship with the Talaandig tribe so that those harms will not be repeated.

Datu Vic struggles, in his role as chief, to find ways for the Talaandig to survive and to flourish. The (his)story of his tribe must be told. How does one overcome the past injustices? He believes that reconciliation is possible and is focussed on that journey.

– Story shared with me by Datu Vic and L. Dann Pantoja of Peacebuilders, Inc. and adapted from
<http://peacebuilderscommunity.org/2012/04/tribal-and-business-leaders-initiate-peace-and-reconciliation-process/>

Historical Survey of the Philippine conflict in Mindanao: Impacts on the Tri-people

The history of the Philippines, and the island of Mindanao in particular, is a complex one. War, the struggle for colonial and imperial domination, movements of resistance, and the pushing of identities and boundaries are entrenched within the story involving the inhabitants of the region. The stories of violence, corruption, discrimination, genocide and exploitation are the fabric of the communities represented by the peacebuilders within these pages. Calls for justice, attention to root causes, the right to self-determination, for basic needs to be met, inclusion in peacebuilding processes, and simply for opportunities to go to school and sleep at night are at the heart of the peacebuilding work in this region. This history of Indigenous peoples, Muslims, and settlers is necessary knowledge in the attempt to conceptualize avenues for peacebuilding.

My research with local peacebuilders, September to December 2015, came at a time when the completion of the peace process between the Philippine government and the MILF—a Muslim group struggling for regional autonomy—seemed to be so near at hand. In May 2016 the Aquino presidential administration came to an end and, sadly, the ratification had not yet happened. This chapter acknowledges the history of three people groups impacted by the dynamics of events in Mindanao. Emphasis will be placed on the Muslim story given that during

the period of my research, much effort was being put into strategies to ensure the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

The Philippines is a country of about seven thousand islands and has three geographic regions: Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao. The Mindanao area sits at a strategic position in the center of the shipping line between the Far East and the Malayan world. Mindanao and Sulu have a total land area of 102,000 square kilometers. The region is extremely fertile and rich in agricultural commodities, marine and mineral resources. More than half of the country's rain forests are found in Mindanao. Its agricultural crops include rice, corn, roots crops, vegetables, cassava, and fruits, such as mangoes and pineapples. Mainland Mindanao has substantial mineral deposits. Zamboanga del Sur has gold, silver, lead, and zinc deposits. The resources in Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, and South Cotabato include oil deposits, marble, and chromite. The enormity of resources in this area of the country has placed it in the centre of attention on the political and economic fronts and has impacted its autonomy and identity.

But it must be stressed that Mindanao's economy, and essentially the fortunes of many of the Philippines key political families, is based on the exploitation of these natural resources (Human Rights Watch/Asia 1992). In the central areas of the province, cattle ranches and pineapple plantations have moved in, thus clearcutting vast tracts of forests and "leaving bald hillsides and barren plains" (12). Foreign-owned corporations now own and control huge tracts of available agricultural land on which pineapple, banana, coffee, copra, and rubber are cultivated and processed for export. Consequently, despite Mindanao's abundance of resources, it remains the poorest region in the country and the indigenous communities have seen their homelands diminished.

The emergence from colonial rule to a democratic government in 1986 did not amount to concrete improvements for poor people in the rural areas of Mindanao. Many roads are still unpaved and hospital beds are difficult to attain. Human Rights Watch Asia thus deems Mindanao a “Laboratory of Counterinsurgency” given the conditions of disparity regarding wealth and access (12). Until the early 1900s, thirteen Islamicized Indigenous groups known collectively as the Moros accounted for ninety percent of Mindanao’s population (12). The remaining peoples were non-Muslim tribes, the largest of which were the T’boli, the Higaonon, and the Manobo.

But after decades of American colonization and the following imperialist years of “Philippine conquest and encroachment” the make-up of Mindanao has changed (Human Rights Watch 1992, 12). Currently, it is the Christian settlers and their ensuing generations who dominate the region by population and resources. Almost three-quarters of Mindanao’s population is now “first- or second-generation immigrants from the neighbouring islands of Cebu, Panay, Leyte, Samar, Bohol and Negros” (Goodno 1991, 241). The vast majority of the population is now Roman Catholic. This context sets the stage for the peacebuilding work in the Philippines.

Colonial History and Independence

The Philippines is a complex land—it is a varied set of islands, languages and terrains as well as an historical mix of early fisher communities and the experience of colonization by Spain, the United States, and Japan. The roots of the conflict in Mindanao can be traced back to the colonial periods, but pre-colonial history is essential for understanding the undertones of the tripartite relationships involved (Quimpo 2001, 274). During the time of the Spanish colonization an intense rift emerged between the Christians, predominantly Catholic, and the Muslims, or

Moros, of Mindanao. The Lumads, the Indigenous peoples, were often caught in the middle of these conflicts since the Spaniards, who converted them to Christianity, “compelled. . .[them] to fight with them against the Muslims” (274). Once the Philippines gained their independence from the United States in 1946, the national government became a factor in the tensions between these groups, as “most Muslims could not identify themselves with the new republic, whose laws were clearly derived from Western or Catholic moral values and whose public school system was too Americanized and alien to Islamic tradition” (274). For more than four hundred years, Mindanao has been a landscape of conflict as different players have postured for power at the expense of the local inhabitants.

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century, the archipelago now known as the Philippines was a diverse collection of at least seventy distinct horticultural and fishing-based ethno-linguistic groups across a relatively homogenous ecological and cultural zone. There were a number of languages in the area but not a great amount of cultural differences between those groups. The most important culture-linguistic groups were the Tagalogs in the north, the Visayans of the central islands, and the Maguindanaons, originally the name of the family dynasty and now the Muslims of the plains, and the Tausugs in the southern islands of Mindanao and Sulu (Constantino 1975). The Lumad, the collective name for the Indigenous peoples of the Philippines, were the “original inhabitants” of Mindanao and had their ancestral homelands in the highlands of both Luzon and Mindanao (Picardal 2008, 54). Inter-regional trade was limited and the India-China trade routes left this area mostly untouched.

The earliest Muslim traders might have come as early as the 10th century. But, between 1300-1500 AD, the trade routes between the Middle East and China did move southwards and the Philippines became part of this trade. Islamic influence began to spread throughout this

archipelago—mostly in the Sulu and Mindanao region. Around the mid 1400s, Sayyid Abu Bakr, who claimed to have descended from Mohammed, established a trading and raiding dynasty in Sulu. In 1511, the powerful Muslim Sultan Kudarat fled Molucca after the Portuguese conquest of that city and founded a militant dynasty in Mindanao (Majul 1975). A strong Muslim elite began to take shape in Mindanao. The Moro areas, that is, those areas under the regional sultans, became the most politically centralized regions of the area. By the 16th century, Islam had been introduced to other tribes—the Maguindanaos, Maranaos, Tausogs, Samas, Kalagan, and Iranuns—in Mindanao (Camba 2002; Picardal 2008). By the end of the Spanish era, the Muslims comprised the majority—over seventy-six per cent of the population.

In 1572, Spain commenced the conquest of the Philippines. The forces began in the north and were successful in pacifying the Tagalogs and Visayans. When the Spaniards encountered the Muslims, or the Moros as the Spanish came to call them, in the south, their conquest ran into difficulties. Significantly, the Spanish Conquistadores failed to fully subjugate the Lumad and the Muslims. The Muslim sultanates of Maguindanao and Sulu were able to put up a strong resistance (Picardal 2008, 55). The warrior traditions of Mindanao and Sulu were strong enough to push the Spanish expansion back. The Muslims resisted so strongly that as late as 1876 the Spanish friars were still exhorting Christians to fight the Muslims of Sulu. The Catholic Church spread horrific stories of the Moros and the conflict began to take on some religious overtones that would continue to deepen the separation. The Spanish thought of this issue as parallel to their own need to get rid of the Moors in Spain, which was accomplished in 1492. Indigenous peoples also fell under the Spanish desire for power and land. The long period of the Philippines, and its people, being viewed simply as commodities for the development of Spain has created a

legacy of mistrust, discrimination, and marginalization at the expense of Indigenous and Muslim peoples.

The Americans arrived in 1898 in the midst of the Philippine Revolution against Spain (1896-1898). American forces concentrated their fight on the Philippine Revolution in Luzon and the Visayas. In the 1899 Treaty of Paris, which concluded the Spanish-American War, Spain sold Mindanao and Sulu to the United States along with the rest of the Philippines and retained Cuba.

The Americans also struggled to subdue the Muslims and used military force, the creation of schools with a pacifying educational curriculum, and aid by way of health services to subdue the Muslims. Soon enough the Americans were bringing in logging companies and plantations to exploit the resources of Mindanao and Sulu. By 1910 there were ninety-seven major plantations of one hundred hectares or larger in Mindanao, sixty-two per cent of which were owned by Americans and nineteen per cent by Europeans. The environmental devastation, and impact on land sovereignty, of Mindanao had begun.

Settler practices of colonization

Perhaps an even more potent force of colonization was the colonial government's policy encouraging "Christians" to settle Mindanao. In 1912, Governor Pershing encouraged the Visayans to settle the Cotabato valley. By 1917 there were six agricultural colonies in Cotabato and Lanao. This migrant population continued to grow. In 1936 Philippine president Manuel Quezon specifically linked the colonization of Mindanao with efforts to bring economic development to the island. After the Philippines achieved full independence, Mindanao continued to be utilized as a resource base for the country. In the 1940s and 1950s many poor farmers from across the country moved to Mindanao.

The colonial policies of Spain, the United States, and the Philippine government marginalized the Moros in their own land and the Lumads were pushed into the highlands. The land and settlement policies begun during the American colonial period started the process of re-configuring the demographic make-up of Mindanao. With the influx of Christians in Mindanao during the American period and under the new Republic, the Muslims and Lumads began to feel anxious that they were being deprived of their ancestral land as their traditional administrative structures were disrupted. Land ownership, and the conception of the meaning of ownership, shifted as the Christian settlers who were able to acquire title believed that they had a right to live in Mindanao (Picardal 2008, 55). This became the source of much conflict and animosity. In 1903 the Moro population was seventy-six per cent of the total inhabitants in Mindanao; and by 1939 the Moro population had decreased to thirty-four per cent of the total population in Mindanao (Rudy and Leguro 2010). The Lumad's numbers were also greatly decreased during this period of colonization.

Thomas McKenna's historical scholarship reflects that early on in American rule the approach to effective settlement focused on "pious paternalism punctuated by brutal pacification operations" (McKenna 2007, 4). The Muslim south was not easily pacified and harsh methods were employed. Both Muslims and Indigenous peoples were thought to "need special attention to advance to the level of civilization of Christian Filipinos" and were, therefore, grouped together administratively (4). Yet, the American colonial administrators did not view these two groups as the same. Although Muslims were viewed as barbaric, they were "not considered savages as were tribal groups. . . due principally to their possession of both a world religion and an aristocracy" (4). Consequently, Christians were not encouraged to proselytize Muslims but were

rather to focus their attention on the tribal groups. Muslims, as lowlanders, did become included in land registration programs, unlike the Indigenous groups.

On December 8, 1941, the Moros of Mindanao were vigorously fighting the Americans and the settlers, intending to thwart the westernization of their communities. But when the Japanese invaded Mindanao, as a way to hold their position in the Philippines, the Moros turned their attention to this attacker. They became a “courageous ally in the guerilla struggle against the Japanese,” fighting alongside the Americans during the battle for Mindanao, March 10th through August 15th, 1945” (Milligan 2005, 81). Although the colonial attitudes towards Muslim Filipinos shaped since 1898 seemed permanently entrenched, the Muslims “continued their long history of violent resistance when possible and grudging accommodation where necessary [when Japan was the new threat] in the face of external threats to their cultural, religious, and political independence” (81). Their constant focus was the stability of their identity and right to determine their own future.

The scale of Christian immigration to Muslim Mindanao caused inevitable dislocations as well as producing glaring disparities between Christian settlers, highland Indigenous peoples, and Muslim farmers. From 1935 onward, the administrations of the Philippine government provided more and more opportunities and assistance to settlers coming down from the North. In fact, the government services available to Muslims were fewer than they had received under the colonial regime. And by 1954 the economic disparities between Muslims and Christians generated by the Christian migration to the Muslim southern regions were already becoming conspicuous (McKenna 2007). This inequality continues to the present day and shapes much of the conflict dynamics in the country.

Seeking rights and identity: Emergence of Muslim national organizations

The March 1968 Jabidah massacre, regardless of its sometimes-debated historicity, has been a significant narrative in the way in which it catalyzed Moro nationalism onto the Philippine scene. It surfaced subdued reactions to marginalization. As a result, in May 1968, Moro politicians in Cotabato organized the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM). The MIM declared not only independence but it also sought to recapture Moro lands from the Christians. The Philippine government *Homestead Program* (1903–1973) took advantage of the absence of a land titling system. The MIM warriors began attacking both civilian and military targets. “Christian” politicians retaliated by organizing their own army. The Philippine army sided with the Christian army and the conflict heightened with much ensuing bloodshed.

It was in the early 1970s, during the government of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, that “the immigration of Christian Filipinos to Mindanao had created a social landscape wherein Moro Filipinos and Indigenous tribal Filipinos (Lumad) had become minorities in their own homeland” (Russel 2004, 3). The frustrations of both the Moros and Indigenous peoples erupted into the national consciousness and the name Lumad became officially determined as political identities emerged for the non-Muslim/non-Christian Indigenous peoples. Social tensions increased to the point that Christian, Indigenous peoples, and Muslim elites all began forming private armies (Fitzpatrick 2008, 119).

This was perceived as insurrections by the Philippine Congress and a Special Committee was appointed to investigate the causes of those disparities and their possible solutions (McKenna 2007, 5). It is important to stress that loss of ancestral lands for both Moros and Lumads transitioned these communities from independently functioning sultanates and chieftainships “to marginalized cultural and religious minorities remain at the heart of the

Mindanao conflict” (Russel 2004, 7). From 1903 to 1975, the total Islamized population of Mindanao moved from an estimated 39.29 percent to only 20.17 percent and for the Lumad population a transition from 22.11 percent to 6.86 percent (Russell 2004). The discourse utilized within Special Commission discussions promoted the colonial perspective supporting the backwardness of Muslims and saw societal integration as the solutions, thus ignoring the impacts of settler migration and rights and favouring the idea that Muslim culture was to blame. The Commission on National Integration (CNI) thus recommended that resources be put towards removing the barriers preventing Muslims from attaining a university education. Young leaders from these communities were selected to be educated in some of the finest universities in the Philippines and abroad.

In 1971 Nur Misuari and other young leaders of the MIM, dissatisfied with the leadership of the traditional politicians in the MIM, organized the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). This group had Islamic revolutionary aims and sought comprehensive economic and political changes in Mindanao and Sulu. These young leaders were recipients of CNI scholarships with the result being that the CNI opportunity had “unintentionally created a group of young Muslim intellectuals schooled in political activism and able to articulate the frustrations both of Muslim students disaffected by their encounters with Christian cultural hegemony in Manila and of peripheralized Philippine Muslims in general” (McKenna 2007, 6). The MNLF sought complete independence for Muslim people of Mindanao and this education provided a foundation for realizing that political change lay within their reach, if organized.

The MNLF and emergence of the MILF

The declaration of martial law in 1972 was seen by the MNLF as a declaration of war (Wurfel 1977; Tacujan 2013). Full scale war erupted leading to massive casualties on both sides

and huge numbers were evacuated. Eventually this led the way to a focus on the need for peace agreements as a way to improve relationships with the government of the Philippines and to create security for the peoples of Mindanao: the Lumad, Christians, and Muslims. The 1976 Tripoli agreement, brokered by Libya, was created from this crisis. The agreement finally recognized the validity of the historical struggle of the Moro people for self-determination and the right to a homeland. This realization was no small thing given the decades of colonial and imperialist rule that did not equally respect the rights of Indigenous and Islamicized peoples of that region. Part of the agreement included the establishment of an autonomous government of thirteen provinces in Mindanao and Sulu—the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao or ARMM. The events surrounding the Tripoli agreement were politically complex. In a turning point, the ceasefire was violated amongst indications that President Ferdinand Marcos was simply using the agreement as a way to validate martial law (Espejo 2013; Ackerman & DuVall 2001). It was the breakdown of this agreement that resulted in a split within the MNLF.

Consequently, MNLF commander Hashim Salamat broke away from Nur Misuari and established the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) according to a more religiously framed nationalist movement. Salamat and his group rejected the Tripoli Agreement that Misuari signed. Misuari and the MNLF remnant resumed their armed struggle against the Philippine government. The ongoing conflict resulted in significant loss of life and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people (Rudy and Leguro 2010). In 1996—in the term of President Fidel Ramos—Misuari again accepted a peace deal with the Philippine government through the Jakarta Peace Accord. A plebiscite was conducted and elections held. Nur Misuari was elected governor of the autonomous region (ARMM). Yet, this agreement did no better than the Tripoli agreement for reducing the violence and deaths. Misuari became a “polarizing force and eventually lost his

ascendancy among Muslim militants” (Espejo 2013; McAmis 2002). These events gave space for the rise of the MILF. By 1999 the MILF controlled vast areas of Mindanao.

Peace Processes

The time period following the attempts of the 1976 Tripoli agreement to create peace in the southern regions has been full of challenges as efforts and persons have emerged within the process of changing the quality of life for those on the edges of power and privilege. The MILF asserted its intention to maintain the struggle for independence and placed an Islamic emphasis on its approach to engaging in these efforts. The MILF rejected the 1996 peace accord and resumed its independence struggle building up to President Joseph Estrada’s year 2000 policy of “All-Out-War” against the MILF. Many lives were lost during this period. It is important to assert that, during this period as well, the Indigenous People’s Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 was passed as legislation and focuses on recognizing and promoting all the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities of the Philippines. The local inhabitants of Mindanao were struggling to find their autonomy and ways to preserve their identities and traditions.

In 2002 dialogue did resume with the result that, in 2008, a Memorandum of Agreement - Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) was created that addressed issues of expanded self-rule for Muslims. Imaginably, this agreement created insecurities in non-Muslim areas and “non-Muslim politicians and local interests lobbied intensely against” the agreement (Liow 2016, 81). The result was that it was aborted after the Supreme Court of the Philippines declared it unconstitutional following petitions made by local government officials in affected areas of Mindanao. The inability to pass the MOA-AD was heartbreaking in many communities in Mindanao. Thereafter, a break-away faction of the MILF—the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)—started attacking civilians in Mindanao and armed hostilities between

government troops and the rebel MILF ensued. The MILF, though, continued to be committed to a negotiated peace settlement.

Peace talks did resume in 2010 under the administration of President Benigno Aquino III, facilitated by Malaysia. On 15 October 2012, the Philippine government and the MILF signed a Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB), which basically provided a roadmap to a final peace deal between the central government and the Muslim rebels in Mindanao. On 27 March 2014, the Philippine Government and the MILF signed the “Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro” (CAB), the culmination of many efforts and peace talks that started between the two parties in 1997. The next steps included the framing of a “Bangsamoro Basic Law” (BBL), which was submitted to the Philippine Congress for enactment. Indigenous peoples’ groups began to organize to analyze the impact of this on their communities.

Recent Events

On January 25, 2015, in the midst of Congressional deliberations on the BBL, the Philippine National Police Special Action Force launched an operation into the Bangsamoro autonomous region controlled by the MILF to capture two terrorist targets: Malaysian bomb maker Zulkifli bin Hir and Filipino bomb maker Basit Usman. In the midst of this operation there was an exchange of fire between the police, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and a unit of the MILF. In the end, forty-four Special Forces police officers, eighteen MILF members, and a number of civilians were dead. This encounter has become known as simply “Mamasapano” or the “Mamasapano clash/incident.” Politicians quickly distanced themselves from the peace process in order to avoid being seen as supporting the violence that had just occurred (Arguillas 2015). The movement toward peace diminished as many scrambled to declare themselves as a “hardline nationalists” (Abuza 2016). President Aquino lost considerable

influence in the process. This was a strong blow against those working towards ensuring that a peace agreement would be passed. Aquino's term as president ended without the passing of the BBL despite strong efforts by many—even many of those interviewed in this study.

President Duterte, elected in May 2016, inherited the peace process that stalled when Congress failed to pass the BBL legislation that would have created an autonomous region for Muslims in key parts of Mindanao and the southern islands. His administration has created a new peace panel in order to move forward on maintaining the momentum for an agreement.

Summary

The history of the Philippines is one of struggle—a struggle for resources, acknowledgement, preservation of identity, and emancipation. That history includes a colonial legacy that has encompassed the entrenching of inequalities and the pacification attempts of peoples through force and political structures, as well as years of martial law and decades of war and violence in Mindanao. Muslims, the Lumad, and Christians are the current fabric of Mindanao and are seeking to create peace in their island. Many voices are required for the telling of this history and for participation in peacebuilding activities. The country is at a fragile point in terms of stabilizing its peace and making decisions that will affect next generations. Many players are working on creative measures for ensuring that a wide variety of voices are involved and that the structures that emerge provide space for multiple stakeholders. Knowledge of this history is a crucial dynamic within the peacebuilding efforts in this region.

Chapter 3: Seeking out the roots of conflict

Introduction

What does it mean to do research in a context of deep hurts and complex causal factors? Although I have lived and worked in the country for two decades, I am from the outside. I am a white, Canadian woman, and I have much to learn about colonization, and power, and my own work for decolonization. I met Regina Mondez about five years ago, as a budding activist in rural Mindanao conflict impacted communities. We recently spent the morning over tea, catching up on the years. Today, she is a significant staff member of Sulong CARHRIHL. This organization is pushing for the continuance of an agreement between the government of the Philippines and the Communist Party of the Philippines, which was signed in 1998. She stresses that “still there’s killings and tortures happening.” Decades old wounds and mistrust between the government and various liberation groups exist. She envisions a time when the Philippines and its people groups will achieve a nonviolent co-existence, a time when reconciliation will be a possibility.

And this progress will emerge when Filipinos realize the assets that they have for making this come to be. “We understand the history of our own people and we [can] relate to the people who are being victims of violence and injustice, and there’s so much connection, you know, like as a race, as a country, and I think that’s one thing that is not very appreciated. But the civil society strength is that we could connect to each other and that from that we could be united from the same experiences, from the same situations, because we’re not different from the people that we’re helping. We’re arising from the same situations.” Together, knowing the history of colonization and greed, a way forward must be found.

Colonization

In this study I focus on several scholarly areas: colonization, power and violence, local actors and peacebuilding, trauma, and resistance. These literature review chapters will review these fields and their points of connection to understanding more deeply the challenges of the Philippine context for peacebuilding. As well, these chapters indicate the themes that emerged out of the conversations with the peacebuilders of this study. This chapter will concentrate on colonization and the themes of power and violence associated with it. In conversation with Bishop Tendero, former National Director of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), he stressed that:

the Philippines is a nation where you see so much conflict. We are in so much unpeace. Then there's the lack of development. And, on the other hand, we also say that the lack of development is also part of the reason why there is also the unpeace situation. Therefore, if we want to really have an impact in our society, in our community, we need to be able to address these issues. So, what are the root causes of conflict? Why is there conflict? And how can we help provide both, let's say, an equitable and sustainable as well as a suitable peace for everyone?

He emphasized this in the context of analyzing the potential strategies for peacebuilding.

Colonization and power carry enormous influence in the dynamics of the conflicts in the Philippines and to work towards peace is to spend the effort analyzing the causes of the current conflicts in light of the legacies of these themes.

The Philippines is a colonized context, thus necessitating the need to examine the literature on colonial discourses and the role of a colonial legacy in shaping the narration of history, policies, relationships, and enduring inequalities. These factors do much to impact the nature of research methods aiming for holistic approaches and rich narratives. Although the term “colonial legacy” is being used here, it deserves acknowledgement that it is not simply a “legacy” given that “colonial ways of knowing still circulate and have agency” in the current

context (McLeod 2010, 39). This section is not to convey that colonialism does not any more exist, but to reflect on the legacy of it and the implications for current research and peacebuilding efforts. This literature review includes significant, and necessary, voices from Filipino scholarship (Tan 1987; Iletto 1979; Abinales 2000; and Gonzales 2007) in order to provide insight into the foundations of the conflict in the Philippines, as well as writings from a broad range of colonial discourses (Spivak 1986; Guha 1982; Memmi 1968; Nayar 2010; Said 1993; Bhabha 1994; Green 1995; McLeod 2010; Galtung 1971; Boehmer 2005; Bhatia 2005; Fisher 1990; Burton 1990; Botes 2008; and Blaut 1993). This section will conclude with a discussion on the role of power and de-colonizing activities in colonized contexts.

Colonial and postcolonial theorists are creating new spaces for the discussion surrounding the impacts of oppression, the breakdown of cultures and communities, and structural and direct violence (Hathaway 2013). Gayatri Spivak's essay, "Can the subaltern speak?," pushed the field to acknowledge the diversity of voices required, specifically voices from the margins, for authentic exploration regarding colonial impacts (Spivak 1988). She urged postcolonial writers to expand their borders in order to "know the discourse of the society's Other" and cautioned against speaking for others (272). Spivak, as member of the Subaltern Studies Collective, has urged the group to look at subordination in Asia under a broad range of attributes including gender, race, class, or office (Guha 1982, vii).

This new space is crucial. In 1968, Albert Memmi (1968) looked at the assumptions within the colonial discourse and warned against thinking that once the colonial oppression is removed the changes will emerge immediately. Colonial power brings with it a legacy that shapes next generations—creating transgenerational trauma—and, thus, creating space for oppression to rise from within: "The colonised lives for a long time before we see that really new

man (sic)” (88). This history resides deep within the culture and is not simply banished after a generation.

Harvard professor Homi Bhabha (1994) writes that providing opportunities to express memories might provide the catalyst to enable the creation of a fragile bridge between the age of colonialism and the progression towards constructive cultural identity. Although this process can be “a painful re-membling, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present,” it provides for rich text in the de-colonial journey (63). Simply forgetting the past will not be sufficient for moving forward. Change requires authentic grappling with what has transpired. Bhabha describes social transformation as death and birth happening simultaneously, the end of one thing and the beginning of the new (64). Post-colonial theory serves to reveal the violence—structural, cultural, and direct—that has underscored the colonial condition.

Definitions and Forms of Colonialism

As Memmi (1968) cautions, assumptions often guide the direction of the discourse and, therefore, definitions need to be analyzed for the foundations that they express and, perhaps, enshrine. Colonialism has taken on many forms. At the most basic level, colonialism is the expansion of one nation to another. Over the last four hundred years, much of that colonial expansion has seen (mostly) European nations carry out relationships of control and influence over regions viewed as their colonies. The colonial system is grounded in judgements of inferiority and the “sustained exploitation of native races and spaces” (Nayar 2010, 1). Joyce Green’s (1995) work on colonial tactics utilized within Canada’s colonial practice views Canadian conquest efforts as expressly directed towards controlling the fundamental level of a people’s identity (8). Much of this can be applied to the Philippine context.

Traditional colonial discourse focuses on a clear binary approach of “us” versus “them,” providing the basis for perceiving the colonized as the ones in need of development (Nayar 2010, 32 & 38). Colonial tactics focus on identifying points of vulnerability as avenues for accomplishing the larger agenda of domination. In the context of war, those in power understand that wars are won by reducing the resistance of the enemy. In the context of seeking domination, those with legislative power understand the advantage of eliminating certain voices. Spivak (1988) queried whether, in the colonial context, “even the most benevolent effort merely repeats the very silencing it aims to combat” (298). She provides the example of the British ban on the practice of *sati*, the burning of the widow on her husband’s funeral pyre, as a vehicle to establish British “civilization” and Indian traditions as “barbarism.” Although the stated intention was saving women’s lives, it communicated the inferiority of Indian practices.

Edward Said (1993), a significant voice in colonial discourse, distinguishes the nuances between colonization and imperialism in this way: “‘imperialism’ means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; ‘colonialism,’ which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory” (8). Thus conceived, imperialism is a particular “ideological project” and colonialism is “*one form of practice*” (McLeod 2010, 9). Promod K. Nayar (2010) writes that imperialism “is the *ideology* that recommends, furthers and justifies colonial rule” (2). Johan Galtung (1971) iterates that the imperialist agenda sustains itself with a focus on the domination and exploitation of the other’s economic system and often supports that agenda through political and military domination (81). The targeted region in the sights of the imperialist is viewed as peripheral in importance, simply a utilitarian resource for enhancement of the dominating power. Studies in

de-colonizing theory (written about in more detail later) seek to analyze possibilities for liberating colonized states from colonial thinking and patterns.

Boehmer's (2005) definition of colonialism serves as a useful springboard in contemplating the colonial legacy present in the Philippines. She frames colonialism as the "settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the Indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, often by force" (2). The phrase, "attempt to govern," provides space to analyze the purported success of the colonial endeavour. McLeod (2010) writes that in contexts of colonialism, "a colonised people are made subservient to ways of regarding the world which reflect and support colonialist values" (21). Historical documents regarding the challenges that Spain and the United States had in colonizing the Philippines, often repeat that the need was to "pacify" the Moro people.

The Philippines has emerged from a complex history of colonization, greed, discrimination, and weak state leadership. The long-term effect of the colonial legacy cannot be underestimated for its part in the recent civil wars. It is clear that the colonial history—the sustained exploitation—has shaped the factors that have been instrumental in leading to civil war in the country. The peacebuilders interviewed here reside and work within the colonial framework and, thus, this study requires astute attention to the assumptions utilized, the narratives grounding the process, and the voices included.

Colonial tactics and impacts: The Role of Settlers in pacification

Pacification of the "native" has directed much of the colonial practices in the developments of empires. Imperialist powers have often used the colonial strategy of relocation of settlers in "problematic" areas as a means to assert dominance. Of greater devastation to the Moro land rights was the colonial government policy encouraging "Christians" to settle

Mindanao. In 1912, Governor Pershing encouraged the Visayans to settle the Cotabato valley. By 1910 there were ninety-seven major plantations one hundred hectares or larger in Mindanao, 62% of which were owned by Americans and 19% by Europeans. By 1917 there were six agricultural colonies in Cotabato and Lanao. This migrant population continued to grow. In 1936 Philippine president Manuel Quezon specifically linked the colonization of Mindanao with efforts to bring economic development to the island. After the Philippines achieved independence, Mindanao continued to be utilized as a resource base for the country. In the 1940s and 1950s many poor farmers from across the country moved to Mindanao.

The colonial policies of Spain, the U.S., and the Philippine government marginalized the Moros in their own land. The land and settlement policies begun during the American colonial period started the process of re-configuring the demographic make-up of Mindanao. This process entrenched deep fear and hatred between the settlers and the Moro people.

In 2003, then mayor (now President) Rodrigo Duterte argued that then President Arroyo should label the MILF as terrorists under the belief that: ““They have taken so many lives of innocent civilians, which is inexcusable. No one knows when or where they will strike. It is about time this group should be branded terrorist before they go beyond the bounds of rebellion”” (Bhatia 2005, 5). Eid Kabalu, responded by stating that using such a label would indicate that the “government is closing its door to the peace process and [intends to] pursue a military solution, [which would]. . .result in a bloodier war. . . . We have been threatened that we will be pulverized, bombed out of existence and now they’re using this terrorist label. We have been threatened enough and nothing can scare us enough” (5). Opting for seemingly simple solutions or categorizations will not eliminate the conflict.

The chasm between settlers and Muslims in the region has become embedded in violence, fueled by decades of government rhetoric and military intervention. These violent conflicts have focused on the “preservation of cultures, values, and needs” (Fisher 1990, 5). Consequently, seeking out appropriate methods of conflict resolution that can probe beyond the surface is challenging. Insufficient efforts might only “lay the seeds for more intense conflict in the future” (5). This has been the case in Mindanao. Hostilities have been nurtured in Mindanao for decades and it requires new approaches to transform the situation. John Burton (1990) stresses that when it comes to identity and survival, people will go to great lengths to preserve their communities, even resorting to behaviour that is outside of their usual standards (36).

The resulting legacy of animosity between settlers and Muslims has created structural inequalities. These inequalities must be analyzed to ascertain “to what degree such structures are sources and causes of conflict. . .and the extent to which changing the system. . .could end [the] conflict” (Botes 2008, 358). Changing structures is challenging since those benefitting from unjust structures will seek to maintain those structures. A significant factor for successful dialogues regarding the Philippine conflict will rest on the willingness, of those with power, to re-establish the ways in which the conflict parties relate to each other.

The peace agreement annex on power sharing was especially contentious in the Aquino administration negotiations. It required significant trust between the parties because it prescribed the dismantling of historical power structures. It is apparent that the then Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Teresita “Ging” Deles, understood how great a step the completion of this annex was: “We consider the signing of the annex on power sharing as a special gift of the [December] season for the Filipino people, an indication of the collective hopes and dreams of our people for just and lasting peace” (Botes 2008, 365). This annex marked a significant step

taken to address the conflict legacy instilled by the colonizers of the Philippines and that has tainted relationships between the peoples of Mindanao for decades. The relocation of peoples, the creation of settlements, creates two (or more) narratives within a society. Awareness of the diversity of perspectives and experiences in a particular context is crucial to develop research methods and results with broad landscapes of inclusion.

Philippine authors on colonial history and legacy

This section privileges the voices of four Filipino writers with scholarship regarding the colonial legacy in the Philippines—Samuel K. Tan, Reynaldo Ileto, Patricio Abinales, and Vernadette Gonzales. Given that this study focuses on the voices of local actors and the Philippine context specifically, it is important to directly engage the ongoing academic research in this context. Each of these writers has a particular area of expertise in terms of analyzing the events and impacts of the colonial legacy on the Philippines, its people, and the challenges that have emerged. Peacebuilding research must obtain data from local sources.

Tan: Tracing the Spanish period and transition to the U.S.

Samuel K. Tan (1987) has written *A History of the Philippines*. His chapter on Spain highlights that Spain conquered the Philippines with specific aims of enhancing Spain's assets. Tan describes them as focused on "God, Glory, and Gold" (50). This was the motto of instruction to the various Spanish explorers, from Magellan to Legaspi, and to the religious orders that moved in once Spain had conquered. Tan's historical overview creates a platform for contemplating the current economic difficulties of the Philippines and understanding the context out of which revolutionary movements emerged over the centuries.

The religious aims were explicit in Spain's journey to colonial power. The early expeditions from 1521 to 1565 provided accommodation to religious missionaries who intended to preach and convert as well as scout out "material resources of the colonies" (Tan 1987, 50). Magellan's first act was the celebration of the mass upon landing at each of his stops in the Philippine islands (50). The zeal for Christianity was "an almost obsessive desire" to diminish the strength of the Muslims, or "Mohammedans," as they were referred to at that point (51). The turning point in the Spanish conquest was the conversion of the Muslim King Tupas, in Cebu, hastening the spread of Christianity.

The Philippines became dependent on this colonial power and began to lose its Asian identity (Tan 1987, 51). Spanish King Philip II's goal was to create an oriental empire to ensure benefits for the people of Spain. These economic aims required the creation of economic institutions to guarantee economic growth. The institutions that became the "hallmarks of Spanish colonialism [were] *ecomien*das, haciendas, taxation, monopolies, galleon trade, and *polos y servicios* (forced labor)" (52). These systems would take years to dismantle.

Spain forced monopolistic trade on the Philippines, resulting in dependency and an erosion of the dynamic trade system that the Philippines had been part of in the Asiatic region. Local chieftains had power only as the collectors of revenues. The political structures created to maintain the power over the resources and control of the native peoples required a strong bureaucracy and distinct social stratifications. The Moros and *infieles*—the unfaithful—were greatly "repressed because of their religious traditions" but managed to hold on to their cultural identities, unlike the majority of Filipinos (Tan 1987, 60).

Despite Spanish efforts at acculturation, a revolutionary struggle did emerge. Jose Rizal was "the foremost advocate of the reform movement" (Tan 1987, 63). Ideals of independence

became a uniting force for the natives of the Philippines and a Filipino consciousness emerged. The Moro answer to the revolutionary struggle was to answer the “Spanish bloody campaigns [with] retaliatory raids on Christian communities” (63). As the colonial tactics of power expanded and became more oppressive, local leaders emerged to question the system. Both within the Filipino and Muslim communities, resistance movements began to accelerate in intensity.

In 1898 the U. S. focused on a “sociocultural [modernization] reorientation of the Filipinos through schools, sports, literature, language, art, music, religion, health and sanitation” (Tan 1987, 70). Free education was provided for all people and school was compulsory for children from ages seven to nine. Consequently, the new leaders of the Philippines were “trained and educated in liberal democracy” (71). This strategy created a “kind of cultural outlook that became indifferent to traditional values” (71). What the Americans achieved in values development was not achievable “by Spain in [their] more than three hundred years” in the Philippines (72). The American worldview was firmly entrenched in the Philippines within a few years.

Although Filipinos had responded negatively to Spanish rule, “American imperialism evoked a kind of response that [divided] the Filipinos in a way into those who opposed American presence and those who welcomed it” (Tan 1987, 72). The inauguration of a civil government in 1901 “brought the elite into the entire American bureaucracy” without making space for the diversity of Philippine peoples, emphasizing the continuance of imperialist processes (74). In 1946 the U.S. relinquished authority over the Philippines. The period of American imperialism greatly affected the nationalist movement, “diluted by the cultural transformation of the Filipino psyche,” leaving Filipinos “vulnerable to external manipulation and exploitation” (79).

Ileto: Philippine revolutionary movements

Ileto (1979), in *Pasyon and Revolution*, focuses on the roles of revolutionaries in creating a Filipino consciousness. Key, for Ileto, is the May 1967 uprising by Valentin de los Santos, leader of the Lapiang Malaya political group, who led his followers to an uprising on the streets of Manila to recount the foreign influences in the country. They believed that their *anting* (amulets) and sacred *bolos* (machetes) would render them successful over the guns of President Marcos' military. After a massacre of more than forty thousand Lapiang Malaya, their leader was taken to a mental institution, pronounced insane, and then beaten to death by violent inmates of the institution.

De los Santos' goals, though, were simple: "true justice, true equality, and true freedom for the country" (Ileto 1979, 1). He believed that President Marcos was too aligned with foreign powers and needed more focus on national power and the identity of the Philippines. His approach was to speak to *Bathala* (supreme god) for advice, thus appearing as hero to some and a crazy man to others. Their massacre has come to be known as "Black Sunday."

As economic changes occurred in the nineteenth century, there was a "rise of a prosperous class of mestizos and native elites, or *principales*" (Ileto 1979, 3). These folks were able to educate their sons (only sons, at that point in time) in Manila or Europe. Once influenced by "Western liberal ideas," these educated Filipinos, or *ilustrados* (enlightened), were "determined" to apply the radical changes that they learned in the "mother country. . .to the colony itself" (3). These sentiments began to stir up nationalist hopes, giving rise to the uprising of the masses. Although short-lived, a Philippine republic did emerge in 1898. These "postrevolution mystical movements" were authentic modes for expressing the people's hopes of liberation and kept these hopes alive "during the American colonial period" (8).

The brand of Christianity that developed in the Philippines drew upon “much of the language of anticolonialism” (Ileto 1979, 12). In particular, the dramatization of the story of Jesus during the Passion Week was influential in developing values of liberation. The *Pasyon Pilapil* version of the Passion Week events assisted in articulating the social consciousness and social unrest. It includes “powerful images of transition . . . e.g. darkness to light, despair to hope. . . which, in times of economic and political crisis, enabled the peasantry to take action” (14). There is a strong case for examining the links between revolutionary periods and the religious perspective instilled in the people as a basis for understanding the tactics for resisting colonial power and the current peacebuilding strategies of Philippine peacebuilders.

Abinales: Transition from American colonial rule to Philippine elite state-building

Patricio Abinales (2000) focuses on the many variations that emerged in regard to the achievement of state-building. Those in power in the early years of the 1900s argued that Filipinos were not equipped to form any government and that Muslims should be “apprentices to the Filipinos” since they had no experience in politics (17). The American military and Filipino elites were vying for control of state-building given the immense resources of the region in southern Mindanao in the early twentieth century. The view was that the area needed “a ruler with a firm hand” to properly control the assets (17).

The Americans sought “to hinder the integration of Muslim Mindanao into the Philippines” given the differences between the Filipinos and the Muslims (Abinales 2000, 17-18). Filipino leader Manuel Quezon, though, wanted the Muslim area under full Philippine control in order to enhance the colonial state. In the case of the Philippines it was both local regimes and colonial centres that “influenced the course of state-building” in the region (18).

The American approach to governing southern Mindanao was to view the Muslims as a savage group, “little different from native (sic) Americans they had recently subdued” (Abinales 2000, 19). The army ruled tightly and focussed on pacifying and “Civilizing the Moros” (19). The area to be controlled was a huge region and the army worked rigorously to bring in roads, outposts, and telegraphs to aid in their goal. Settler-based agriculture ventures became part of the strategy that economic growth would bring stability to the area.

Philippine nationalist views expanded and plans began to emerge that would ensure Mindanao’s cooperation in the integrated Philippines plan. Mindanaoans, then President Quezon argued, needed to be ruled by Filipinos, especially given the history of the American treatment of Native Americans. The decision was reached to divide the area into seven provinces and grant Mindanaon Filipinos the same rights as those of the north. Those provinces dominated by Muslims “remained [as] special provinces” (Abinales 2000, 32).

The issue of Muslim independence has remained a significant issue in the Philippine context and each president has looked to different strategies for pacifying the region. Abinales’ work highlights the impacts of different ideological perspectives on the creation of a people’s identity. Abinales asserts that philosophical and ideological differences are important to declare in order to understand the statebuilding approaches taken and to understand the variations in approaches and results in primary research. Bias is part of each researcher and is important to acknowledge.

Gonzalez: Gender and colonization

Building awareness regarding inequities in a particular situation requires researchers to understand the historical, political, and cultural situation and the methods utilized that might entrench these imbalances (Parpart, Connelly, and Barriteau 2000). Vernadette Gonzalez (2007)

examines gender dynamics as they relate to colonial legacies. Her article, “Military Bases, ‘Royalty Trips,’ and Imperial Modernities: Gendered and Racialized Labor in the Postcolonial Philippines,” examines the premise that enjoyment of neoliberal economic policies requires the “suspension of a critique of the neocolonial Philippine economy (29). Gonzalez’s approach is to highlight the current reality of the body of a Philippine woman (Filipina) as cheap labour as the vehicle for discussing the impact of the colonial period on current day Philippines. This approach starkly lays out the narrative of the Philippine economic issues in a country attempting to move forward from a colonial legacy.

Gonzalez argues that the neoliberal economic policies that the Philippines has embraced, and has been encouraged to embrace by external states, has created a labour context of “leisure and service” such that the hospitality offered in the Philippines “can again be enjoyed without colonial guilt” (Gonzalez 2007, 29). The presence of U.S. military bases and the emergence of a Filipina workforce in the vicinity embodies “a particular gendered material history of empire” that can’t be ignored (29).

Gonzalez utilizes ethnographic research, ethnography of empire, and the Clark U.S. military base—now a free market zone—in the Philippines as a case study to examine the “culture of domination” that perpetuates imperialism into the “present and lived realities” of the people, and women in particular, in the area (Gonzalez 2007, 30). The military base functions “as a cultural artifact of colonial dominance” that encourages the nostalgia of the colonial lifestyle as it “exploits” the labour force of the present (31). The current tourism focus on the base—golf, tennis, clubhouse, and museum—sets a mood of domination as the Filipina labourers include umbrella girls (young women in bikinis that hold umbrellas as sun shade over the golfers), caddies, groundskeepers, and hostesses.

The Clark military base is deemed a model of success if relying on a definition of American modernization. The organization of the base infrastructure “promises” something other than what often stands in contrast to the often “tumultuous economic and political reality of Philippine society today” (Gonzalez 2007, 36). The air of “benevolent colonialism transforms to one of benign globalization” and indicates a particular definition of development and modernity (41). This context hides the fact that violence was involved in creating the colonial structures of the Philippines and is still “lived out, negotiated, and unsettled in the bodies and spaces of ostensibly former colonial experiments” (54). Gonzalez creates a clear picture of colonial impact on people’s lives and the continuing legacy.

This section has traced the writing of key Philippine scholars interested in the country’s colonial history. Their collective voice substantiates the colonial literature and research through the descriptions of relationships within the country and details regarding the emergence of power imbalances. Each has sought to examine Filipino efforts to free themselves of colonial restraints, providing inspiration for current thinking regarding de-colonial efforts. Defining colonialism is no easy task. The diversity of voice in these four writers signifies that colonial research needs to be attentive to the various perspectives existent in one particular context in order to accomplish a colonial analysis and critique.

Post-colonial critique

Post-colonial work requires exploration of the voices of those who come from contexts with colonial histories as a way to work towards transformation (McLeod 2010, 39-40). Colonial values are embedded in the current reality and, as such, researchers cannot be naïve about the legacies in existence and about what might be of value as part of the exposition of these legacies. Constant hegemonic pressures might only allow for postcolonial approaches to exist in the

“utopian context” but the [postcolonial] ideal “does describe real, if incomplete, ruptures with past structures of domination, sites of current struggle and imagined futures” (Clifford 1994, 328).

J.M. Blaut: “The Colonizer’s Model”

The purpose of J.M. Blaut’s (1993) work, in *The Colonizer’s Model of the World*, is “to undermine one of the most powerful beliefs of our time concerning world history and world geography” (1). This belief is the idea that European/Western civilization has a quality that renders it permanently superior over all other civilizations for all of history. Europeans make their history through their advances and modernity, and the rest of the world, in contrast, is seen to be traditional and slow. The geographical framework for this is the belief that Europe is the epicentre and that all other countries are the periphery and that the initiator is on the inside.

This theory is entitled “diffusionism” and proposes “theories about the way cultural processes tend to move over the surface of the world as a whole,” rendering certain locations as irrelevant (Blaut 1993, 1). Thus, it is seen that ideas initiate in Europe at the centre and flow out to the rest of the world. At the basis is the belief that Europe’s progress stems from its internal qualities and not from any interaction with other parts of the world. Consequently, what Europe brought to the rest of the world was so-called modernization and what emerged was “eurocentrism,” a belief of European superiority (2).

Scholars separate on the question of whether pure inventions occur within a community or whether all changes occur as a result of diffusionism—changes brought about by interaction with others. Diffusionism, as Blaut (1993) describes it, “is a product of modern European colonialism [and] is the colonizer’s model of the world” (18). This ideology developed as a way to convince the European society that efforts towards modernization were the ideal and the

necessity. The colonial enterprise “was immensely profitable from the very beginning” for European countries (20). During the classic colonial period, the colonies were influenced to believe that their success was rooted in accepting the colonizer’s definition of modernization and progress (28).

“Diffusionism is a poor theory,” says Blaut (Blaut 1993, 30). So, how has this theory come to be so influential for such a long period of time? Diffusionist thinking has been taken on as truth within the scientific and religious communities given the strong belief and value systems that have become intertwined to support this way of thinking. “Diffusionism developed as the belief system appropriate to one powerful and permanent European interest: colonialism” (41). Elite classes were able to hold their societal positions as this theory took root and it was essential to the success of colonization. Blaut concludes by saying that the critique of diffusionism has just begun. His hope is that his book stands as part of the treatment “of a serious malady of the mind” and serves to open new spaces of discourse (215).

Power and violence

Decolonization and Power

Fitznor (2012) asserts that breaking out of colonial hegemonies, or the “serious malady of the mind,” requires “challenging the inequities of racism, oppression, stereotyping and so forth that currently exists in our Canadian systems of education” (280). Decolonizing, the process of “revealing and dismantling colonialist power,” requires conscious deliberation (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000, 56). In colonized contexts, the frameworks of thought, and of institutions, have been directed towards establishing the superiority of the imperial power. The social conditions of colonized peoples are often fraught with oppression, sexism, and racism that

has been encouraged by policies and practices directed, deliberately, at the control of marginalized people. It is a constant struggle to remove the constraints of those dynamics.

Deconstructing colonial legacies or creating post-colonial/de-colonized societies is no easy matter. Even after independence the colonial structures are in place via the colonial policies and the entrenched attitudes of the citizenry. Alternatives need to be created for de-colonizing to materialize. Blaut (1993) indicates that the colonizer's model views the colonial power as the centre of importance. Decolonialism, then, creates meaning from the peripheral edges, the voices on the margins. In the Philippine context this would entail elevating the voices of the Moros and the Lumad of Mindanao in discussions of national importance. In that globalization attempts to bring all people together, decolonial projects critique the centres of power (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000, 100).

Decolonizing processes need to be attentive to aspects of power. Researchers, in selecting voices for their research, require the awareness that accepting globally powerful voices over local voices "often silences alternative voices" (Cook-Huffman 2011, 26). The power of privileging elite perspectives can reify identities that are "rigid and inflexible" and result in categories that sway access to opportunities (26). Peter T. Coleman's (2000) research indicates that high-power groups "tend to like power, use it, justify having it, and attempt to keep it" (124). Because power is relational in nature, the person with concentrated power "has access to valued resources and [can use] them to achieve personal, relational, or environmental goals, often through using various strategies of influence" (113). Within the field of anthropology, post-colonial academic conversations are acknowledging the need to dismantle the privilege of Western perspectives over the knowledge of others.

James Clifford's work (1986), *Writing Culture*, highlights the potential dangers for ethnographers if the realization of the power held in their writings is not considered (2). "Ethnography is actively situated between powerful systems of meaning" in that its questions enter into the "boundaries" of cultures, classes, ethnicities, and genders, thereby creating codes of order and interpretation (2). Researcher's "pens" hold the power to shape perceptions of relationships and, as such, impact peacebuilding work.

This section has surveyed colonial discourses and Philippine perspectives on colonial history. Given that colonial values are embedded within societal narratives and hegemonic structures of the present, reviewing the contexts and foundations of community inequalities is essential to the research process. Possibilities of decolonization emerge out of "the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000, 56). Abinales (2000) contends that it might not be possible to view state development in regard to Mindanao in Western terms. He purports that a strongman, or state, will not be effective, and that stability might require a mingling of state and society, a new take on structures (184). The "complex interlacing of identities" in Mindanao will require distinct strategies. An overdeveloped "postcolonial state" will not succeed if the community ties are not robust (189). Awareness of the historical narrative is a significant part of developing strategies for peacebuilding and shaping research for structuring sustainable options. These perspectives raise complex questions for the researcher in these contexts. Not only is the research tool significant but the attitudes, assumptions, and ideologies must be interrogated for openness and diversity.

Political inequalities and Violence

Acquiring a set of lenses with which to analyze conflict situations is a significant enhancement to peacebuilding research and the ability to build contributions for the resolution of

conflict. Specifically, in this chapter, the exploration of theories regarding intrastate war and violence, frameworks regarding culture, values and identity; chosen traumas as a framework combining identity and culture; and human needs theory will be covered here as themes that further enhance the understanding of the impacts of colonization on the conflicts in the context of this study. These will be layered within the Philippine context of the colonial legacy, emergence of Muslim independence movements, and the declaration of martial law and its ensuing violence. Understanding factors of violent conflict is significant for framing research questions and determining voices for inclusion.

Herbert C. Kelman's (2009) work on social-psychological approaches to conflict analysis asserts that the investigation of the nature of international conflict must be researched for the implications on conflict resolution (170). He argues that it is often a "process driven by collective needs and fears" rather than a series of objective decisions made by political players and stakeholders of the region (171). Celia Cook-Huffman (2009) highlights that when the deep-seated needs such as identity acknowledgement are not met traditional conflict resolution methods might not be adequate for the situation (22). Research methods benefit from processes utilizing deep analysis in order to contribute constructive thinking towards conflict resolution practices.

Daniel Rothbart and Rose Cherubin (2009) suggest that conflict research must grapple with two questions: What view of causation best serves the research? And how does one know when the correct determinants of the cause of the conflict have been deciphered? (59). These questions require an assumption that many levels and types of causation are possible within situations of protracted conflict (60). Marie Doucey (2011) asserts that holistic approaches will best serve the research into conflict resolution causes and possibilities (9). In order to guide the

search for appropriate methodologies for the Philippine context this section will seek to understand the context of violence and inequalities from multiple perspectives and contexts to aid the construction of research directions and methods.

The causes of intrastate war are many and the theories of intrastate, secessionist war have highlighted differential treatment and group cultural identity (Gurr 1993; Gurr & Harff 1994), crumbling nation states and economic inequalities (Blin 2011), lack of protection for land rights, poverty and myopic leaders (Blattman 2010), strong religious adherence (Toft 2007), and the role of colonial legacies (Chalk 2003) as significant factors in the research. Mac Ginty (2006) asserts that, “[a]cademic debate on conflict causation [of civil wars] has crystallised around two [distinct] themes: greed and grievance” (69). The greed theory is based on wealthy parties preying on economically weaker units. The grievance theory covers many factors such as identity, competition, unmet needs, relative deprivation, and religion.

Given that the tools for understanding origins of violence and said causal factors are intertwined and layered—involving immediate, proximate, or ultimate causes—it is difficult to state with certainty which causal factors are the most decisive. Yet, political violence and inequalities are key factors in the erosion of peaceful communities. The Philippines’ history of violence—colonial legacy, martial law, war in Mindanao—stirred by a number of factors, continues to impact current discussions of the possibilities of peace.

Theoretical Frameworks

Intrastate war and violence

“Remove the secondary causes that have produced the great convulsions of the world and you will almost always find the principle of inequality at the bottom. Either the poor have attempted to plunder the rich, or the rich to enslave the poor. If, then, a society can ever be

founded in which everyman shall have something to keep and little to take from others, much will have been done for peace” (de Tocqueville [1835] 1954, 266).

The political plan of discrimination, as a way to subdue the Moro people, resulted in widespread poverty for that community. Settlers from northern parts of the country were encouraged, through incentives, to move to the island of Mindanao as part of a strategy to diminish the influence of the Moro people on that island. The Act of 1919 dictated that “a Christian Filipino could apply for private ownership of up to 24 hectares of land while a non-Christian could request only 10” (Islam 1998, 445). These policies enhanced the economic disparity existent between the Catholics and the Muslim in the country. The invitation for settlers from the north and for large corporations—both in the agricultural and mining sectors—further entrenched this division. “The government believed that, with the declining wealth of the Moros, the Moro nationalist movement would collapse in the long run. In fact, the government's policy made the Moros more aggressive” (452).

Decisions to initiate a civil war, or any other form of violent conflict, depends on several factors. These could include the possibilities of external military and financial intervention, the level of technology and resources available to each armed group, the depth of their ideological beliefs, and their analysis of the strength of state presence in key areas in the country *vis-à-vis* their own possibilities (Justino 2009, 316). In particular, high levels of poverty may drive individuals into conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 1998) as some may gain more from being fighters than from peacetime activities, notably when “productive activities are scarce, unemployment is high and returns from agriculture work are low” (Justino 1998, 317). Patricia Justino’s (2009) hypothesis is that: “The poorer the household is at the start of the conflict, the higher is the probability of the household participating and supporting an armed group” (324).

Justino's (2009) work suggests that the empirical analysis (Collier et al. 2003; Collier, & Hoeffler 1998, 2004; Sambanis 2004) regarding civil war points to low per capita income as one of the most significant explanations for the outbreak and the duration of violent internal conflict (315). Moro people in Mindanao were gradually reduced from an early place of power and influence to a state of extreme poverty due to pacification efforts and inequitable land policies. Populations in these situations must adapt to stressful circumstances simply to survive. An emerging area of research is the analysis of the role of micro-level economic factors and the decisions that influence the onset of violent conflicts (316).

Abiding inequities promote the high likelihood of moving towards serious conflict. Tedd Robert Gurr's (1993) model is premised on the theory that protest and rebellion by communal groups are motivated both by deep-seated grievances about group status and by the political interests that they have for the group (166-167). Grievances about differential and inequitable treatment and the pressure on the group's cultural identity frame the key bases for mobilization of the group as well as shaping the kinds of claims made by group leaders. If deep grievances exist and a strong sense of group identity is intact, along with the existence of coherent common interests, this will "provide highly combustible material that fuels spontaneous action whenever external control weakens" (167). Groups that express strong demands for political rights typically have social and economic grievances based in economic disadvantages, and cultural discrimination (188).

Relative deprivation theory is one of the predominant theories linking a people's grievances with the conflicts that emerge, focussing on vertical inequalities of household incomes. Although there is debate in the field regarding the range of application for this theory, the work of Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils B. Weidmann, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch (2011)

suggests that when “ethnic groups find themselves in radically different situations for various historical reasons” it becomes a significant point of tension and impacts levels of regional conflict (480). Their work indicates that “structural asymmetries. . .make ethnonationalist civil war more likely” (481). There is strong evidence that horizontal, or group, inequalities are significant drivers of violent conflict (Brinkman, Attree, and Hezir 2013, 4).

Horizontal inequalities, as defined in the work of Frances Stewart (2002) are those “severe inequalities between culturally defined groups” (3). In stratified social systems, social comparison that reflect on issues of superiority or inferiority are especially likely to spark conflict. Donald L. Horowitz’s (1985) summary of ethnic conflict is that it “arises from the common evaluative significance accorded by the groups to the acknowledged group differences and then played out in rituals of affirmation and contradiction” (227). The combination of horizontal inequalities—such as social, cultural, economic and political—along with grievances increases the likelihood of civil war (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 481).

In the Philippines, environmental degradation of renewable resources has been one of the grievances, as well (Smith 2004, 6). The early colonial strategies focused on providing entry points for both settlers and corporations into Mindanao as ways to subdue the Moro people. The result is that Mindanao is the target for resource generation and does not have policies that could protect the social and biological diversity of the island or provide equitable access for all Mindanaoans to the benefits of those resources.

Culture, Values, Identity

The “Conflict Barometer” is an annual report that surveys the incidence of interstate and intrastate wars and violence in the world. It utilizes eight conflict items or causes—national power, decolonization, territory, secession, system/ideology, autonomy, resources, and

subnational predominance—as a grid for each conflict that it investigates. It indicated that the majority of the conflicts in Asia were of a system/ideology nature (Conflict Barometer 2012, 73). The specific report on the Philippines lists the national government in conflict with the Abu Sayyaf, the New People’s Army, the MNLF, the Communist Party of the Philippines, as well as the MILF. In this report the factors for the GPh-MILF conflict are secession, system/ideology, and resources.

The MILF conflict with the Philippine government has centred on the desire to create an autonomous region, utilization of traditional lands for settlers and corporations, and the desire to implement Sharia Law. Years of discrimination can move people who have established a strong sense of identity into a process of seeking self-determination. Over years of colonization southern Philippine Muslims have achieved a distinct identity. The identity has been shaped over and against the identity of the settlers and has been attached to a specific place, a sense of a “homeland.” The quest for self-determination is linked to both place and people. Efforts to educate Muslims and force them to become “civilized” have only served to deepen the sense of difference (Islam 1998, 445). The work of the MILF has been focussed on creating an autonomous region for the Moros.

The frameworks and theories regarding culture, values, and identity are significant in regard to understanding the complexities of protracted conflict and possible avenues forward. Kevin Avruch (1998) asserts that “[u]nderstanding the concept of *culture* is a crucial prerequisite for effective conflict analysis and resolution” (167). Identity is “fundamental to how individuals and collectives see and understand themselves in conflict” and, thusly, an aspect of how people justify their actions and interactions in a particular context (Cook-Huffman 2011, 19). Categories for determining who is in the “in” group and who is in the “out” group, along with the ensuing

analysis of superiority, can lead to dehumanizing of the other and violent conflict (Kriesberg and Dayton 2011, 11).

Therefore, in the historical and complex context of the Philippine conflict, it is certainly the case that one must gain adequate knowledge of the identity and cultural underpinnings shaping the direction of the conflict. Culture is a dynamic and multi-faceted topic to explore. The fact that culture is often seen as encompassing the everyday aspects of life necessitates appropriate analysis to discover its meaning and impact. Culture provides us with ways of acting and being in the world; cultural variations can result in conflict between people and within communities.

Avruch's (1998) seminal book, *Culture and Conflict Resolution*, asserts that the definition of culture must be struggled with and that in order to "push it . . . beyond the pale: we [must] complexify culture" (17). To "complexify" culture, Avruch asserts that "interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations" must be part of the exploration of the role of culture (17). Culture is grounded in the historical experiences of a people and shapes the worldview of that community. Values and identity of a people emerge as they struggle with the interpretations and meanings from those experiences (20). Cook-Huffman's (2011) work highlights the complexities within the discussion of identity and protracted conflict. To be sure, a people's context does influence the categories that are created. As well, she argues, that the "categories create context" indicating that identity construction might provide direction for conflict resolution processes (28).

The articulation of values and identity is a significant factor in problem-solving. Attention to the many narratives within a context and openness to a broad range of causal factors is paramount to an effective approach to research within complex units of investigation. Jonathan

A. Smith and Mike Osborn's (2008) discussion of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) affirms, as a research method, that foremost for researchers is the exploration of how participants are making sense of their personal and social world (53). The "double hermeneutic" of research is that at the same time as participants are seeking to understand the meaning of their experiences, the researcher is seeking out the process by which participants are doing their internal work of meaning making (53). The researcher is assisted in the process by studying the context of the participants in the study.

– Chosen Traumas: Ties between culture and identity

One of the difficult areas to "untangle" in this discussion of political inequalities and intrastate conflict is the formation of the ties between culture and ethnic identity. Intrastate conflicts have considerable impact on civilians; the numbers of deaths in identity clashes is immense (Blin 2011, 303). Vamik Volkan proposes that identification with a large group (such as a religious, ethnic, or national one) begins early on in childhood such that each member's core personal identity is intertwined with the large group identity (Volkan 2004, 11). Values are learned through socialization processes and an individual's behaviour is impacted by the values held. "Cultural values provide broad guidelines about what are acceptable means for achieving end-states in different situations and influence cultural norms and rules" (Gudykunst 1999-2000, 1-2). The existence of ethnic identity provides impetus to interpret events as part of the collective identity, albeit sometimes unconscious.

Volkan (2001) refers to this as "chosen traumas." These chosen traumas are images of a past event during which a group suffered loss or experienced helplessness in a conflict with another group and come "to symbolize a group's deepest threats and fears through feelings of hopelessness and victimization" and assist in understanding the challenges in moving forward

from these experiences (Avruch 1998, 173). This can create an injured self-image that is passed on to generations (transgenerational trauma) and impacts interactions with other groups through different negotiation styles based on different trans-cultural dimensions, or values, such as high and low context cultures (176). This chosen trauma becomes the narrative for the strategies determined as appropriate for maintaining the community's identity.

– *Human Needs Theory*

It is difficult to work constructively on conflict in the face of glaring lapses in meeting people's basic human needs. Abraham Maslow (1943) purported that all people have a hierarchy of needs, such as food, shelter, and safety, to love, belonging, and self-actualization (394). It is difficult for people to focus on higher needs when their basic needs are not being met. Burton (1990) indicates that needs are part of our universal motivators (36). He stresses that people are going to pursue their basic human needs at all costs, regardless of the conflict. Needs are deep values and are not items for negotiation; they are "inherent drives for survival and development" (36). Unmet needs can give rise to behaviour, even violent, that is not consistent for a particular group. In assessing interventions for any conflict it is important to undertake a needs assessment and incorporate community capacity building as part of the large picture efforts to improve the conflict situation. Ronald J. Fisher's (2013) work in resolving conflict stresses that not only is the identifying of the needs significant but that "mechanisms to address them ("satisfiers") must be built into the outcomes (189).

The diagnosis of conflict situations needs to be deliberate and multi-faceted. Conflict "arises in different contexts. . .occurs at [many] levels. . . [and] exists when incompatible goals develop between persons, groups, or nations" (Byrne and Senehi 2009a, 3). It is important to consider comprehensive approaches, such as the interconnection of material and psychological

mechanisms, and the human needs of the actors within the conflict. Without an adequate diagnostic framework for the analysis of conflict the intervention, tools and techniques are at risk of not being sustainable or constructive for the parties involved, or of not achieving a significant level of transformation.

Jay Rothman's (1997) problem-solving work has focused on entrenched and historical conflicts. Significant to these types of conflict are the "primary group identity needs of the disputants" (5). One can be certain that "[w]hen people's essential identities. . .are threatened. . .intransigent conflict almost inevitably follows" (5). Identity driven conflicts have, at their core, a need for "dignity, recognition, safety, control, purpose, and efficacy" (7). These core needs must be addressed. As people find their voice in the process they can offer space to hear the other side, as well.

Years of discrimination will eventually move people, who have established a strong sense of identity, into a process of seeking self-determination. Southern Philippine Muslims have achieved a distinct identity. The identity has been shaped over and against the identity of the settlers and has been attached to a specific place, a sense of a "homeland." The quest for self-determination is linked to both place and people. Efforts to educate Muslims and force them to become "civilized" have only served to deepen the sense of difference (Islam 1998, 445). Various campaigns have been undertaken by the Spanish, the Americans, the Japanese, and Filipino governments in attempts to pacify the Moro people without deliberate regard to their religious, cultural, and political identities (Jubair 1999, 123-127).

Intrastate conflicts can shift their agenda over time if people's original desires and needs are not met. The Philippine conflict originally focussed on "righting" the faults of the colonial legacy and working towards agreements. As those fragile agreements unravelled over the years,

the religious dimensions, alongside the changing external political dynamics and desire for self-determination, began to move to the forefront of the articulation of the conflict. The shift from the predominance of the MNLF to the MILF in shaping the rhetoric for the resolution of the conflict exhibits that type of shift—the MILF asserts that it speaks out of an Islamist perspective. The emergence of religious dimensions into the dissatisfactions of the region strengthens the cause and the legitimacy of their struggle. In the Philippines, the move towards finding “Islamic Unity” has strengthened the resolve of the Moros to work together to combat the Philippine government and to ensure that all of them are being treated equally (McKenna 1998, 281).

Summary

Effective peacebuilding research is tied to the ability to identify root causes. There are numerous lenses with which to understand the causes of political inequalities and violence. Societies organized so that segments of society are treated unequally and unjustly have strong possibilities of erupting into conflict, especially if the leaders are not perceived to represent all of the members of that society. Research in the area of causal factors requires depth of perception in order to add to the possibilities for re-framing dynamics constructively in contexts of protracted conflict.

The analysis of root causes requires entry into the various “under bellies” that have shaped the current context. The literature of colonization, power and violence opens vistas to understanding the root causes of a complex context. Colonization’s interdisciplinary possibilities thwarts simplistic answers and asserts the necessity for complexity appropriate to the hope of building connections and new possibilities. The literature on power and related sub-themes highlights the tactics and strategies existent in the fabric of the context. The local actor is shaped

in myriad ways by this context, thus impacting the peacebuilding efforts and directions in which they are engaged.

Chapter 4: Grounded in the local

Introduction

Froilyn Timoyo Mendoza works in a closely-knit community-based organization for the Teduray Lambangian Women's Organization (a Lumad organization) and, at the time of my interview with her, was the representative of the non-Moro Indigenous people in the Bangsamoro Transition Commission in the peace process. She is fiery and deeply caring about her place within her community and their collective work towards peace.

She said to me of the challenge of being the Lumad representative on this significant commission: "How will I explain and convince the MILF and the government that this is what the Indigenous people want? Because I heard already from the very start, for example, the issue of the Indigenous people rights was not in the timetable, was not in the framework agreement, and was not in the comprehensive agreement, so how will I convince them? But my tribe said, the elders, the team voice, the villagers, 'It's okay; the important thing is you raised it and they heard of it, and maybe when there is conflict then that's the time we will fix that one, the important thing is you raise it.' So maybe that's also the thing that made me very burdened from the start. So, I said, 'You have to help me.' 'Yes,' they said. 'You will only be our echo there and, here, in the ground, we will also work.' So we promised to each other, my tribe and myself. . . . But the truth is I do not like it because I said, 'I already have an organization also; I am working here.' I am also the key person because I also function as the executive director of the organization. So, I can't leave having this big job; it's too far [away] for me. And the villagers said to me, 'And who will represent us if you will not do it?' they said. So, I think those are the behind the scenes [dynamics] of our aim for peace."

Froilyn takes energy and support from her community, understanding that working alone, without support, is not sustainable. Her community discerned her for the task and they will walk in solidarity with her, because her work is also their work. She also tells me that her elderly mother checks in with her each time she returns to her home community, asking for a status report on how Indigenous women's capacity building is going. "‘Yeah, they are working good,’ I say. ‘Some of the women are now not shy’" and are able to assert themselves in decision-making processes. Her passion is contagious and once I'd met her, it didn't surprise me that the majority of the other interviewees put forward her name as someone with whom I should speak.

Local Actors and Peacebuilding

"I have a rather modest thesis. I believe that the nature and characteristics of contemporary conflict suggest the need for a set of concepts and approaches that go beyond traditional statist diplomacy" (Lederach 1997, xvi).

"[T]he challenge of rebuilding war-torn societies is to nurture and create the political, economic and social space within which indigenous actors can identify, develop, and employ the resources necessary to build a peaceful, just, and prosperous society" (Bush 1996, 86).

Although there exists an immense diversity in thought regarding the strategies and implementation of peacebuilding efforts, it is of vast importance to explore since the questions with which this topic engages are of deep resonance in conflict impacted communities around the world. This chapter focuses on peacebuilding approaches and the role of local actors in peacebuilding through the construction of a critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature as a way to connect with the ideas and frameworks emerging from the study's participants. Specific frameworks and practitioner work will be examined to highlight and contrast the contributions of local actors within the peacebuilding discourse and activities. Given

the spectrum of thought regarding peacebuilding practices and mechanisms, included will be a review of the complexities involved in defining and framing a discussion of what constitutes local actors, peace, and peacebuilding. The liberal peace and statebuilding frameworks of peacebuilding will be explored in order to provide contrast with peacebuilding frameworks focusing on local actors. This range of exploration will serve to provide a foundation for the discussion of the role of local actors in the case study of focus in this research.

Local Actors

Defining local actors in peacebuilding

Introduction

The roles and impacts are many regarding local actors in peacebuilding. Consequently, it can be challenging to understand the parameters given the wide array of intersections. In 1994, Curle (1994) concluded that “[s]ince conflict resolution by outside bodies and individuals has so far proved ineffective. . .it is essential to consider the peacemaking potential within the conflicting communities themselves” (96). This was written a mere two years after UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s (1992) United Nations report firmly planted the space for the activities of international sectors in the peacebuilding arena. There is a broad range of actors—both international and local—that can become involved in any particular conflict scenario. And there exists a complex discussion regarding who fits best at particular points in time. As a significant role in this research it is essential to visit the foundations of this space in peacebuilding.

The terms “local actors” and “civil society” are complex ideas without definitive consensus in the field for the particularities of their uses (Paffenholz and Spurr 2006; Pouligny

2005). Ronald J. Horvath (1972) and Spivak's (1998) work highlights the delicateness of the local actor conversation within the narratives of colonial thinking and paternalistic attitudes. Lederach has devoted much of his career to considering the roles of leadership essential to peacebuilding and the role, in particular, for grassroots and local participants (pyramid of actors). Anderson and Olson provide a vantage point of those working within the NGO sector. Oliver P. Richmond (2016) stresses the "network of local agency" as the "architecture" upon which peace and development depends (2).

In addition to the conversation regarding definition of terms is the discussion of roles for participation. John Rudy and Myla Leguro's (2010) Collaborative Learning Project on the Philippines outlines the advances made in local participation through community development of local peace zones. Lederach's (1997) integrated framework highlights the roles for actors within conflict scenarios. Funk (2012) proposes that the local voice is due to be "privileged" within peacebuilding processes (397). Mac Ginty (2008) asserts the need for elevating awareness of indigenous practices and local wisdom that could broaden and enhance peacebuilding efforts. Anderson (1999) discusses the dynamics of interactions between NGOs and local players. The avenues and perspectives are immense in terms of considering the questions, challenges, and possibilities for enhancing local involvement in peacebuilding processes. This complex terrain can enrich the examination of a particular context by opening up broad spaces for analysis.

Terminology—local actor

The Peacebuilding Initiative (2015) website differentiates between these actors on the basis of the position of the actors—that is, are they local or external or insiders or outsiders, local or international—the roles they play in the conflict situation, and the sectors into which their activities fall. Pouligny (2005) asserts that, in reality, the designation is not always clear because

“while pretending to work with the local civil society, outsiders actually collaborate with other outsiders—in other words, with themselves” and further complicating the categories (501). Lederach’s (1997) pyramid framework (discussed below) builds on the complexities of this discussion.

Although most of the literature distinguishes between “local,” “state,” and “international” actors, these adjectives “can be problematic” in various settings (Peacebuilding Initiative 2015). One only need imagine the different perspectives possible when considering the participation of a national actor coming from an urban centre to the rural area of conflict to understand that delineating a person as the local or outsider is complex. Different regions will also have different perceptions of these distinctions. Anderson and Olson (2003) prefer the terms “insider” and “outsider” as categories for distinguishing the roles of various actors within a conflict (36). They define insiders as “those vulnerable to the conflict,” living with the experience of the conflict (36). Outsiders are those who have the option to choose whether they become involved in the conflict situation and for how long they are immersed in it. It would seem that this discussion is more appropriately a matter of degrees rather than clear, diagnostic boxes.

Contemporary discourse in this area is prone to evading the distinctions of insider and outside, or between what is political and not (Pouligny 2005, 497). This limits, though, the range of analysis. Bijlert (2014) says about her work in Afghanistan that working with local actors does not necessarily mean that there is legitimacy in their leadership simply by virtue of being local. As well, working with local leaders does not necessarily mean that they are not separate from those in government, nor does it guarantee that they are “easier to deal with and more amenable to peacebuilding” (par. 5). Leaders at the local level can be equally preoccupied with power and patronage and are not untouched by the dynamics complicating the discussions at the national

level. Referring to the Afghan context, the question of whether one views the work as dealing with “war lords” or “tribal leader” is no small consideration in the field. Local politics is contested, complex, and intricately networked and whoever engages in that becomes party to the various competitions. Bijlert’s experience highlights the needs to speak more specifically about who are the local leaders, by whom are they determined, and from whose viewpoint they are being evaluated in order to contemplate the roles they might play.

Ignoring that each situation or context implies this level of complexity in order to understand the roles that various actors can play has the possibility of further exacerbating the conflict or negatively impacting the relationships of people in the region. As noted in chapter one, the understanding of the term “local actor” can impact the range of one’s research and the interviewee’s chosen identity. The term insider in the context of this study does have a number of nuances. Insider, at times, is a Filipino, grounded in peacework seeking to bring out a culture of peace that encompasses the broad range of identities but who is not living in Mindanao. Other insiders might be Mindanaoans who are come from the settler group and still others who are Moros or Lumads living in the area considered for autonomy in the peace negotiation. This is, admittedly, a complex scenario for an exploration of local actors in peacebuilding. Dueck-Read’s (2016) work on border justice speaks of those who are “affected persons” in a particular context and defines them as those whose work “stems from a personal conviction to live and create possibilities for survival” (139). This description is helpful in a context where the passion for peacebuilding work rests on the urgency of the issues for the community from which one is lodged. This study will define the term “local actors” as a way to describe the personally impacted insider perspective in a given conflict scenario and acknowledges that these actors emerge out of a positionality and particular sets of values.

Terminology—civil society

Although this study focuses more on the role and agency of the local actor, a number of interviewees highlighted the interaction with civil society. The literature is vast regarding the various options for civil society (Barnes 2002, 2005, 2006; Burbidge 1997; Cardoso 2003; Clark 2003; Crowther 2001; Diamond & McDonald 1996; Fischer 2006; Oliver 2002; Paffenholz 2010, 2015). Miriam Coronel Ferrer, in her role as Chairperson of the peace panel of the Government of the Philippines in the negotiation with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front during the Aquino administration, stressed that,

civil society, both of the local and maybe those who have more regional or more national character, would be the steady voices that would say “stay on track,” and certainly because of that the government leadership, the executive branch stayed on track.

She views civil society, as that larger entity, as that which pushes the necessary interface between various levels of conversation. It is that encouragement that maintains a “vibrant” society, in her mind.

Barnes (2005) writes extensively on the complexity of the distinguishing markers for civil society. “Every society has its own distinct forms of social organization” and each level is central to the development and well-being of that particular society (7). In the broadest sense of the term, civil society “refers to the web of social relations that exist in the space between the state, the market. . .and the private life of families” (7). These social/political arenas, though, are fluid. Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk (2006) also acknowledge that “civil society” is a complex idea to define. Similarly, to Miriam Coronel-Ferrer’s views, they propose that it is “the arena of voluntary, uncoerced collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values [and is] not a sector on its own but the space between societal sectors” (2). It is in this space that the traditions, values, norms, and networks of people intertwine to create opportunities for

peacebuilding activities focussed on a particular context. As well, “[c]ivil society is independent from the state, but it is oriented toward and interacts closely with the state and the political sphere” (3). Charles Taylor (1990) asserts that “[t]he underlying issue [regarding civil society] is this: what gives a society its identity?” (101). However one describes civil society, it is important to acknowledge that it is fluid—meaning that a society within a society is possible—context-based, and determined by the space that exists for the various state and society identities to interact. And it is within these fluid spaces that the actions of local peacebuilders emerge and are supported.

It is important to note that not only are there individuals at work on peace issues but community organizations that utilize the power of a unified collective to encourage social change. Barnes (2005) indicates that in the challenge to address structural conflict, partnerships with, and between, local organizations are both necessary and pragmatic (12). Given the plethora of organizations it is worth describing the different motivations for engaging in structural change.

Barnes (2005) suggests that there are three types of orientations that motivate civil society organizations (12). The first are the pre-existing organizations that were not created to engage specifically on the conflict in the region. Yet, because they are local actors, they are “compelled to respond to the challenge that conflict and war poses for their constituents” (12-13). The second type is the organizations oriented towards addressing the structural problems through mechanisms such as policy reform and change. The third type emerges specifically to address the conflict of their region and respond in ways to involve civil society.

The Philippine women’s group, WEAct 1325, is an example of Barnes’ second and third categories. This organization was founded with the intention to work on defining the rights of

women as impacted by the peace agreement between the government of the Philippines and the MILF. Nario-Galace (2014), the national coordinator, reports that the organization is focused on both capacity building and consultation. In my interview with her she stressed the “belief also that women have been for a long time neglected, as agency of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, we are helping reinforce that [role].” Their work emphasizes enhancing women’s abilities to engage in decision-making activities as well as ensuring that new laws promote the rights and security of women in conflict areas.

“The ability of nonstate actors to set a compelling agenda” has been a weighty force in garnering international responses to significant regional structural concerns (Barnes 2005, 26). The strength to persuade has been an effective tool for civil society actors. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer related, in conversation, that in times of difficult negotiations she would say: “We need your solutions, not just the general positions that you are espousing also along the way.” So essential was the asset of civil society positioning, in her mind. The UN Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict (2000) makes it clear that civil society organizations are crucial to the reduction of violence and conflict (par. 137). The qualities of significance that civil society organizations bring to the response options towards conflict are: their independence, innovative and creative strategies, ability to act, opportunities for inter-group dialogue, people power, and witness to violations (Barnes 2005, 15-16).

An example of Barnes’ third type of civil society organizations, those addressing a particular issue, is the Philippines’ Bantay Ceasefire team formed in Mindanao to monitor a ceasefire in the conflict between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2003. This began as an unofficial group but, at the same time, “mandated by grassroots people living in conflict areas” (Eviota 2005, 389). Its composition was broad-based

across religious and ethnic lines and provided keen vigilance in order to prevent the outbreak of war. A community need was assessed and a specific plan emerged to address the need. Bantay Ceasefire has modelled the strength of grassroots initiatives and the capacity that can be enhanced through the creation of strong networks, networks that would not have emerged without local initiation and participation.

Although Barnes' (2005) framework of basic types of societal organizations is useful for identifying local actors in a given context, she has not identified the more urgent and responsive aspects to the work in which local actors engage. Local peacebuilders are uniquely positioned for responsive actions to the emerging dynamics. The Bantay Ceasefire volunteers' ceasefire monitoring activities have had significant impact on the local stakeholders—safety and security, increased freedom of movement, and ability to maintain their livelihoods. As a result of their work, the conflict parties have become more cautious in their activities on the ground given the presence of a civilian-led ceasefire monitoring team watching their actions. Local stakeholder conversations can enable the quick emergence of organizations specially designed to respond to the immediate issues at hand. These volunteers often work in the highly conflicted areas and risk their lives in order to hold the conflict actors accountable to the maintenance of a ceasefire. As well, community people have been empowered when realizing that they can do something to prevent the escalation of conflict. They do not need to wait until conflict approaches them, they can respond with the strength of their work (Mindanao People's Caucus 2015). More will be said of this approach in the discussion of research on temporary autonomous zones (Arnold 2014; Bey 1991).

Although various civil society roles have been highlighted, I will stress that porousness is a defining factor in this area. The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, led by

Thania Paffenholz (2015), undertook a three-part study, from 2006-2010, regarding civil society and peacebuilding. The working assumption was that little research had specifically addressed the contributions of civil society in peacebuilding (5). Although it is clear that civil society has great potential in the constructive approaches to peacebuilding, this work is not of a pre-determined type. Paffenholz's study indicates that during different phases of a conflict, different functions and spaces for civil society are necessary (8). Richmond (2011), as well, stresses that each "local" carries its own "contextualities" and significant range of, perhaps, hidden agencies (135). It is important to consider that the definitions of local actors will change within each context and culture, making uniform descriptions and requirements impossible to proclaim.

Given that civil society activities are strongly associated with the development and nurturing of intersectionalities and analysis of spaces that can provide possibilities for action, the potential range is immense, and can include community-based organizations (CBOs), religious leaders, student groups, women's groups, revolutionary societies, professional bodies, and more. In the space of this variety of engagement, Barnes' (2005) assessment is that civil society rose to greater prominence through the efforts of international NGOs during times in which donor agencies were employed to assist in the economic development of fragile regions, which could be nations, states, communities, or villages (8). There is little doubt that international NGOs have contributed to the strengthening of the civil society in many context, but I would say, in my standpoint on the Philippine context, that this point of view simplifies and underrates numerous examples in which communities built their own capacities.

It is limiting, and paternalistic, to highlight that NGOs have played the key role in the current prominence of civil society discussion. Jobb Arnold (2014) asserts that civil society is always under great pressure, post-conflict, to define its role within the new reality and,

importantly, that it will naturally seek out different roles with different networks in each context for the sake of survival and resiliency (35). Within the context of research, it is important to remain mindful that the lenses utilized, or prominence given, for the analysis of contributions will shape the nature of the discourse. There is growing literature indicating that peace processes that do not include the local sectors will not be sustainable. Although the civil society landscape can be ever evolving, moving target or not, it must remain that on which we maintain our sights.

Lederach's Levels of Leadership

Lederach's (1997) pyramid of actors, as one lens of analysis, provides a framework to identify local actors and assess networking potentials. Although not all local groups can accomplish all of the needs, it is important to identify the aspects necessary and nurture the assets available. These levels of leadership, or pyramid of actors, highlight three levels of leadership for peacebuilding: top, middle, and grassroots. Lederach's framework views strength in vertical networking between the different levels of leadership and horizontally among the members of the same level. In this way, coordination and stronger possibilities emerge for any given situation.

Richmond (2005) asserts that Lederach has "made one of the most important theoretical contributions to the peacebuilding debate" for the reason of highlighting who local actors are and the roles for local actors towards a particular "construction" of peace (103). It is Lederach's work that has paved the way for the "development of multidimensional peace operations" and diverse discourses on peacebuilding mechanisms (105).

The pyramid base represents the greatest population and includes grassroots leaders such as community leaders, local leaders, and community developers who are immersed within the experiences and challenges of grassroots people and have direct experience with the animosities

that are a part of conflict. The middle section represents community/ethnic/religious leaders, academics, and humanitarian leaders—people with visibility and influence in addition to networks that can link either to the top level or to the grassroots. They have a great deal of flexibility in how they might operate. The top level represents the fewest people and includes military/political/religious leaders with high visibility.

The pyramid model highlights the variety of actors representing affected populations that could be considered local, the range of peacebuilding methods possible depending on the need and context, and it can add depth to the discussions regarding peacebuilding strategies. Although local actors are impacted by external dynamics, and co-operation with other sectors is valued, they are sufficient in their abilities to interact with the possibilities for their regions out of their knowledge of the context. A Philippine strength in peacebuilding is the positive orientation to networking and its assets.

Peacebuilding

Defining peace and peacebuilding

The ranges in defining peace

There are multiple competing agendas and questions within conflict impacted regions and given that “the answers will, to a large extent, determine what sorts of intervention we design,” the exploration regarding a definition of peace is a valuable precursor to the discussion of specific peacebuilding methodologies for local actors (Cheldelin et al. 2008, 15). The literature reveals a complex discussion pertaining to the locus of interactions of peacebuilding discourse and variations on the designations for the word peace (Boulding 2000; Bouta, Kadayifci-Orellana & Abu-Nimer 2005; Covey, Dziedzic, & Hawley 2005; Darby & Mac Ginty 2008; de

Rivera 2009; Does 2013; Haider 2009; Hilhorst & van Leeuwen 2005; Hofmann & Schneckener 2009; Lederach 1995, 1997; Mac Ginty 2006, 2011; Richmond 2004, 2005; Schirch 2005, 2008; Sampson, Abu-Nimer, Liebler & Whitney 2003). Definitions tend to follow and indicate a predisposition to certain worldviews and ideologies.

Rupert Ross (2014), a Canadian non-aboriginal lawyer, writes, in *Indigenous Healing: Exploring Traditional Paths*, of the challenges of linking deeply to an indigenous worldview. He discovers that “the real essence. . . lay in what was going on *between* things” (8). So it has been in my work in the Philippines, building my understanding of a people who live their lives collectively and seek to escape the pre-determinations of a colonial legacy. This highlights the necessity to understand what is meant when people talk of peace and the ensuing strategies for building that peace.

This section will review the ranges of perspectives in the current literature in regard to defining peace. Peacebuilding work needs to be built around mutual understandings of peace and approaches must be grounded on the realities at hand. The work of Johan Galtung, Adam Curle, John Paul Lederach, Oliver P. Richmond, Jason Franks, Robert Ricigliano, Ho-Won Jeong, and Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl will be examined.

In April 2013 I received a research grant from a small faith-based development and peace focused North American NGO, with significant experience in Israel/Palestine, to assess lessons learned regarding peacebuilding in the Israel/Palestine context and compare effective peacebuilding approaches in different parts of the world (Kroeker 2015). The main objective was to undertake interviews with current and past partners in order to gather research and perspectives regarding the contribution or impact of international NGOs on the efforts of

peacebuilding in conflict contexts and to glean insight into the NGO's approach to peacebuilding as it pertained to local partnerships.

The common theme among those interviewed was that international NGOs, indeed, have become significant participants in the peacebuilding landscape of Israel/Palestine. As well, the way in which the international NGOs define peace and approach peacebuilding activities has impacted the work of local NGOs and the nature of peace in the region. The local Palestinian organizational leaders asserted that the NGO perspectives on peace strongly shaped the peacebuilding activities engaged in in the region. They recognized a dissonance between the operating principles of the international NGOs and those of the local organizations in the region, highlighting that "how one defines peace shapes the responses and options of the parties" (Kroeker 2015, 218). This dissonance, they asserted, was creating "a failure to conceptualise and critically interrogate key notions at the heart of peacemaking processes" (Mac Ginty 2006, 6)

Oliver P. Richmond and Jason Franks (2009) assert that in order to determine the range of peacebuilding activities it is imperative to articulate the type of peace being sought (1). The question of the nature of the peace being sought not only needs to be explored in order to determine the direction of peacebuilding interventions but as a vehicle, as well, for acknowledging the significance of the subject point and social location within the discourse. Much research has been done on the tactics of war; accordingly, "systematic inquiries into peace are rare and unsurprisingly there is an inadequate understanding of the contemporary conceptualisation of peace" (1). The implication is that time and energy must be spent considering the direction of one's efforts towards peace in order to achieve peace that is sustainable.

Peace is commonly assumed to be attained through the work of international/third party actors focused on building good governance and institutions (Hauss 2001). The framework for these endeavours is drawn from “the epistemic knowledge systems and communities that liberalism supplies” and often becomes the foundation for the distribution of power and rights for a select group (Richmond and Franks 2009, 6). Given the introduction of these complexities, it is important, Richmond portends, to consider both the kind of peace sought and which actors need to be incorporated into the various peacebuilding processes.

It is remains difficult to define what peace is and “who creates and promotes it and who peace is for” (Richmond 2005, 15). Peace is situated in a particular time and context and, as such, can’t be “assumed to be monolithic and universal” (16). The contemplation of cultural, economic, political and social conditions is required when considering the focus of the needed peace. Is peace the product of some “form of hegemony” or built through social, political, or economic pursuits (67)? Does peacebuilding work imply that there was peace in the past and that it only needs to be restored (92)?

The emergence of Galtung’s work on peace asserted that intricately linked to the discussion of peace was the role of violence. Galtung views peace as having two faces: negative peace and positive peace (Galtung 1969; Galtung 1996). Simply put, negative peace is the absence of violence. Positive peace is oriented to social justice. Galtung’s basic premise is that “[t]o work for peace is to work against violence” in its varied forms, from overt to covert, latent to manifest, and intra/inter-group to institutional (Galtung, Fischer, and Brand-Jacobsen 2000, xiii). Peace work requires analyzing the causes of the violence and actions of prevention of that violence in order to achieve peace. Galtung is emphatic that the discussion of peace needs to be linked to the discussion of violence.

Curle's (1971) definition of peace articulates the importance of building relationships. Curle is sympathetic to Galtung's analysis and definitions of positive peace in that the absence of violence is not a sufficient criterion on its own to define peace. The containment of a conflict is not sufficient to pronounce that peace is present, negative peace is not a stable peace. Curle views peace as "making changes to relationships so that they may be brought to a point where development can occur" (15). Yet, can that point, when reached, be deemed peace? Foundational to the work towards achieving peace is the requirement that this entails working towards significant change in the dynamics of the relationships within the conflict situation. Curle (1990) utilizes the distinction of peaceful and unpeaceful relations towards that goal (22). Peaceful relationships, for Curle, are characterized by whether the participants are doing "more harm than good" (22). How does one assess the "tipping point" from harm to good? Curle attests that the work of peace requires a focus on transformation. The work of transformation, if it is to be sustainable, though, needs to consider the role of power within the conflict dynamics. Processes seeking to be transformational can be recognized by the orientation of seeking out the roots of the violence on both personal and structural levels. Curle's definitions are significant. Yet, one must ponder who defines the terms and what the markers are for evaluating the effectiveness of the relationship building.

Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl (2013), in *Rethinking Peacebuilding*, consider whether the focus of peacebuilding is only the two-pronged efforts of achieving either positive or negative peace (1). Peace is a fluid, context based, value laden term and "very little effort is expended upon conceptualizing the essential qualities of peace" (Richmond 2004, 136). Is it possible to direct peacebuilding efforts without thinking about the kind of peace that is sought? Aggestam and Björkdahl's (2013) assessment is that peacebuilding is under critique precisely

because there is a lack of clarity over “the kind of peace that is promoted and whom the peace serves” (197). Aggestam and Björkdahl’s concern is that there is an absence of the mention of justice. The “interplay” between peace and justice is required in order to attain a doable and sustainable peace (1). One or the other will not be sufficient for building sustainable peace.

Determining the presence of peace and justice is challenging. In addition to the linking of peace and justice it is valuable to acknowledge which viewpoint is utilized to assess the existence of peace and justice. Any discussion of peace needs to consider which voices have been provided the power to be heard within the analysis of the situation. Michel Foucault (1972), in his “Discourse on Language,” pondered the challenges of speaking into a context and acknowledged that one’s every choice of word is an indicator of the perspective from which one comes:

I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality (216).

Foucault’s perspective is significant for this discussion because of the observation that there are systemic “rules” indicating what’s in and what’s out, what can be said and what cannot (216).

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin’s (2000) work asserts that “[i]t is through discourse itself that the world is brought into being,” indicating that the language used plays a large role in the emergence of practice (62). Discourse becomes important because it “joins power and knowledge together” allowing some to have power to control what is known (63). This is often the approach in which local actors are excluded from decision making in their conflict situations by international actors. Actors who are not attuned to the local political realities can simply create a new set of unjust systems.

Lederach (1997) views peace as oriented towards harmony and well-being within a group of people (28). The conflict affected communities with whom he has worked stress that peace cannot be “just for a few;” if peace is not pervasive it is only a mirage (28). Lederach’s fundamental goal in regard to creating peace in conflict affected contexts is creating space for the possibility of reconciliation (25). He conceptualizes peace as a sustainable form of reconciliation and, like Curle, sees building relationships as the first priority in the work of restoring broken communities. Reconciliation requires an encounter between people. Peace is retained as a possibility when people have the opportunity to express their needs and tell their stories. Reconciliation requires creativity and the ability to look outside of the normal confines of political traditions. Although Lederach’s work implies the need for justice and legitimacy within the reconciliation process, structural change cannot occur without attention to the larger power dynamics. The relational focus is significant yet without structural analysis and change, barriers to authentic relationships will linger.

Ho-Won Jeong (2005) begins his introductory book, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, with the purpose of re-conceptualizing the meanings of peace from the content of conventional worldviews (2). He asserts that what is essential is that an examination of approaches takes place that will adequately deal with the questions that local actors have, such as how to combat poverty, oppression, and marginalization in today’s world. Jeong acknowledges, though, that the diversity of approaches to peace creates a challenge and, as well, that “the concepts of peace have been rich in content across various religious and philosophical traditions” (7). There is much to learn from tracing ideas from eastern religions and inner peace; to indigenous approaches and attention to nature (8). Understanding the context and aspirations of a particular situation reveals essential new layers of complexity for contemplating the meaning of peace.

Given the diversity of the visions of peace, it is of no surprise that the definitions of peace also span a wide spectrum of thought. Finding some direction on this plane is significant and, for Jeong, peace must be rooted in the search to create a nonviolent world (19). His vision of the nonviolent world requires an honest grappling with the conventional approaches to violence.

The literature on definitions of peace highlights the importance of acknowledging that perceptions of peace strongly influence the decisions regarding the ways in which peace is pursued. The ambiguities and challenges in defining peace are both great and wide (Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell, & Sitea 2007). There isn't room for naïveté in the task of defining peace for contexts of conflict. The layers are complex and the stakes, in today's world, for achieving peace are high. Transparency regarding structural violence dynamics as impacted by power, class, resources, and legitimacy, to name a few, is a significant aspect within the exploration of peace.

To arrive at conceptions of peace helpful to the work of peacebuilding it is essential to think beyond confined definitions of terms. This study considers it essential to consider the role of justice, attend to issues of violence, commitment to nonviolence, recognize orientations to power, notice the nature of relationships, and discern which contexts and whose voices are present in the discourse. The landscape of definitions on peace is immense and the focus for this study is that grounding the work of peacebuilding in the worldviews of the local actors is essential to sustaining hopes for the peacebuilding endeavour.

Variations in Defining Peacebuilding

Clarity regarding perceptions of peace and its diversity can provide a beneficial foundation for the creation of peacebuilding mechanisms and directions. This discourse has been strongly shaped by the liberal peace and statebuilding perspectives which will receive specific consideration in the following section. As well, civil society agency and alternative movements

have emerged as significant drivers in the peacebuilding field. The review of roles for local actors in peacebuilding will follow these discussions.

This section reviews the history of the emergence of a specific peacebuilding discourse and its ensuing debates via the work of Galtung and the concept of positive peace; the impact of Boutros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace* and the emergence of international roles in peacebuilding; Lisa Schirch's work regarding questions to be asked of peacebuilding; John Paul Lederach's focus on complexity and the lenses for peacebuilding; Elisabeth King and Robert O. Matthews on whether peacebuilding seen as a slate of activities is useful; and the work of Jobb Arnold (2014) on the need for peacebuilding work to be viewed as having potential for disrupting the *status quo* as a way to create new possibilities. The purpose of this exploration is expand the depth with which to interact with the case study and the creative work of the peacebuilders within that context.

Thushara Dibley's (2014) analysis of Galtung's contribution to peacebuilding situates his work on positive peace as the foundation for contemplating "how structures of power contributed to the development of violence" (4). The notion that positive peace requires the analysis of structural violence and social injustice became the locus for his concept of peacebuilding methods and "reflections on the mechanisms needed to end violent conflict" (4). In Galtung's view, at the most basic level of analysis, is that peacebuilding must address structural violence.

Similarly, Paffenholz (2010) indicates that "peacebuilding is essentially the process of achieving peace" (44). Schirch (2008) highlights that the peacebuilding definition runs a spectrum from focusing on specific post conflict activities to broad analysis of the stages of conflict (4). Over time communities have developed mechanisms to work with the conflicts of their contexts, be it through elder councils or organized dialogues (Paffenholz 2010, 45).

Paffenholz's view of the development of the peacebuilding field is that in the wakes of World War I and II, nation states and organizations participated as the main contributors to the activities of peacebuilding. The formal peace research field began to emerge in the 1960s. Galtung's 1975 essay, "Three Approaches to Peace," was the first usage of the term peacebuilding (Paffenholz 2010, 45; Galtung 1975). The term peacebuilding addressed Galtung's assessment of the need for structural violence to be addressed in order for peace to be achieved.

According to many observers, it was Boutros-Ghali's 1992 definition of peacebuilding in *An Agenda for Peace* as the "construction of a new environment" for peacebuilding activities by creating new angles with which to view the activities of state-oriented conflict interventionists and popularized the use of the term peacebuilding (Boutros-Ghali 1992, p 16, par 57; Smith 2004, 19). Boutros-Ghali's attention to peacebuilding emerged out of a realization that war and conflict events created a legacy of destroyed infrastructures and relationships. Early peacebuilding perspectives envisioned states to move from a place of negative peace to positive peace by seeking out deeper approaches to social, political, and economical issues. Boutros-Ghali's report contextualized peacebuilding as a post-conflict strategy and framework for nation state activities. Peacebuilding activities from this definition emerged, for example, as "disarming, destroying weapons, repatriating refugees, training security forces, monitoring elections, and advancing the protection of human rights" (Paffenholz 2010, 45-46). Paffenholz's (2010) assessment of the legacy of this document is that peacebuilding became focused on shorter term measures without an eye to longer term needs to sustain peace (46). Peacekeeping became intertwined with state oriented peacebuilding activities, influenced by a discourse of peace lodged within the liberal democratic peace camp.

The peacebuilding field has continued to develop dramatically in terms of scholarship and practice (Zelizer and Rubenstein 2009, 2). It refers to numerous tools, methods and time frames. Peacebuilding work can encompass multi-country missions or grassroots women's organizations conducting mediation trainings. Peacebuilding work is also transformational revolutions, such as Arab Spring and Idle No More. The range of discourse in peacebuilding also includes a discussion of appropriate stakeholders, use of military forces, role of international interveners, good governance, or impacts of community capacity building. The voices engaged in this discussion are varied by context and social location.

Schirch (2008) asks whether “peace is something to be kept, made or built?” (1). Her work in strategic peacebuilding began with her interactions with her students, people coming from a wide range of conflict contexts. She defines peacebuilding as that which “seeks to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest” (9). Peacebuilding becomes strategic upon the recognition of the complexity of the tasks required to build peace. Kevin Clements (2004) views strategic peacebuilding as requiring “higher levels of collaboration” (14). What does collaboration imply? Who will be privileged in the process of this coordination? What voices will be part of that process? Is this a network or centralized leadership? Clements asserts that civil society stakeholders are a vital part of the process, along with development and conflict resolution experts (14). Peacebuilding is strategic when the complexities of the situation are acknowledged and steps are taken to ensure the best potential for sustainable activities. Overarching issues regarding the role of power and de-colonial thinking are also crucial to substantive conversations regarding sustainable peacebuilding.

Dan Smith (2004) asserts that “[c]onceptually, the term ‘peacebuilding’ offered the opportunity to make a new start and not simply return to a dangerous *status quo ante*” (19). The Boutros-Ghali framework dominated the peacebuilding discourse for most of the 1990s and in the process guided states in monitoring peace processes and agreements as ways to make those new starts. The UN struggled with the concept of peacebuilding after the genocide in Rwanda. The Brahimi Report 2000 was written to acknowledge these peacebuilding shortcomings and used the term “peacebuilding” as realistic activities “building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war” (19-20). Most of this discussion viewed peacebuilding as a post-conflict activity.

In contrast to the UN Secretary-General report, Lederach (1997) asserts that peacebuilding needs to be more than “postaccord reconstruction” and views peacebuilding as that which utilizes all possible processes in order to transform conflict and move towards peaceful relationships. This approach frames peacebuilding as a “dynamic social construct” (20). Lederach outlines an integrated framework for constructing peace in situations of armed conflict and presents “analytical lenses” to “address structural issues, social dynamics of relationship building, and the development of a supportive infrastructure for peace” to create a comprehensive approach (21). Peacebuilding must be grounded in current realities and articulated by a range of voices and players and be oriented towards building relationships. It is essential to develop the capabilities to address and recognize conflict at early stages. In 2001, the UN Security Council withdrew chronological elements and recognized that peacebuilding “is aimed at preventing the outbreak, the recurrence or continuation of armed conflict” (UN Security Council Statement, 1). This signalled the importance of a long-term approach to peacebuilding

within the United Nations and marked a significant shift in global efforts at peacebuilding (Smith 2004, 20).

Christine Chinkin and Hilary Charlesworth (2006) highlight that peacebuilding has become “a major industry in international institutions” (937). Many NGOs have transitioned from the work of maintaining ceasefires to constructing peaceful communities post conflict. Although the mainstream view is that these are valuable endeavours, some circles dismiss this as “social work” and “neocolonialist impositions” that set up Western definitions of modernization (937). A lack of local actors will certainly entrench this approach as such. In order for humanitarian NGOs to “realise their well intentioned and altruistic aspirations” there is a great need to have coordinated strategies linked to levels to the different levels of leadership, i.e. Tracks I, II, III” (Clements 2004, 13). To move beyond an industrial model, the challenge is to find ways to share analyses and build greater synergies between all peacebuilding actors.

How then is peacebuilding to be defined? Although it can be understood as a slate of activities seeking to reduce the violence of a particular context, Elisabeth King and Robert O. Matthews (2012) question the usefulness of that framework. Framing peacebuilding work as activities “can sometimes lead to conflictual outcomes” (278). Kenneth Bush (2004) highlights that oftentimes activities are decided upon as “blueprints that meet Northern specifications” instead of emerging out of a critical examination of the context (24). The challenge in peacebuilding is to move away from creating solutions to creating possibilities and opportunities. It might be useful to speak of “peacebuilding as an impact rather than a specific set of activities” (King and Matthews 2012, 277). It’s obvious that there are numerous nuances of which to be mindful.

These opportunities and impacts, though, require the freedom to be defined broadly. Arnold (2014) writes of the concept of temporary autonomous zones (TAZs) as temporary moments that allow for social experimentation and disruption of the status quo—that can “allow for the creation of compelling alternatives that tap into local cultural discourse” and empower local actors for new tasks and perspectives (60). This approach to peacebuilding permits actors, especially local actors who know the context, to focus intently on the opportunities for peacebuilding that present themselves in a particular moment and context and to add a deliberate responsiveness to their plans. As well, this provides opportunities for participants in the conflict space to offer support to each other in these spaces in order to enable new activities to emerge.

Peacebuilding has emerged as a well-used term to encompass a number of stages and activities undertaken in conflict situations. It is a set of activities carried out by actors from a variety of contexts, perspectives, and levels of power and privilege. Peacebuilding work can include short or long-term endeavours; be exercised before, during, and after a conflict; and involve a variety of actors and stakeholders. It is clear that peacebuilding efforts can greatly impact the identities, structures, and futures of the conflict affected communities. Aggestam and Björkdahl’s (2013) evaluation is that the significant question for peacebuilding is whether it can contribute to “profound change, greater justice and well-being” (204). Schirch (2008) asserts that the integrity of peacebuilding is linked to the discussion of roots causes and sustainable peace (15). Thus, the peacebuilding discussion would indicate that well-being is a value laden term and dependent on whose perspective is dominant within the evaluative process. This study works with a context sensitive definition asserting that without a broad range of stakeholders involved peacebuilding impact will be limited. Local actors need to emerge as prime contributors to perspectives essential for sustainable peace platforms.

Challenges for Peacebuilding

Necla Tschirgi and Cedric de Coning's (2015) assessment of twenty years of peacebuilding is that "The Nature of Conflict is Constantly Changing as Should Peacebuilding" (4). Despite many lessons learned, the peacebuilding results via international assistance "remain[s] quite fragile and, at best, mixed" (4). While it has become apparent that peace processes need to be multi-faceted, "anchor[ing] within local structures" is essential (4). There is now a "vast literature" existent that critiques the liberal peace proposal and its intentions (Stamnes 2010, 4; Keating & Knight 2004). Although there is diversity in this literature, in short, it highlights the need for concentrated focus towards the role of local knowledge and participation.

The previous discussion has highlighted the value of utilizing a broad range of methods and inclusion of participants for effective peacebuilding. Although there is a range of perspectives regarding peacebuilding, the liberal peace framework has emerged as the "dominant approach to peacebuilding since the 1990s. . .and is based on the premise that democratization and the liberalization of the economy are integral to building sustainable peace" (Dibley 2014, 7). It focuses on the building of institutions and the development of robust economic policies. As influential as this framework is, and remains to be, it is important to realize that it is currently under pressure to reflect upon its impact and ability to respond to the needs in conflict regions. Post-Cold War the belief within the sector of influential Western actors was that the liberal democratic peace and its economic liberalism "offered a panacea to the social, political, and economic woes of war-torn nations" (Thiessen 2014, 27). Chuck Thiessen (2014) asserts, rather, that "hindsight has revealed significant challenges in most reconstruction efforts" that utilized

such strategies (27). This observation begs the evaluation of assumptions and a commitment to strategies effective in relieving the dire consequences of violent conflict.

Donais (2009) asserts that if one desires to understand the connection between local actors and peacebuilding that most important is “first and foremost, acknowledging [that there exists] at least two competing visions of peacebuilding. The first of these, which has in recent years come to be known as the liberal peace” (5). The vision of the liberal peace is that “liberals see local ownership emerging out of a commitment by local actors to take ownership over a largely predetermined vision of peacebuilding” focused on building strong institutions and democracies in contrast to “communitarian” approaches emphasizing local design in the structures that emerge (6).

This framework’s foundation is undergirded by the idea that liberal or democratic states are stable and will not go to war with each other (Gat 2005, 73). Thus, building strong states becomes the central focus for peacebuilding work. The key actors have been international states and organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. The implication of this framework for developing peacebuilding mechanisms is that the contributions of local actors in the field are not at the forefront. The challenge of this conversation is that it encompasses building a “bridge from theorising peacebuilding to studying peacebuilding practices” (Schneckener 2016, 8). Donais’ (2009) articulation of the second vision for peacebuilding, though, “is associated with what has come to be known as peacebuilding from below” (6). How one engages in this conversation is paramount (Oda 2007).

Mac Ginty (2016) asserts that one needs to tread cautiously within the conversation while acknowledging the “power to impose narrative frames on others” (194). The term local is socially constructed and has “great value” attached to it, providing opportunities to justify and

direct the strategies ensuing from its use (196). J. Ann Tickner (2005) highlights, for researchers, that one “should [be mindful to] pose a question that is ‘important’ in the ‘real world’” (5). It is essential to avoid the temptations of simplistic binaries in the face of complex and urgent issues. This discourse displays the discomfort and tension that needs to exist within relationships where a power differential is intrinsic. Mac Ginty (2016) asserts that the term local “is often left uninterrogated” (202). This vagueness allows for those with greater power to construct the parameters of what the local means.

Paffenholz (2016) frames the complexities of the local peacebuilding discourse as an analysis of the “local turn” history (211). Rather than a discussion of “the local” it nuances the idea of changes in direction and emphasis. She cites two periods of “local turns,” the first beginning in the 1990s (211). This first period focuses on capacity building. Lederach’s (1997) work on actors and agency is an example of the first turn. The second could be described in terms of “resistance against the hegemonic international liberal actor” and framed in distinct binaries (214). Much of this work focuses on the failure of the liberal peace.

Schirch’s (2008) work suggests that a distinction is required between liberal peace and statebuilding and peacebuilding activities. Mac Ginty’s (2011) theory of hybridity seeks to address concerns of balance and creating space for alternative voices. Richmond’s (2009) introduction to *Liberal Peace Transitions* highlights the increasing integration between the peacebuilding and statebuilding endeavours since the 1990s (1). The notion of “peace-as-governance” is based on a context in which a liberal state provides the framework, and much of the activities, for the creation of peace at local and state levels, mostly through institution building to the exclusion of local actors. This has become a common form of peace as applied by

international actors. This peace-as-governance framework focuses on the institutions of a state as the basis for the construction of what is termed “the liberal peace.”

Liberal peace efforts have had their successes. It does provide the capabilities to build, and maintain, ceasefires that bring immense relief to war torn communities. Influential third parties have the status to urge parties to sit at the negotiation table. It encourages analysis and critique of the many possibilities for the road to peace. Yet, it has framed its success on the skills of third party interveners to the exclusion, or minimization, of local actors.

Are there ways to enhance the contributions of the liberal peace? Does it have a role in today’s context that has seen many local actors—think Arab Spring and Idle No More—rebel against the exclusionary practices of external states and organizations? Mac Ginty (2006) suggests that the approach can be enhanced through attention to ten propositions. These range from implementing review mechanisms, working on trust, highlighting the dangers of a stalled process, reviewing the definition of peace, being mindful of public expectations, protecting local economies, working with indigenous traditions, creating broad ownership, realizing that third parties need to be supporters not leaders of the process, to acknowledging that a bad deal should be rejected. The basis for these suggestions is Mac Ginty’s view that peace is something to be facilitated rather than executed and that facilitation can come from a number of different sectors.

As the liberal peace activities developed, a shift emerged regarding how peace was perceived. Woodrow Wilson’s idea that peace is the ideal form to pursue has transformed into a discussion of how peace can be created through “correct methods and formulations” (Richmond 2004, 49). The working assumption is that if adequate methods and activities can be discovered and ascertained, peace will be within grasp. Aggestam and Björkdahl’s (2013) critique is that the international actors “tend to separate the implementation of peace” merely into activities as

simply technical methods without integration into wider political questions and participation (202). Their view is that instability can be created with this approach by leaving institutions empty of the structural analysis to provide sustainable measures.

In the eagerness to transfer knowledge and ideas into the new post-conflict situation, international actors, including NGOs, have at times overlooked the needs and rights of those from the local context. This conservative model begins from the point of security for the region and “assumption of technical superiority” by the third parties (Richmond and Franks 2009, 8). This creates pressure in the local context to adopt the methods and, in effect, the values of the international actors. Those who have refused the take on the liberal peace approach have been “excluded economically and politically from the peace process” (9). Consequently, peacebuilding has been reduced to “a process where establishing democracy, human rights and the market are seen as the ultimate goal” (9). The focus established does articulate a peace agenda but from the perspective of negative peace rather than the sustainability oriented positive peace.

The liberal peace agenda did emerge as an approach to resolve the aftermaths of violent conflict. Schirch (2013) highlights that peacebuilding must be an “overarching concept” in order to have a chance at effectiveness (10). Effectiveness, though, begins with the acknowledgement that peacebuilding methods require a distinction “from traditional development and security efforts” and must be overarching (10). That is, efforts must go beyond simply instrumental measures and seek out meaningful dynamics that move us beyond hegemonic narratives on the road to sustainable peace.

This section briefly describes the intents of the liberal peace approach dominant in many peacebuilding sectors and activities. Weak states have resulted from the establishment of the

liberal peace and steps need to be taken to address the shortcomings of the approach or even to move into other frameworks. Patrick M. Regan (2002) stresses that an important element of effective intervention strategies is understanding that there are consequences to how conflicts are managed. It is clear that peacebuilding approaches emerge from within various philosophical and political/social agendas and locations that translate into various choices for intervention. Regan's research indicates that if the solutions focus exclusively on military or economic forms of intervention, the "conflicts appear to be not only ineffectively managed, but the interventions themselves also appear to prolong the conflict" (72). His research concludes with the suggestion that the working assumptions of liberal peace require rethinking.

To conclude, the diagnosis of conflict situations needs to be deliberate and multi-faceted and the approaches to peacebuilding require reflection regarding the intentions and perspectives to ensure constructive and sustainable possibilities. Conflict "arises in different contexts. . . occurs at [many] levels. . . [and] exists when incompatible goals develop between persons, groups, or nations" (Byrne 2011, 3). This section, focussing on the liberal peace approach and its implications, suggests that privileging the work of international actors and the state diminishes the possibilities for effective peacebuilding work by neglecting comprehensive approaches utilizing a broad range of approaches and voices. As well, it requires an inclusion that moves beyond a simple romanticism to one with a depth of relationship and respect. Without an adequate diagnostic framework for the analysis of conflict, the intervention tools and techniques are at risk of not being sustainable or constructive for the parties involved or of not achieving a significant level of transformation. Given that one of the key challenges for, and critique of, the liberal peace approach regards the inclusion of local actors, the next section will focus on local actor roles and their abilities to enhance peacebuilding efforts.

Roles for local actors

Introduction

Given the historical development of peacebuilding, discussing space for local actors requires rethinking on many levels and for many participants in peacebuilding efforts. This section will seek to reveal the complexity of approaches and discourses in regard to local actor participation in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a complex task that requires analysis of the context at the level of root causes and indicates that a creativity that looks beyond surface structures for its answers is imperative. Colonial and postcolonial theorists have created new space for the discussion surrounding the impacts of oppression, the breakdown of cultures and communities, and both structural and direct violence.

Certainly, international NGOs have brought forth spaces in which local actors could contribute to the well-being of their own localities. Yet, to say that it is the NGOs that have brought civil society to their prominence borders on imperialist thinking. If the peacebuilding field is to take seriously the contributions of local actors, it must be done within a context where de-colonizing thinking is a requisite part of the discourse. Local actors can create the space for others to join them in peacebuilding activities; it is not simply a matter of space being created for local actors. Horvath (1972) views colonialism as a “form of exploitation” with areas of emphasis being on economic and culture-change variables (46). Spivak’s (1988) essay, “Can the subaltern speak?” pushed forward new voices for difficult topics. To create shifts in thinking encompasses examining the impacts of “colonialism, listening to communities and communicating, educating themselves and the mainstream society, and developing specific” strategies for ensuring the substantiality of the change work (Cooper 2009-2010, 40). This is

difficult work and requires unflinching reflection. All roles in peacebuilding would benefit from the participation and leadership of local actors.

To commence work on this issue requires a thorough examination of the structures of our societies. Chinkin (1988) proposes that the examination begin with an exploration regarding the meaning of “the people” and the question of self-determination for whom. The continued silencing—often the space in which trauma lies—of a particular sector of society fundamentally contradicts the goal of community (or national) well-being. Clements (2004) proposes that a specialization audit is conducted to determine the specializations that stakeholders can bring to the peacebuilding efforts and thereby ensure complementary efforts are utilized (18).

Van Tongeren’s (1999; 2005) books *People Building Peace* and *People Building Peace II* focused on the same conclusion through the examination of successful stories from civil society regarding responses to conflict stressing that “peacebuilding from below” is a necessary part of the success for the actualization of peace processes (van Tongeren 2005, 1). There is considerable literature within the scholarly world regarding “Track One” interventions but a dearth of writing that highlights the roles and opportunities for civil society to play. Van Tongeren holds strongly to the belief that civil society actors should be seen as “a necessary and irreplaceable complement to the activities” of Track One actors within conflict situations and the work of peacebuilding (2). This section will examine the research of various peacebuilding scholars and practitioners, as well as examples from the work of local actors as a way to draw conclusions regarding the roles for local actors in peacebuilding.

Opening: Diversity of local roles

The roles for local actors are almost limitless. Conflict has different phases and individuals and community organizations can play numerous diverse roles in each phase of a

conflict. These can range “from early warning at the start to mediation when a conflict is already going on and awareness-raising in a post-conflict situation, to prevent the same from happening again” (van Tongeren and van Empel, 2007, 7). Roles range in type with the severity of the conflict and the level of violence present. The variation is also impacted by the relationship that the actors have with government. Peacebuilding roles can range from cooperation with other sectors, to resistant, and/or independent of other actors.

Philippine journalist Carolyn O. Arguillas (2003) likens locally-driven peace initiatives in Mindanao to a “jigsaw of sectoral responses, including religious leaders, the media, women and indigenous communities, among others. With their different agendas and styles, they continue to act both individually and collectively in the struggle for peace” (12). The varieties of demands for peace are demonstrated in multiple forms in the many phases of conflict existent in Mindanao. She describes:

They are proclaimed in the usual chants and placards during street protests against the war and in the Women In White’s 40-day, hour-long, noontime silent protest in front of malls and in major streets in Davao City. They are expressed in the peace caravans travelling from Davao City to Cotabato City. They are delivered in sermons from the pulpits of Christian and Islamic places of worship and in the pastoral letters of Bishops. . . While Mindanao-wide groups were initiating forums, fact-finding missions and lobbying work, peacebuilding activities have also continued at the grassroots, away from the glare of television cameras. In the past, communities already weary from the ravages of the conflict between government forces and the communist New People’s Army (NPA) created their people-initiated responses called ‘peace zones,’ which first emerged in the Philippines in 1988. While many such areas have become moribund, similar mechanisms, largely based on the same people-initiated and community-based principles of conflict resolution, are slowly gaining ground in the aftermath of recent upsurges in violence. These areas are now referred to as “spaces for peace” (12-13).

Local actor roles are not limited to invitations by international actors. Local actors operate in their own domain as experts on the context and conflict realities. The following sections utilize the reflections of various researchers and practitioners to reveal the myriad possibilities for local initiatives.

Lederach: Integrated Framework

Lederach's development of the integrated framework in 1997 firmly planted the role of local actors within the discussion of peacebuilding efforts and activities. His premise is that the skills and assets of the three levels of leadership (in pyramid of actors) must be integrated with the issues and systems for conflict transformation work. Lederach was influenced by Maire Dugan's (1996) "nested paradigm," which was designed to articulate the interactions between "narrower and broader aspects of conflict resolution and peacebuilding" and provide peacebuilders with concrete ways in which to engage people and ideas within the conflict dynamic (Lederach 1997, 55). The integrated framework emphasizes the need to search for the broader, systemic concerns and to include multiple voices, voices grounded in the type of analysis needed for sustainable peacebuilding. His approach is to integrate the time frames necessary for peacebuilding with an analysis of the types of responses required for substantive peacebuilding, and assess the resources necessary for implementation.

Resources—such as time, finances, human participation, and local wisdom—are required for peacebuilding; unfortunately, oftentimes much more is allocated for war than for peacebuilding. These resources are necessary to "support, implement, and sustain" the efforts towards peacebuilding (Lederach 1997, 87). Decades ago local actors in many conflict ridden areas had a dearth of resources with which to work on conflict reduction. Today, very few actors are without some technological access to information and networks that provide assets for conflict transformation endeavours. The Idle No More and Arab Spring movements illustrate how much can be done with a minimum amount of resources if one, at least, has some technological resources.

Sociocultural resources encompass two dynamics: people and culture. Development agencies and conflict resolution experts have struggled to view people and communities as resources in peacebuilding and not simply as beneficiaries. Middle level actors—local and third part —often have the networks to connect with both the grassroots and the top-level players in order to build bridges. It is important to understand that wisdom already exists in the local communities and that they are not always well served with solutions from the outside. Work must be done to discover those cultural resources. The inclusion of local wisdom as a key resource in peacebuilding creates a platform for ensuring depth in the selection of peacebuilding activities.

Funk: Privileging the local

Funk's (2012) work proposes "privileging the local" in peacebuilding (397). Privileging indicates commitments beyond the traditional confines of previous peacebuilding methods. This assertion acknowledges the un-level ground between the different parties involved in the peacebuilding work. Both theoretical and practical considerations will be required to adequately reflect on the new possibilities that this thinking will encourage. This is not a simple "switch of the button" to move from privileging the voices and work of international third parties to that of local actors. It will be important to ensure that the "privileging" process is not paternalistic in nature or a romanticizing of particular players and their contributions. Peace will need to be viewed as a construct that is a vital local reality, as more than a necessary constraint, and acknowledged that the appropriate role for outside parties will be as supporters and facilitators, not instigators, of the peace. Caution must be exercised in order to avoid forms of cultural imperialism. Lederach's (1995) advocacy for a balance of the prescriptive and the elicitive approaches towards consultations and dialogues in which outsiders have a part would be well

applied within this discussion. Local peacebuilding wisdom holds broad possibilities for enhancing conflict transformation efforts.

Rudy and Leguro: Collaborative Development Project - Philippines

Rudy and Leguro's (2010)—Leguro, a local actor—research and interviews for the CDA Collaborative Learning Project on the Philippines indicated that at the grassroots level local people are now asserting their understanding of their roles in the current peace process (36). Through concerted efforts to create local peace zones and pacts, local actors are finding their voices in their communities. As well, through the process of making their voices louder, through advocacy or through the successes they experience on the ground, they have signalled to local government that their first responsibilities are to be “public servants, not private entrepreneurs” (36). The reduction of violence in the communities can be traced to specific local actor activities and intersection with local government vision.

Mac Ginty and Fitznor: Indigenous practices

Mac Ginty (2008) asserts that indigenous practices, together with western approaches, could serve to strengthen peacebuilding methods by incorporating the “affective dimension of peacemaking” (128-129). This is a multi-layered approach to peacebuilding. Many international organizations have funded indigenous approaches to conflict resolution, even to the point of recreating these approaches and possibly “contaminating. . .diminishing local ownership” (126). Traditional approaches are not static and it is not possible to go back to a pre-colonial moment for the “pure” wisdom of these approaches. Mac Ginty highlights the existent “danger that observers [can] over-homogenize the ‘traditional’” (151). Zartman (2000), in regard to his work in Africa, asserts that “[c]onflict management practices are considered traditional if they have

been practiced for an extended period and have evolved within African societies rather than being the product of external importation” (7). Mac Ginty, similarly, evaluates indigenous approaches as “techniques that are based on long-established practice and local custom” (145-146). Indigenous practices assume time-tested approaches that will enhance the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts.

Fitznor (1998) writes of the daily struggle to assert an aboriginal philosophy while living in the dominant culture. The dominant culture is a difficult context in which to gain recognition of aboriginal perspectives because of the potential for misunderstandings and assumptions. A significant aspect of this is the challenge to communicate through the Western/colonial worldview and the overlay of the Christian religion. The colonization process distorted the Aboriginal perspective, making it difficult to discern within the multiple challenges of indigenous struggles in a colonized context. Aboriginal philosophies are “the ethics of the people, the way people live, and their consciousness of living a way of life” and have much to offer by way of enhancing the decisions towards long term peacebuilding endeavours (26). The aboriginal perspective stresses the integration of the spiritual, one’s behaviour, the past and the future, and the environment. Fitznor asserts that the work for change must take place in a context that recognizes the impacts of colonization, the loss of language, and policies—for Canadians—such as the residential schools. This is de-colonizing work and needs to take place on the part of both local and external actors.

Anderson: the relationship between NGOs and local actors

International NGOs have become a large part of international peacebuilding efforts and have a strong impact on the roles that local actors take in peacebuilding, given the oftentimes close relationships with partner organizations. Anderson (1999) approaches the question of local

actors and peacebuilding from the viewpoint of the international NGO by stating that aid efforts “should not feed into and exacerbate the conflict” (7). Anderson has observed the increasing NGO participation in the international agenda of modernization and assistance without consideration of the impacts that this might bring to the context or the new status quo that it might instill. “NGOs must be clearly on the side of those who are poor and marginalized, those against whom societies discriminate, and their aid must support systemic change toward justice rather than simply keep people alive to continue to live in situations of injustice” (7). It will be important to maintain the monitoring of this orientation.

Yet, NGOs have often fallen into a paternalistic pattern resulting in the weakening of the local voice through their attempts at support and advocacy. Colonial legacies of exploitation can unconsciously frame many peacebuilding mechanisms. The term “marginalization” implies a certain view of the role of local actors. It denotes the place of the “central,” thus relegating local actors to roles less significant. NGOs have much work to do in order to realize authentic partnerships.

Barnes and Reardon: Power, civil society, and the state

International players might view civil society participation as either pacifying or escalating a conflict, instead of as the key drivers to the peacebuilding process. Local people, all actors with potential agency, contribute initiatives dependent on their goals or perspective of the conflict situation. The analysis of a conflict requires acknowledgement of the voices heard and perspectives underlying the approach. Barnes (2005) emphasizes that civil society “is a potentially powerful force that can mobilize” to escalate the conflict or enhance possibilities for resolution (10-11). Governments that thwart the attempts of civil society run the risk of resistance from those groups. This has been clearly exhibited in the Arab Spring and Idle No

More movements. Long-term strategies for peace necessitate the cultivation of cultures of peace and engagement of civil society actors and local governments in processes devoted to reducing violence and conflict (11).

Betty Reardon (1998), peace educator, states that education to create cultures of peace is to “promote the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transform the present human condition by changing the social structures and the patterns of thought that have created it” (x). The United Nations 2000 Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict acknowledged the need to move from strategies of reaction to those of prevention and that civil society was seen as playing a pivotal role in that orientation (2). Included in the capacity development must be an awareness of competing power blocks between civil society and states and the appropriateness of addressing these forces. Determining complementary processes between NGOs and local actors will be significant for sustainable peace efforts.

Adrian-Paul and Ekiyor: Gender Issues and local contexts

One of the areas of civil society work has been in the area of gender. Since the 2000 adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, the resulting Women Building Peace Campaign has worked to “ensure that women’s perspectives are integrated into peace and security issues” (Adrian-Paul 2005, 533). This campaign sought to assist in the identification of local women advocates in order to enhance their opportunities of working towards the issues in their regions (535). This campaign has been effective in placing women’s issues onto the agenda of the international community (537). This work has highlighted the necessity of “constant engagement and continuous monitoring of the status quo (538). Linkages must be established between policy making and practice at the local level.

In 2001 the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) launched a regional network called Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET). WIPNET played a significant role in the Liberian peace process. The women of the network decided that they would not sit on the sidelines as the conflict raged and took mass action seriously (Ekiyor 2005, 134-135). The successes of their efforts focused on some key areas: create broad awareness of the issues across the countryside; create a human face in the conflict by bringing large numbers of people to events that are usually only attended by government officials; exert pressure on all parties that are seated at the peace talks table in order to enhance truth telling; and sustain action over the long term (137-138). This kind of work can foster change, create hope, and shape peace. By acknowledging the complexity of local actor categories and ensuring diversity of participation on a broad range of dynamics, peacebuilding possibilities will be strengthened.

Challenges to civil society involvement

Local actors are crucial aspects of peacebuilding efforts. Yet, there are challenges to the involvement of local sectors that require acknowledgement. There is a large spectrum regarding local actor identification, such that it is possible that no one particular group will immediately become obvious in a particular conflict situation. Concerns over elites, power, and wealth are present in this sector as in all others. The scale of violence is another challenge that can't be alleviated with isolationist thinking or methods. And whenever relationships are implicated, discussions of ethical procedures are a significant aspect to those enterprises.

Although Funk (2012) writes of the importance of “privileging the local” peacebuilding work can't be naïve about local involvement over and against third parties. Nuancing discussions of working with local actors is significant “[o]therwise, local ownership risks being a code for working with the most powerful and most opportunistic sectors of society” (Smith 2004, 27).

Groups that have the capability to finance projects often already have political or business networks making that possible. It is beneficial to keep the focus on local realities.

Much peacebuilding work intersects with entities of power. States have the task to make decisions. International parties wield considerable power. Barnes (2005) proposes that many peacebuilding organizations lack the ability to deal effectively with the political economy of war and greed, are challenged in linking issues to justice and human rights, realize that they are beyond their skills and capacities, and have not attained sufficient legitimacy in the eyes of the community (21-22). Peacebuilding work that intersects with multiple sectors and modalities faces significant challenges to operate in ways that can enhance the possibilities of sustainable peace.

The levels of violence in a particular context are also significant challenges to understanding the roles of the various actors in peacebuilding. Clements (2004) views responses to violent conflict, “at both civil society and governmental levels [as] often generat[ing] as many problems as solutions” (5). Schirch’s (2008) assessment is that “[d]ifferent forms of violence spread like a virus. When public structures are violent, they infect entire cultures” (7). When there are great disparities in wealth between the rich and poor sectors of a country violence will be part of the fabric of that society. Schirch qualifies her definition on peacebuilding by the extent to which the violence has grown: “Peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence **that has not yet led to massive civil unrest** [emphasis is this author’s]. At the same time it empowers people to foster relationships that sustain people and their environment” (Schirch 2005a, 9).

Violent extremism is a category of violence that is of concern in the world today and involves all sectors of leadership (Holmer 2013, 5). Georgia Holmer (2013) asserts that

international “[p]eacebuilders know also that working within existing local mechanisms, networks, and practices ensures the sustainability, relevance, and impact of any conflict prevention program” (5). Her assumption is that at points of great violence all sectors must coordinate to avert drastic consequences. Civil society actors need to be supported since they “play a pivotal role in building good governance in conflict” and can shape the prevention or de-escalation of a violent conflict (5).

It is, though, the non-combatants that suffer the most in contexts of violent conflict. There are contexts in which the local sectors are not able to significantly contribute to peacebuilding efforts given the trauma from which they are recovering or currently enduring. Oftentimes they are the targets of “protagonist groups for strategic or tactical purposes” (Rothbart and Korostelina 2011, 83). Holmer’s (2013) research suggests that peacebuilding organizations already focused on peacebuilding efforts have a key role to play in interaction with local sectors: supporting non-securitized spaces for civil society; empowering and equipping women to participate in peacebuilding and decision-making efforts, especially given that they are often the targets of violence; building resilience; reforming the security entities; and broadening the analysis of the problem using lenses from the local community (6-7).

Anderson (1999) has been a key spokesperson within the conflict sensitivity approach to conflict and has provided encouragement to the peacebuilding community to consider ethical questions regarding impacts. The questions that have driven her work have been directed towards answering how assistance can be given in conflict situations without “feeding into and exacerbating the conflict [and] help[ing] local people to disengage and establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems” undergirding the conflicts (1). Anderson’s approach has been to collect case studies in order to gather experiences of working with the concept coined as

“Do No Harm.” One of Anderson’s case studies has questioned whether humanitarian aid has had adverse effects on conflicts, such as the example of maintaining Hutu *Interhamwe* militants in the refugee camps—together with noncombatants—of (former) eastern Zaire from 1994 to 1997, after their exodus from Rwanda. Revealing the complications when outsiders are immersed in conflict situations is part of the process for enhancing possibilities of assisting in times of conflict (147). Michael Lund (2003) asks whether “some post-conflict peacebuilders are. . .merely being enlisted as the ‘social workers’ of a world system that provides palliatives to alleviate the suffering of peoples who are forced to endure the worst economic and social costs of globalization, and in the bargain, are made aid-dependent” (19). Peacebuilding requires transparency regarding the goals and approaches being utilized.

Everyday Resistance and Peacebuilding

Introduction

Local actors in a conflict context are involved with the activities of the everyday. This idea of the “everyday” has been the focus in a range of disciplines. Feminist Betty Friedan (1963) began *The Feminine Mystique* with a first chapter entitled “The Problem That Has No Name” (15). She introduced the notion of the banality of everyday activities as defining for a particular sector. According to Ben Highmore (2002), the concept of the everyday refers to “those practices and lives that have traditionally been left out of historical accounts. . .It becomes shorthand for voices from ‘below’: women, children, migrants and so on” (1). In the face of colonization, the challenges of de-colonizing, and analyzing dynamics of power, the literature of everyday resistance (Scott 1989, 1990; Foucault 1978; de Certeau 1984; Abu-Lughod 1990; Vinthagen and Johannson 2013) and everyday peacebuilding (Mac Ginty 2011, 2013, 2014;

Richmond 2011, 2016) can prove helpful in creating a space for reflecting on the types of spaces existent for peacebuilding work.

In a well-known claim of Michel Foucault (1978) he asserts that “Where there is power, there is resistance” (95–96). Resistance scholar Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) continues that assertion with “where there is resistance, there is power” (42). In an interview with Michael Bess in 1980, Foucault (1980b) proposed that “Power is a set of relations” (2). In the Philippine collectivist context this set of viewpoints is particularly helpful as a path to strategizing regarding peacebuilding approaches.

In 1955, the American Friends Service Committee published *Speak Truth to Power*. Out of that tradition, Quaker mediator Adam Curle’s 1971 work, *Making Peace*, examines the dynamics of asymmetrical relationships through the journey of unpeace to peace via a matrix of power and knowledge of the conflict. His step of confrontation, second in a set of four steps to sustainable peace, draws from that Quaker legacy. Concepts that speak to ways of conceptualizing confrontation as a means to work at the unbalance of power is the emergence of the fields of everyday resistance and everyday peacebuilding. Curle’s purpose towards a sustainable peace composed of respectful relations is more than reactionary responses to power. In Curle’s mind the responses to power are nonviolent.

John Hartmann (2003), in examining Foucault’s later work, asserts that there is a kind of critical questioning crucial to an understanding of what comprises the potential for acts of resistance. He defines it as “an ontology of ourselves, an ontology of the present” (5). The questions that emerge from that space is: “What is our actuality? What is the present field of possible experiences?” (5). Hartmann reads Foucault as expressing a “positive account of resistance to power in hand (the relation to oneself and care for the self as a site for resistance)”

(9). What are the possibilities, everyday peacebuilding, for a positive resistance to power that moves beyond the abstract to even oneself as the site for this work?

Everyday resistance

Anthropologist James Scott's (1985) theory on the hidden transcripts of life that inspired his work on everyday resistance emerged from two years of ethnographic research in a Malaysian village and was written about in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. He asserts that it is "important to understand what we might call *everyday* forms of peasant resistance, the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from them. Most of the forms this struggle takes stop well short of collective outright defiance" (29). Everyday resistance is a "practice" and "needs to be understood as intersectional," thus creating space for overlap with feminist and postcolonial studies (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013, 1). Scott's use of the term "transcripts" indicates the conversations that are held within society. The public transcripts are those "open interaction[s] between subordinates and those who dominate" (Scott 1990, 2). The public conversations do not tell us everything about the power relations within a context. The "hidden transcript" signifies the discourse that is "beyond direct observation by powerholders" (4). These are not organized methods of rebellion but actions that can easily be missed but no less powerful. As such, Scott's (1985) definition of resistance ultimately allows the inclusion of forms of resistance that cover both individual and collective actions and converges his interest on the intentions of the actors (290-292).

Roland Bleiker's (2003) discussion of human agency is helpful within this field regarding actions of resistance. He defines human agency as "how people may or may not be able to influence their environment" (25). Although the dynamics of context, culture, and identity are

also significant factors in human agency, this definition emphasizes that the everyday actions move people towards influencing their environment. “Everyday forms of resistance make no headlines” but the actions do raise voices that are often muted (Scott 1985, 36). This is a significant component in the discussion of the role of local actors.

Stellan Vinthagen and Anna Johansson (2013) emphasize that the discussion of everyday resistance “suggests that resistance is integrated into social life and is a part of normality; not as dramatic or strange as assumed—even if it is still unclear how common it is” (3). Looking at resistance from this perspective lodges it as an “embedded resistance” (Mihelich & Storrs 2003, 41). John Mihelich, and Debbie Storrs (2003) describe it as an “almost unwitting resistance” in which subalterns:

influence the nature of the hegemonic structure as they broaden their roles by working within the system. . . [and] continue to embrace their role in the hegemonic system, and because, in hegemonic fashion, they are not motivated by a consciously articulated resistance (41).

It is a space of unconscious dissonance as it encompasses actions and opposition with, often, positive intentions for the actions of resistance.

There is diversity within the field of everyday resistance. Perhaps there is enough agreement to say that “[r]esistance is always situated, in a context, a historic tradition, a certain place and/or social space forged by those who rebel” (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013, 14). This space is intertwined with cultural connections, memories of leaders of the past, and historical legacy—all coming together to shape the actions that ensue.

Jesuit scholar Michel de Certeau (1984) is another voice in the everyday resistance field. His work takes us back to Foucault’s (1980b) proposal that “Power is a set of relations” (2). The focus for de Certeau is centred on a discussion of “tactics” depending “on time” given that it does “not have a place” (xix). Thus, this resistance has to be nimble and “is always on the watch

for opportunities that must be seized. . . . Whatever it wins, it does not keep” (xix). What emerges is a “contract with ‘the other’ (the interlocutor) in a network of places and relations” (xiii). This ability to navigate the present realities indicates that everyday resistance holds knowledge regarding the “way of using imposed systems” (18). In this approach, creativity in one’s thinking becomes a significant aspect of the success of the resistance actions.

Everyday Peacebuilding

The links between everyday resistance and everyday peacebuilding are important to build on. Although somewhat similar in concept, it is everyday peacebuilding that pushes forward from the spaces described by everyday resistance. The nimbleness of navigating possible avenues for change becomes compelling in conflict contexts.

Arnold (2014) views nimbleness in the emergent spaces for alternative movements and possibilities. He researches the role of “temporary autonomous zones” as methods of creating social change (4). He describes them as a “praxis-oriented tactic that uses social disruption to create immediately realizable social change” (4). Given that these are temporary zones, moments in time, they are not oriented to sweeping revolutionary results but a recognition of everyday types of opportunities utilizing the opportunities in the moment. These are small moments that hold the “possibility for deep individual transformations that may not fit well within the dominant discourses of peace and prosperity” but can contribute to ongoing strategies for social change (4). Arnold sees utility in this model in contexts of community trauma. Post conflict the society is still plagued by the uncertainty created by the political instability. Responding merely with broad state-level processes will create a “‘thin’ description of culture and health [that] fails to account for the broad spectrum, profound force and irreducible meanings” of the events that

took place (52). Researchers attuned to these spaces of opportunity can assist in the identification of moments for change.

These emergent spaces are possible within everyday actions. Mac Ginty (2014) views everyday peace as “the routinized practices used by individuals and collectives as they navigate their way through life in a deeply divided society” (2). Yet, it is not simply a matter of repeating one’s daily activities and hoping for change to occur. It is “a form of agency. It is not something that people always and necessarily engage in. It relies on opportunities and context, as well as the ability of individuals and groups to exploit these” (3). This might appear, initially, to be “beguilingly simple,” but requires a mindfulness towards the desire for change and openness to observe the potential in given interactions (3).

Thus, Mac Ginty (2014) cautions that “our consideration of everyday peace must also be viewed through the lens of power” (3). Richmond (2010) asserts that “foregrounding the ‘everyday’ is so significant” because of its considerable connection “with hidden agency and with resistance” (669). The technologies of power and legitimacy utilized in the pursuit of statebuilding are even “designed to distance the everyday lives of post-conflict individuals” as “a classically colonial intellectual move” to thwart the “emancipatory claims” (668). What happens, though, within these tensions is that what emerges is “discursive ‘webs of meaning’” that emphasize a local context (668).

The everyday is a deep space where the dynamics of local needs are being considered by locals and unconsciously, or consciously, strategies and problem-solving activities are implemented. The previous chapter on colonialism, highlighting Bhabha’s (1994) work on culture and everyday interactions and Spivak’s (1988) assertions on the subaltern are essential within the discussion of the everyday. Although the temptation is to describe the everyday

peacebuilding as “banal” activities it must be seen that the stakes are high and the challenges to power immense (676).

Consequently, what emerges as a possibility from everyday acts of resistance, and is significant for this study, is the idea of the everyday “represent[ing] an alternative site of knowledge for peacebuilding” (Richmond 2009, 571). This signifies the transformation of local actors “from being mere subjects to being active citizens in the peacebuilding process” (Galvanek 2013, 15). This peacebuilding is “unencumbered by hegemonic institutions” and achieves a mobility able to shape a necessary path while calling for an accountability to the needs of the everyday context (Richmond 2010, 677).

Peacebuilding is a complex mix of activities. Scott’s (1990) term of “infrapolitics” opened space to discuss forms of resistance initiated by those part of subordinate groups (19). This space is not one of defeatism but of revealing alternatives to what might be presumed as singularly dominant. Scott sees as essential that there is space for “probing the boundaries” of action that will open possibilities (200). To be clear, the peacebuilding intention is not to entrench the work within current problems but to find ways for emancipation via methods that enable responses defined by flexibility and resourcefulness.

Summary

The expanse of perspectives on peacebuilding is vast. Attention has been given to the role of local actors in peacebuilding through the construction of a critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature. Specific frameworks and practitioner work examined the contributions of local actors within the peacebuilding discourse and activities. Given the spectrum of thought regarding peacebuilding practices and mechanisms the review of the complexities involved in defining and framing a discussion of what constitutes local actors, peace, and peacebuilding was

explored. It is clear, through probing the various perspectives of whose peace, what peace, and who will act on the peace, that “deep” foundation is necessary within the discussion of the role of local actors and the frameworks that enhance their involvement in peacebuilding processes. The variety of voices in this study speak to the necessity of that depth and the need to maintain a fluidity of space throughout the discourse and exploration of options towards peacebuilding.

Chapter 5: Speaking of the Trauma

Introduction

There were days that I went back to my temporary house in the Philippines, during my time of research collection, mentally and physically exhausted. Tears had been shed as profound stories were told of death, of fear, and pain. In my conversation with Deng, she emphasized: “It’s the trauma of the intergenerational trauma.” Brought on by the colonial legacy. “[B]ecause we have been colonized then we’re not used to thinking as one, because we have been so much divided at the convenience of those who are in power. That we do not know how to be one. So, we still have that in our psyche. So, it’s difficult. So, my vision for Mindanao really is for us to sit together and start the process of really understanding what is it that we want Mindanao to be and how are we going to get there. What is it that we want to be?” She pauses. There is time for us to think about that question. The space between us is heavy. She continues, “We’re so scared to speak about it because the one in power might silence us, might castigate us, we might not get into heaven, all these things.”

Father Bert is another Mindanaon who has seen so much pain from the years of war and violence in the region. He knows that to overcome the trauma that people carry with them very deliberate efforts must be taken. “We have to establish good relationships among the people so that they live in harmony and there will be peace. So, it’s really a tough job because of the hatred and anger and biases that people experience at the grassroots because of the series of wars here. So, it’s a very challenging task for us especially.” Father Bert has done his own work towards dealing with hate and anger. When his dear colleague, Bishop Benjamin de Jesus was murdered in front of the Cathedral in Jolo, he admitted that he “also started to hate all Muslims.” It was his time working in the evacuation centres, “when you hear the sounds of

mothers weeping and children crying in the night, you don't anymore ask whether they are Muslims or Christians." Over and over again, with Rexall, with Sharon, with Musso, with Jasmin, and others, stories of pain were shared with me.

Mark Torres, the Peace Research Coordinator at the Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao told me that they had finally figured some things out. They were using psycho-social models from outside organizations and the people from the traumatized communities told them that the processes didn't work for them. "So, our plan for next year is to craft modules together with the Department of Psychology for intervention psychosocial support that is sensitive to the local culture." There are no easy answers to the question of how to address the existent trauma in this region, but I do know that there are compassionate people seeking authentic avenues for that discussion.

Trauma

Introduction

Trauma must be spoken of in a study of this region and it must be linked to strategies and understandings of peacebuilding. Each of the local peacebuilding actors interviewed in this study has their own story of conflict and its impacts on their lives and community. As well, in the context of this research project, it is important to acknowledge that researchers require sensitivity to the context and an awareness of the signs of trauma in order to operate constructively and ethically. Qualitative research, in trauma impacted communities, requires a "theoretical commitment to the person as a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being (Smith and Osborn 2008, 54). It has been an honour to "sit" with the participants in this research, to strive to hold their stories respectfully, and to hear their dreams for a land so impacted by conflict.

As a way to build on the literature of trauma as it relates both to the challenges for the local peacebuilding actor and the researcher invested, this section will explore the nature of trauma and trauma healing; theories on trauma, violence, and peacebuilding; and the trauma research of a Filipino practitioner situated in the field. Research in contexts of traumatized peoples requires conflict and cultural sensitivity to navigate the best approaches for healing. Many communities in the Philippines bear the scars of colonial practices, deprivations, and the Marcos years. Knowing that trauma exists in a community requires that research methods are sensitive to that dynamic.

Trauma is another complex category to define. Its impact can be individual or collective, in addition to transgenerational. Riva Kantowitz and Abikök Riak's (2008) work on links between peacebuilding and trauma healing indicates that trauma results from threats to the survival of an individual or community and impacts people's relationships, decision-making abilities, access to choices and power, and behaviours (6-7). Many of those interviewed in this study have received such threats. The factors creating the trauma can coalesce to form "a collective narrative characterized by powerlessness and a sense of lack of control" (7). Moros, Lumads, and Christians in Mindanao have suffered a great deal of trauma over the decades of war and violence that has shaped perspectives and approaches in regard to prospects for the future.

In attempting to understand the meaning of trauma and to work in contexts of trauma, one of the most important aspects to consider is "that massive trauma is in important ways inherently incomprehensible" (Suárez-Orozco and Robben 2000, 7). Appropriate to trauma research is the resistance to simply force various definitions and frameworks of trauma and trauma experiences into specific schema. Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and Antonius C. G. M. Robben (2000) assert that,

instead, one must “allow testimony to unfold itself” (7). Trauma healing work is not served well with “mechanistic paradigm[s]” (10). The approaches to these complex issues need to be “thick,” (see discussion of Geertz below) in that they provide room to explore the impacts on identity, gender, children, ethnicities, and memory.

Trauma healing involves working with people’s basic needs and intertwining efforts with both peacebuilding and development. Creating safe spaces for people to work on strategies for reducing violence in their communities and opportunities for livelihoods and support are vital to the healing process. The international development field has become focused, since the 1990s, on advocating for trauma healing practices that are multi-factoral and conflict sensitive.

The marginalized are vulnerable to exploitation in times of conflict and social stress. In the Philippines, the disappearances of Filipinos during martial law under the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos are reminders of the fragility of collective relationships. A central focus of modern political violence is to create “states of terror [in order] to penetrate the entire fabric of economic, sociocultural and political relations as a means of social control” (Summerfield 1998, 10). At the grassroots level this is often called “total” or “all out” war. Mechanisms of terror become tactics for the pacification of the society. In the Philippines it was the disappearances and assassinations of those suspected of resisting Marcos, as well as the torture that occurred in the detention camps, that accomplished pacification. These tactics can crush the social and cultural institutions and expectations of an entire generation. The result is that anxiety levels increase and memories are forced to “disappear” in order to survive. Decades of war, and the threats of war, in addition to a colonial legacy created transgenerational trauma in communities throughout the Philippines. Consequently, narratives in this context have multiple layers and voices to be considered and aware of in the interview process.

Theoretical Frameworks: Trauma, Violence, and Peacebuilding

Trauma and violence are closely intertwined. Given that the focus is on the Philippine context, collective trauma and the intersection with violence will be the primary focus for this discussion. Collective trauma is a condition resulting from “the experience of both overt and structural violence” (Kantowitz and Riak 2008, 6). In such contexts people are in survival mode, terrorized by fear, and bereft because of the failures of institutional supports. Kantowitz and Riak (2008) purport that there is a “dearth of knowledge” regarding collective trauma dynamics as they relate to resiliency and recovery (7). It is an issue that many of those interviewed are attempting to decipher.

One of the key areas of research regarding collective trauma as an outcome of war is the relationship to authority that develops over time. New social patterns, such as dependency and paternalism, tend to develop in the social structure (Kantowitz and Riak 2008, 7). People who have been living in an oppressive, or colonial system, are often forced to depend on others to provide for their well-being, making them vulnerable to a loss of self-sufficiency.

Structural violence is embedded in the social system in the Philippines. Critical theorists (for instance, the Frankfurt School, Marx, Althusser, Foucault, and Said) can be of assistance as they focus on critiquing structural dynamics within a particular social context with an eye towards social change. Critical theory assists in revealing that people are often victims of their social, historical, and geographic locations given that the elements and relationships within social structures are often hierarchical, dependent on attainment of power, and averse to change (Botes 2008). Judith Herman (1992), in *Trauma and Recovery*, asserts that “we need to understand the past in order to reclaim the present and the future. Therefore, an understanding of psychological trauma begins with rediscovering history (2). In the course of the discussion on trauma and

violence it is useful to recognize the impact of oppressive social systems. Times of war and/or racial discrimination intensify the social dynamics already present and the impact on civil society can be immense.

Ralf Dahrendorf, a class conflict theorist in the latter half of the twentieth century, viewed the context of social classes in their struggle for authority as the foundation for structural conflict. Galtung (1990), one of the principal founders of peace and conflict studies, building on Dahrendorf's work asserts that structural violence is built into the very fabric of cultural and societal institutions (292). Galtung and Dahrendorf have written extensively on the methodologies for countering structural violence. Dahrendorf believed that to consider it possible to counter structural imbalances with violence would only be an illusion of success. His view was that the seatholders of power might change through violence but that the deeper issues would not be resolved (Schellenberg 1996, 86). Galtung (1990) emphasized that structural and cultural violence is built into social systems resulting in the privileging of wealth and power for only a few in the society and that when "the violent structure [is] institutionalized and the violent culture internalized, direct violence also tends to become institutionalized" (302). As well as institutionalized, the practices become condoned within multiple sectors.

Peacebuilding, asserts Lederach (1997), must be grounded in the current realities and be oriented towards building relationships. Lederach's approach to peacebuilding has three working assumptions for conceptualizing a basis for reconciliation and the connected work of trauma healing. Peacebuilding must focus on relationships, create encounters, and look beyond the mainstream (30). Peacebuilding is a complex task requiring analysis of the context at the level of root causes and indicates that a creativity that looks beyond violence for its answers is imperative. As well, it is a complex field that engages the areas of security, justice, capacity, and

equality as part of the goal of reducing the violence in the community or region. Trauma healing is a vital component to a holistic approach to peacebuilding.

Kantowitz and Riak (2008) assert that it is essential to acknowledge that trauma, like poverty, is “debilitating. . .if not addressed” (22). Material development, although necessary, is not sufficient on its own to address the needs of post-conflict communities. Leadership changes are required, from colonial and authoritative styles to grassroots and participatory ones. Fear must be addressed in order to liberate people to explore possibilities of hope for their contexts. For the process of reconciliation to be meaningful it needs to happen at local levels in order to facilitate the transformation of relationships.

The deeper one delves into trauma and its possible sources of healing the more complexity that emerges. Studying the colonial history through the Moro story or reading through the stories of people who survived the Marcos dictatorship highlight the immensity of pain and the issues present that require acknowledgement within trauma healing processes. Consequently, as a way to enhance the arenas of possibilities, it is imperative to acknowledge that trauma healing requires latitude and attention to the local strategies and wisdoms within the community. The latest research in the field indicates that “human emotional experiences, understandings of self and others and approaches to healing are cultural through and through” (Bracken et al. 1998b, 188). There is a need for multi-disciplinary research that goes beyond quantitative reports to donor agencies (190). Patrick J. Bracken and Celia Petty (1998b) propose that to rethink the trauma of war is to re-organize perspectives and consider “all aspects of social and economic survival” (190). This re-organizing work lodges trauma healing efforts within the larger scope of peacebuilding, justice, and reconciliation, and encourages programming based on how people live their lives with an understanding of the complexity of relationships.

The suffering of war is “normal and understandable;” it is the detachment, though, of that trauma from the person, as the modern trauma model does, that is of concern (Summerfield 1998, 30). Practitioners must be aware that humanitarian interventions run the risk of perpetuating colonial mindsets in regard to trauma and trauma healing. Organizations within the field must be cautious of viewing trauma as a “product of globalising culture” and presenting the findings on it as “definitive knowledge” (31). Each situation needs to be examined on its own terms and experiences, without importing Western discourse, as a foundation for any other region. As a way to emphasize the inspiration of local trauma healing approaches, the work of Filipino scholar Dr. Al Fuytes will be reviewed to highlight the need for distinct approaches for each trauma context and attention to local strategies in order to ensure constructive and sustainable processes benefitting the world’s most vulnerable communities.

Approaches to trauma healing are numerous. Both the conflict events and the approaches to trauma healing weigh on a community’s ability to recover and regain capacity. Two areas of focus for Fuytes have been the research on communities impacted by war in Mindanao and their relationships with donors/NGOs and his process of community workshops for revitalizing resiliency and constructive survival.

Fuytes’ (2010b) research reveals that assistance for internally displaced communities was “being done mostly in terms of the 3 Ds: donor-led definitions, donor-led agenda and donor-led strategies” (4). The rationale is based on the perception that NGOs have superior knowledge and understanding of the situation as compared to those from the local context, especially given the assumption that displaced persons will not have the assets to contribute to options for the situation. It is true that displaced people do need assistance for the maintenance of their basic needs. However, this does not mean that they “are not capable of envisioning, meaning-making,

and taking an active role in addressing their situation” (5). Approaches need to invest in assessing the capacities at the local level.

The guiding framework for the relationship between NGOs and displaced peoples has been “that of a ‘donor-recipient’” relationship (Fuertes 2010b, 7). This approach, though, negatively impacts the ability of trauma impacted people to develop their own capacities and to be “active participants in their own healing and community building” (7). Fuertes emphasizes the importance of relationship development during this time of crisis, with a focus that goes beyond the donations of food, clothing, and medical assistance. This is an “involuntary dependency” that has been forced upon people suffering from loss of basic needs and loved ones and begins to impact people’s self-esteem.

The impact of donor-led definitions is that people are compelled to accept the definition provided by the helping organization in terms of what constitutes the “‘good life’” (Fuertes 2010b, 8). Donor-led agenda constitutes an acceptance of NGO shaped ideas of progress and development. This can extend to how community life needs to be set up, how traditional belief systems should be acted upon, and how lifestyles should be modernized. Donor-led strategies put into action the definitions and agendas of the donor.

Fuertes (2010b) argues that a transformative approach is necessary in order to achieve genuine development for displaced persons. Five descriptors, he writes, address the characteristics of a transformative approach. Mutual: there needs to be recognition that both parties have something to offer in the articulation of assistance strategies and goals. Open: there needs to be a desire for discovering aspects of the community that can be helpful in the situation. Integrative: the whole range of human needs must be taken into consideration. Adaptive: NGOs must not have a “predetermined model to impose on local communities. Consistent with human

experience: the process needs to be designed with the needs of the human experience as the focus” (13). The focus of these five is that the trauma healing work should push towards creating practical approaches to assistance that can be meaningful and transformative. Some of those approaches are: analyzing your perceptions about the context you are entering; respecting local knowledge; listening to key local informants; inviting people to a discussion of local practices; and naming your own power. All of the issues mentioned above reiterate the need for collaboration at a number of levels and between the parties in the situation.

As an avenue for enhancing resiliency, community workshops are an avenue for providing space for civilians impacted by the conflict to have the opportunity to process those experiences through workshops together. Civilians are impacted in overt conflicts in their communities. Lives and livelihoods get disrupted through war, causing many to become refugees in need of assistance to recover from the trauma. This must be attended to as “no amount of peace talks. . .can rebuild [people’s] community. . .and shattered relationships (Fuertes 2004, 492). Attention must be given to the collective trauma healing of a community and build a capacity for resilience in the face of great loss. Yet, there are few studies that have examined the perceptions and realities that have impacted war-affected people’s coping mechanisms. Community-based work needs to be elicitive in that the data comes directly from the context and the people impacted by the violence and the acceptance that the insider knowledge is significant. Without this commitment, Western diagnostic approaches tend to proceed without traditional knowledge.

Fuertes’ (2004) approach is to design trauma healing workshops “in a way that would reflect a sense of reality and elicit local-based conceptions. . .and coping strategies” (494). Collective violence touches on people on many levels and, as such, the understanding of the

impact of trauma “cannot be restricted to the intrapsychic processes of the individual sufferer” (494). Trauma can be passed on to different generations as families cope with the trauma. To counteract that possibility, Fuertes’ workshop focus is to work at deep understanding of the images, feelings, and coping mechanisms of the participants.

Context-based healing does more than alleviate individual traumas; it assists in naming the “sociohistorical and cultural contexts that affect perceptions” (Fuertes 2004, 499). In the context of peacebuilding work, this naming is essential. As reviewed in previous chapters, the awareness of the legacies of violence and colonization represent significant impacts on peacebuilding work.

Knowing the context is crucial since traditional rituals are key resources for dealing with the traumas. The expression of trauma “is locally specific” and needs to be at the basis of trauma healing processes (Fuertes 2004, 499). Knowledgeable local actors are vital for this healing work. Combining local practices with medical interventions and “economic and political mechanisms” can be helpful if utilized with knowledge of the historical context and local realities (500). This context approach is beneficial in the Philippine environment as people strive for ways to put their lives back together again.

Summary

This section emphasizes that trauma must be recognized as a factor for peacebuilding in the context of work with conflict impacted communities and must be incorporated into the methodologies utilized. Oftentimes the needs of communities are overlooked in the efforts to work with combatants and the development of state-building and infrastructure post conflict. Trauma is transgenerational and, if not dealt with, will impact a society for generations to come. Along with the trauma, violence, and peacebuilding theorists, practitioners such as Fuertes assert

the advantages of diverse approaches that can address the considerable complexity within such conflicted societies. Both peacebuilders and researchers are aided in the development of these tools.

Chapter 6: The research and the researcher

Introduction

I arrived early, even having had my taxi drive around in circles a few times in the attempt to find the venue on the Ateneo de Manila University campus. I was met at the registration desk by participants excited to find out who I was and we quickly made connections regarding common friends and organizations with which we were involved. Yes, I was glad that Karen Tañada had invited me to the Waging Peace annual conference. I first met Karen about twenty years ago as our peace work intertwined and now I had just interviewed her for my dissertation research. Waging Peace Philippines is a network of civil society organizations working for peace in the country and the network strengthens and supports peoples' peace constituencies, supporting rights-based and non-violent approaches to peace. I felt honoured to be trusted to listen in on their conversations over the next two days. The calling question for the gathering was: How do we engage with the Philippine government-NDFP peace processes to move towards a just political settlement of the conflict?

It was time to begin. We, about sixty to seventy people, mostly women, a handful of men, and a young child, sat together in a circle, centred around a candle and were guided in ritual movements to indicate our hopes for the day. I was here for my participant observation note-taking at a civil sector peace conference. Yet, all of us became quickly bonded in the peace journey as a Manobo woman's spontaneous sharing of the pain of Indigenous peoples, the recent spate of Lumad killings, and the numerous instances of ancestral land being taken, moved and transformed all of us sitting around the circle. My pen sat still in my lap as she cried, and cried out angrily, regarding the call for justice from her people. "We have died unwillingly," she whispered. She wanted us to understand the situation on the ground, in her community, as we sat

in Manila, almost one thousand kilometres north of her ancestral domain and shared her tears and anger.

How will she and her people speak into the ongoing peace processes? We knew, sitting in that circle, that this would be one of the questions to struggle with throughout the time together in the conference. She and I spoke together at the coffee break. She wondered what I would write about this conference and we exchanged mobile phone numbers. I knew that I wanted others to know that she is a strong and beautiful woman. This research must be connected to the story on the ground. Her story and our personal connection is keeping me grounded.

Methodology

In September 2015 I began this qualitative research project and over the space of four months I conducted thirty-six semi-structured interviews with local Philippine peacebuilders ranging from Manila to various parts of the island of Mindanao. My query sought to explore the space, and dimensions, in which the local peacebuilder works, and to capture the voices of those who are passionately working on peace issues.

There exists a multiplicity of civil society organizations and local players within most conflict contexts. Barnes (2005) indicates that in the challenge to address structural conflict, partnerships with, and between, local organizations are both necessary and pragmatic (12). And given the current plethora of organizations it is worth noting that there are different motivations for engaging in structural change. The Philippines is just that context—varied and conflicted—and is, therefore, a rich context for learning. This study seeks to examine the roles, strategies, and impacts of local actors—the non-state actors—within the civil society arena, focusing on the work of Philippine peacemakers. As reviewed in chapter four, Richmond (2011) stresses that

each “local” carries its own “contextualities” and significant range of, perhaps, hidden agencies (135). It is important to consider that the definitions of local actors will change within each context and culture, making uniform descriptions and requirements impossible to proclaim.

Researcher background and identity

The preparation for this study involved exploring the range of literature that touches on the concerns of local peacemakers seeking constructive ways forward in contexts of deep-seated conflict. The intention was not to do an exhaustive search of pertinent literature but to open up areas of curiosity in order to stimulate questions and angles of importance. Given that I have spent many years in the region of my study, I wished to enter the research collection process with minimal expectations regarding the direction that the research could take as a way to create openness and freshness to the theories and activities I would encounter. I have been influenced by Barney Glaser’s (1992) discussion of the grounded theory approach, the assertion that immersion into the frameworks prior to the research might provoke “conscious or unrecognised assumptions of what ought to be in the data” (31). Glaser (1998) cautions against “preconceptualising the problem” and thereby forcing the ideas garnered into particular frameworks and theories (67).

My primary approach has been to do a thorough review of Philippine history in order to follow and understand the nuances of events as the interviewees place themselves within their story. Reading the history is to know that the complexity of root causes—be it colonialism, resource conflicts, settler migration, discriminatory policies, religious diversity—is immense and to presume which angle takes prominence could jeopardize the ability to truly hear the challenges as spoken by the interviewees, or participants.

Researcher identity

I am a white, Canadian woman and I have been either living, or doing consulting work, in the Philippines since 1996. In 1996 my family and I—which included two pre-schoolers—moved to the community of Dumaguete on the island of Negros. My work was initially focused on gender and community development. My mentor and the community members with whom I spent my time have been significant to my personal growth and understanding of the issues of injustice in the Philippines. This was a steep learning curve given that I grew up in a small, prairie town not defined by a history of violent conflict. They taught me what being an ally was about and were not shy about commenting on my actions. I am forever grateful to them.

Since 2002 I have been teaching at the annual Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI)—another organization that has been significant to me and that is a powerful actor in the Mindanao peacebuilding scene. Many of the current Mindanao peacebuilders have been mentored in the context of MPI. The opportunities for conflict resolution/peace studies teaching that I have had have taken me into many peace networks in the country. During the process of collecting data for this study, I connected with Filipino colleagues who network broadly within the country with people and organizations involved in supporting the peace process in the Philippines and who are themselves engaged in the work of building a culture of peace in Mindanao. These are people with whom I have many years of connection.

Awareness, and discussion, of one's positionality—an individual's worldview and chosen position in relation to a specific research task—within the research project is crucial (Savin-Baden and Howell Major 2013). My gender and nationality is culturally fixed, yet my multiple subjectivities, experiences, and history in the region expand on the possibilities for this project. The insider-outsider dynamic of research is one of discomfort and reflexivity is of vital

importance in moving through the research project with integrity and authenticity (Hamden 2009). My long-term connection points with many of the interviewees helped to dispel some of the space existent and for that I am ever so grateful.

Consequent to the trust built over many years, during the interviews participants committed to connecting me with other peacemakers to expand my research. This has been significant in building trust and accountability within the interview process. This is no small issue of consideration since “[r]esearchers conducting cross-cultural studies in communities with cultures distinct from their own may face a variety of challenges, particularly those related to establishing rapport and trust” (Jonk & Enns 2009, 35). The interviews focused on Filipino leaders in nongovernment organizations—both international and local—faith-based organizations, and communities that have become involved in urging the peace process forward in various ways and by working to ground these efforts in grassroots capacity building in conflict transformation skills. Many of these leaders have been influenced by the principles of nonviolence and teachers, such as John Paul Lederach.

Case study selection

I have chosen the Philippines as the case study to further the research regarding the role of local peacemakers as significant players in impacting the peace discourse and action in conflict impacted contexts. Given the long-term conflicts in the country, various communities of peace activists have emerged to work on specific campaigns or on the long-term task of building a culture of peace. The case study provides opportunity for immediate reflection on the question of focus. Kathleen M. Eisenhardt (1989) advocates for the use of case study research as a way to utilize the understanding garnered from focusing on a particular context and setting.

Alongside providing description and testing of theory, one of the aims of case study research is to generate theory (Eisenhardt 1989, 535). This research will provide a description of particular efforts and strategies towards building a culture of peace but the key area of focus will rest on the attempt to generate theory regarding local actor peacebuilding—its dimensions, strategies, and challenges. The qualitative data from a case study can assist to determine the existent relationships and the constructs supporting them. Significant to the theme of this research is that building theory from case studies “is a bottom up approach such that the specifics of data produce the generalizations of theory” (Eisenhardt 1989, 547). The intention is that the voices of the peacebuilder participants will emerge as the strongest feature of this study and lead to the enhancement of peacebuilding efforts.

Data Collection: Sources and Methods

I conducted thirty-six semi-structured interviews—with a framework of themes and guiding questions along with opportunity for ideas that emerged within the conversation—with local Philippine peacebuilders that were oriented towards the discovery of the various methods, intentions, and activities utilized in supporting the peace process and working to build a culture of peace. I believe that the study of a particular group, in this case a complex and historically rich environment in terms of peacebuilding work, can lend weight and application potential to the general literature on local peacebuilding and provide strategies for enhancement of that work.

The data collected was analyzed for themes and then re-examined for inter-connecting themes, or questions raised, followed by the construction of a narrative or prevailing strategy. To validate the discovered themes and to determine the credibility of the information, three primary forms (Merriam 1988) were used for the verification: (1) triangulation—converging different sources of information (interviews, documents, participant observations); (2) member-

checking—getting the feedback from the participants on the accuracy of the identified categories and themes (I hosted an event after the interviews to present preliminary findings to the participants); and (3) providing rich, thick description to convey the findings.

In general, the inductive method of analysis was used to analyze the data collected. David R. Thomas (2006) defines inductive analysis as “approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher” (238). The intent of this approach is to allow themes to emerge from the collected data without pre-determining the direction of the research, yet building connections with the research questions. The goal is theory building and developing a theory or model from the themes that emerge from the interviews and surveys. Specifically, the grounded method of research has served to provide insights into the process of the research.

In addition to the interviews of people directly connected to various aspects of the peace process, my researcher perspective data is also included. The range encompasses field notes, data research, or participant observations. This data has assisted in creating a larger context for the specific methods being utilized.

Lenses for Data Collection

The options for methodologies are vast and it is, thus, challenging to forge a path through the various options and perspectives (Gubrium & Holstein 2002). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1994) asserts that in regard to the analysis of culture and its stories it is important to be grounded in the roots of the exploration area. He proposes that the researcher retain attentiveness and understand that discoveries happen bit by bit and that

[r]ather than following a rising curve of cumulative findings, cultural analysis breaks up into a disconnected yet coherent sequence of bolder and bolder sorties. . . . Previously discovered facts are mobilized, previously developed concepts used, previously

formulated hypotheses tried out; but the movement is not from already proven theorems to newly proven ones, it is from an awkward fumbling for the most elementary understanding to a supported claim that one has achieved that and surpassed it. A study is an advance if it is more incisive—whatever that may mean—than those that preceded it; but it less stands on their shoulders than, challenged and challenging, runs by their side (227).

Essential to the quest for discovery is the ability to evoke questions and stand in potential discomfort in the attempt to move conversations forward. And, in the case of this study, it is the effort to seek out enhancements to peacebuilding that truly builds new possibilities for peace and relationship building.

This section will discuss perspectives and approaches to methodologies that can be utilized in cross-cultural contexts of peacebuilding research and in deepening the exploration of work on the ground. Feminist international relations theorist J. Ann Tickner (2005) asserts that knowledge is socially constructed and, therefore, “the questions we ask and the methods we use reflect our preoccupations as members of particular societies at particular times” (2). In actuality, research methodologies reveal the essence of the researcher. Thus, self-awareness of one’s positionality is crucial.

As well, Tickner emphasizes that the way in which we go about our research “should pose a question that is ‘important’ in the ‘real world’” (5). The methodology of a study is crucial. Yet, for Tickner, without a passion for uncovering essential aspects that will surge forth, in this case new peacebuilding approaches, the question is whether the requisiteness in the work emerges from the data at the end.

Feminist researchers, such as Tickner, purport that the “questions that are asked—or, more importantly, those that are not asked—are as determinative of the adequacy of the project as any answers that we can discover” (5). Although Tickner writes regarding feminist research specifically, her encouragement to “consider linkages between the everyday lived experiences”

of the interviewees and the “exercise of political and economic power” are helpful categories when immersed in a particular conflict context in order to determine the impacts of people’s exertions within a conflict context (19). Thick description, conflict sensitivity, Do No Harm theory, and culturally sensitive approaches will be discussed as frameworks assisting in ensuring that the research direction will move into areas that matter.

Thick Description and Identity

“Thick description” is an orientation, or methodology, helpful in the context of engaging in cultural analysis. Thick description was popularized among social scientists by anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz (1994) viewed people’s actions as being defined by cultural meanings. He asserted that given the complexity of culture, the descriptions of people’s interactions and lives needed to have sufficient depth. Without a sufficient knowledge of the research context, Geertz purports that we have a “lack of familiarity with the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs” (12-13). Geertz’s term “thick description” came to mean the deliberate attention to the specifics of people’s activities. By its very name it indicates an inclination to matters of substance and depth. Thick descriptions emerge via intense and focused examinations of communities and people’s lives. When working with historical, and entrenched, conflict it is especially important to give sufficient attention to the details and deep values of the persons involved in the conflict. Thick description techniques focus on this type of attention.

Thick descriptions are the results of appreciable work and time spent in the context. Consequently, these studies allow “cases [or studies] to remain open to different interpretations over time” (Davis 1989, 15). In order to grapple with the complexities of culture and conflict, the exploration of hidden layers will provide additional information for the research task. To consistently depend upon precise definitions and strict categories is to miss the nuances and

subtleties that are a part of human complexities and, at times, contradictions. This would mean, for example, that possibilities for resolution could be lost in the pursuit of a narrow definition of justice.

The thick description lens—attention to behaviour, words, and context—offers much to a study such as this wherein the peacebuilders are specifically adjusting their ideas and actions within the changes of a particular, and complex, context. Geertz asserts that it is the “intellectual effort” dispensed that defines the quality of the research (Geertz 1973, 6). It is from the respectful listening and attention to the deep ideas and actions of the participants that new ideas emerge.

Conflict sensitivity approaches

The phrase “conflict sensitivity,” in terms of a research methodology, has been at the margins of international development practice since at least 1999 (Barbolet et al. 2005, 3). Conflict sensitive approaches recognize that conflict exists in the context and seek to operate constructively within that context (3). Although this language is utilized most by international development agencies in regard to the monitoring of projects in conflict zones, it has much to lend peace and conflict studies research with its attention to seeking processes that reduce violence, promote peace, and enhance the structure of relationships in the region. The key focus of a conflict sensitive approach is “learning about the conflict context,” acknowledging the differentials in each context, and responding to the factors that emerge (14).

The conflict sensitivity lens is an asset in the interview process. An interview is a “social event” and as such is determined by the relationships existent in that event and by the context in which the interview is taking place (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, 126). As well, interviews are shaped by the “theoretical underpinnings” (Shah 2004, 552). Conflict sensitive approaches,

that is, preparation on the causal factors of the context combined with theoretical familiarity can enhance the flow of research interviews. Simon A. Mason (2003) views conflict sensitive approaches as profound in shaping the style of interviews that he conducts. Conflict sensitive interview questions are open ended and resource building; and they are questions that generate reflection on needs and possibilities for the community in conflict (5). Investing in examining a fuller picture of the context transmits an emotional absorption in the issues of the interviewee as important in the process. This presupposes an accountability of the researcher to the participants with which they work and the ability of the researcher to recognize the distinctions of that context (7).

Anderson (1999) has been a key influencer within the conflict sensitivity approach. The questions that have driven her work have been directed towards answering how assistance can be integral in conflict situations without “feeding into and exacerbating” the conflict situation and working with “local people to disengage and establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems” undergirding the conflicts (1). Anderson’s approach has been to collect case studies in order to gather experiences of working with that struggle, approached under the guidance of the concept *Do No Harm*. *Do No Harm* works from the assumption that no one is neutral and that, therefore, it is important to reflect on the bias and impact that one can bring into a new context, especially a vulnerable context. My self-education regarding the impacts of trauma and colonization on the people with whom I have worked has been essential in order to diminish the possibilities of bringing harm. Anderson works from the premise that it is preferable to reveal the complications that could result when outsiders are immersed in conflict situations as part of the process for enhancing possibilities of assisting in times of conflict (147).

The conflict sensitivity lens ensures researcher awareness of the impact that the research itself can have on the context in which the research takes place. Acknowledging that one needs to engage sensitively and to analyze one's approach to ensure that it is not creating victimization, or engaging in patronizing behaviour, is crucial. Deep knowledge of the context and a commitment to building and respecting relationships is an acute aspect of the research process.

(Cross) Culturally sensitive approaches

The lenses utilized by a researcher have significant implications for the group at the forefront of the research project. These lenses, unless acknowledged and de-privileged, “can negate the socio-cultural reality” of the group being interviewed, especially if it is a vulnerable population (Wilson and Neville 2009, 70). Research must “accurately reflect the voice and needs of the participant group” in order achieve “optimal relevance” and benefit for the collective group involved in the research (70). Culturally sensitive research assumes the space for diversity within the project and addresses areas of worldviews, specific knowledge, collective orientations based on historical and political experiences, and distinctive behaviours (Baugh and Guion 2006, 2-3). The use of a variety of qualitative research methods is one approach to addressing complex cultural dynamics.

The work done by Denise Wilson and Stephen Neville (2009) contends that cultural safety in research is possible “if researchers fundamentally believe in the right of those who are considered vulnerable (including those who are marginalised or underserved) to be heard and treated with dignity and respect” (70). Working with the cultural realities and safety of a particular group is a complex undertaking. Critical to a successful process is “the establishment of relationships and negotiating [respectful] terms of reference for [the] research” (71). The integrity of relationship building is a vital indication of respectful research process.

This integrity is grown through the commitment to understand the socio-cultural reality of the group at the focus of the research. Cultural safety approaches to research require researchers to dedicate time to reflecting “upon their own cultural reality” as a way to identify the values and beliefs foundational to their reality (Wilson and Neville 2009, 71). Understanding that one’s own set of values can impact the research process is a critical aspect to practicing culturally sensitive research. Given that it is not possible to be an insider in every context, considering appropriate measures as an outsider are significant to the well-being of the relationships and ideas generated. Taking the time to consider these dynamics provides for the possibility of authenticity. Culturally sensitive work focuses on building partnerships based on meaningful relationships. Awareness opens the researcher to contemplating the possible dividers and connectors at play in each interaction. Different cultures have “different ways of thinking and different ways of interpreting objects and events” and this aspect must be understood prior to the commencement of the research (Shah 2004, 561).

Given that cultural differences are huge influencers in the process of the research interview, the role of power in relationships must be considered. It is an influencing factor in research. The researcher needs to be cognizant of the current “pervasive supremacy of the western empirical perspectives” within the prevalent knowledge and research discourses (Wilson and Neville 2009, 76). For the researcher to adopt a “power with” approach requires a willingness “to engage in power sharing” in the process of creating the research project (76). Foucault’s (1980) writing on power and knowledge asserts that power is not something that can be owned, but that it is something that acts in a particular way and functions more as a strategy than a possession. There is a relational aspect to power. “Power must be analyzed as something which circulates or as something which only functions in the form of a chain—Power is

employed and exercised through a netlike organization—Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application” (98). John Gaventa’s work (2006) on power builds on the idea of the “net” with his “power cube” approach. He views the intertwining aspects of levels, spaces, and forms as potential for assessing “the possibilities of transformative action in various political spaces” (25). Sensitivity to the weight of various perspectives and their influences adds richness and respect into the researching relationship and process as well as indicting that attention to the impacts of power are essential to authentic research.

This section has focused on the complexity of research methodologies regarding the impact of researchers from outside of the culture. This requires attention to one’s own culture, and its inherent values, in order to better recognize dynamics within the culture one is interviewing. As an outsider to the Philippines, albeit with long relationships in the region, it behooves me to name the various lenses that can push at areas of integrity in the research process. Reflexivity—the conscious understanding of impacts—is essential and is an approach that acknowledges “that it is not possible for a social researcher to be detached from what he or she is observing” (Easterby-Smith and Malina 1999, 84). In order to make sense of the environment in which one is working one needs to actively engage in the context. Positive engagement requires awareness of the power dynamics in the situation and the type of power one carries into the situation along with attention to the types of conflict. The research methodologies utilized need to be grounded in a commitment to ethical approaches and include awareness regarding the attitudes of the interviewer.

Research Questions: Data Collection

Since I had a personal relationship with many of the participants, we met in a casual environment and I began our conversations asking them to describe how they got started in

peacebuilding work. My questions were intended to provide space for each person to choose the directions for their answers. Anne Galletta's (2013) work on the semi-structured interview stresses the value of such as a vehicle for "leaving space for study participants to offer new meanings to the topic" and for opening "up new possibilities in understanding complicated phenomena" (2). This approach enhances the strength of the semi-structured interview in exploring new areas for theory development.

Although each interview began with the same opening question each took its own turns and focus areas. I focussed on asking questions that left as much space as possible for the interviewee to choose the path of the conversation. Biographies of the participants appear at the end of the thesis. The questions that I used as a guide for the conversation are as follows:

1. *What is your peacework and how do you see it as contributing to building peace in Mindanao?*

This question sought to clarify the range of activities and connections to the broader look at peacebuilding in the region.

2. *From where does your approach come? What grounds your work as a peacemaker in Mindanao? What are your peace traditions? Who are some of your role models of peace work?*

These questions sought to build an understanding of the influences impacting the work.

3. *What is an example of something that has happened that focuses on what your peacemaking work means to you?*

This question sought to bring out stories that exemplify the depth of meaning and commitment connected to the peacebuilding work.

4. *What are the skills and strengths that you bring to your peace work? What skills do you see as essential for your peace work?*

This question sought to encourage reflection on the dynamics necessary for consideration in determining tools for peacebuilding.

5. *What are your hopes and dreams for peace?*

This question sought to frame an interaction with the participant regarding the vision that they have for the region in which they are doing their peace work.

6. *What are some of the challenges for maintaining peace that local players can assist with?*

What are some of the key issues that will need to be addressed in order to solidify the peace agreement or work at building a culture of peace in the region? What are some examples of ways to address them?

This question sought to explore the areas that might need further consideration or skill building.

7. *What are the roles for local peacebuilders? What are the roles for outside peacebuilders?*

This set of questions sought to explore consideration of the unique contribution of the local peacebuilder.

8. *What is your definition of peace?*

This question sought to uncover the assumptions that can be made in regard to what people vision as peace and what functions as the crux of peacebuilding strategies.

Although the open question does allow space for the participant to impact the flow of the conversation it would be difficult to assert that the semi-structured interview is value-free as a result of this flexibility. The questions that the researcher utilizes do indicate the interests of the researcher and, as such, do navigate a path through the conversation. Awareness of this dynamic is important and not necessarily something to attempt to eliminate. Norman K. Denzin (2001) describes the preconceived notions of the interviewer as “interpretive interactionism” and

highlights this facet as a way in which research can build understanding of the lives of ordinary people during critical junctures of life.

If properly conceived, and if the research is approached in a reflective manner, “interpretive research [can become] a civic, participatory, [and] collaborative project” linking the participant and the interviewer towards a “transformative commitment to community action” (Denzin 2001, 5). This view towards a transformative opportunity can provide the impetus for new approaches and strategies to emerge from the content of the research and heighten the value of the interview process. It also functions as a mutual commitment to change and action regarding the issues and dynamics emerging from the interview.

Research Participants

The selection of participants for this research focused on participants that, by way of their involvements and work, would enrich the understandings regarding the roles of local actors in building both peace processes and a culture of peace. The participants included are those—and there are many more—who have been involved (broadly defined) in creating constructive spaces regarding the peace process between the MILF and the government of the Philippines or as activists in building a culture of peace in Mindanao and the Philippines.

I started my selection of participants with a list of participants with whom I was familiar and moved outside of that group through recommendations made as the study progressed—a purposive sampling, a procedure that involves the selection of persons who represent the desired population. I chose a non-probability sampling method which involves the conscious selection of certain subjects to be included in the study. Qualitative research provides allowance to select individuals to participate in the research based on their first-hand experience of the phenomenon of interest because manipulation and control are not the intentions of the study (Streubert &

Carpenter, 1999). This allows for purposeful information gathering on the topic of interest. I strove to garner as much variation as possible within the range of participants.

Category	Demographics	Number of Participants
Total adult participants		36
Gender	Women	19
	Men	17
Culture group	Moro	8
	IP	3
	Settler	25
Region	Mindanao	28
	Luzon	8
Role (overlapping)	Religious leader	6
	Community leader	19
	Political leader	7
	Academic/educator	6
	Peace panel role: past/present	7
	NGO staff	21
Participant observation organizations		3

Table 1: Summary of Participants

A total of thirty-six adults (see interviewee biographies in “About the Participants” at the end of this document) were interviewed in this research and three organizations were observed during their activities of peacebuilding (Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, Waging Peace, and Peacebuilders Community Inc.). The table highlights the range of categories and demographics present in the interview sample. The interviews were, at minimum, one hour in length and two hours, at most. At the start of each interview I went through the consent process with the participant. All participants, with the exception of two persons, requested to have their real name used in the written research presentation. Many of them indicated that the interview was a rare opportunity to reflect on their work and that they would like to publicly indicate their approaches to peacebuilding. I obtained written consent for the interview before each interview commenced.

The interviews were held in a variety of places and I travelled to several communities specifically for the interviews. The locations ranged from coffee shops, workplaces, to homes.

Interviewees as peacebuilders

I have indicated that the thirty-six people interviewed for this study are people who have deliberately focused on seeking out creative and peaceful means for interacting with the conflicts of their region. As well, it was often the case that one person remarked to me, “You should speak to [so and so] for your study.” These were confirmations that the community sees these people as those engaging in the work of building peace.

Yet, each person was also forthright to say that they self-identified as peacebuilders, consciously taking on issues central to the conflicts nationally and within their midst. Each confirmed what others had indicated about them: they are peacebuilders. For some it has become a workplace title and role and for some it is the mantle they have chosen. Phrases that were spoken to me include: We’re tired of something happening. We have to do something. It happens. We’re doers. We fill in the spaces. Not a conscious decision initially.

Jasmin Nario-Galace, a peace educator, recounts how she was influenced by educators in her life: “These are all the reasons why I’m so big in education because I know that it can really transform hearts—that’s how I was transformed. It was primarily the vehicle that touched me and told me that, ‘The way to peace is peace.’” She began to identify as a peacebuilder in her college years, mentored by key women in the peace field. As she teaches, now, she asks her students: “‘What is the choice of your heart,’ I ask them. Because I tell them, ‘this is the choice of my heart, but what is yours?’”

Lyndee Prieto, of Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), laughs as she remembers the years of important international work ascribed simply as solidarity work and global

initiatives. “It’s not all these solidarity and studying globalization [activities]. We are doing peace work. [Laughter] We were doing peacebuilding.” She explained that it was dangerous to name the solidarity work as peacebuilding but she knew, in heart, that that was what she was doing.

Father Bert, a priest in a deeply conflicted area of Mindanao, began his parish work with entrenched biases towards the military and Muslims. But, being assigned in an area that required networking within those groups when war broke out explains his transformation to identifying as a peacebuilder in this way: “And that’s when I really experience the suffering of people in various evacuations enters—Muslims, Christians—but especially Muslims, even children. It was very, you know, as a missionary priest, when you hear the sounds of mothers weeping and children crying in the night, you don’t anymore ask whether they are Muslims or Christians. If there’s any little humanity left in you, you have to do something to alleviate them from their suffering. I remember I would just cry and shed my tears alone by myself. So, that’s when I was able to become a good missionary [of peace], you have really to transcend biases and hatred and anger to be an instrument of God’s peace and compassion to every human being.” His work took a sudden turn with these experiences and he is widely loved as a priest for all of the people.

When I asked former Secretary Teresita “Ging” Deles at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) if she considered herself a peacebuilder, she said: “Yeah, well, I describe myself as a peace activist. I think maybe earlier I’ve use peace advocate, but activist is really more accurate, I think, than advocating.” With the challenges of her work, it was imperative, for her, that she name herself as a peace activist. This designation has guided her efforts through many decades.

Each person in this study has a story of their transformation into peacebuilding and the journey to recognize that this would be the passion that would guide their lives. Their efforts have been recognized by the community and, as a result, they were recommended to me as those essential to interview. Of course, many more names were suggested than I could possibly interview. I am grateful for many years of friendship and learning with this large Philippine peacebuilding community.

Data Analysis and Approaches

This study encompasses qualitative research methodologies. The intention was to study particular “phenomena in all its complexity,” thus examining the “many dimensions and layers” inherent in the research context (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 133). Embracing complexity indicates that a pure objectivity is not a possibility within the process of entering the narrative of the research participant, as the *interpretivist paradigm* indicates (Denscombe 1998, 2). This means that we, as researchers, become part of the research process as we work towards developing “insights into people’s beliefs and their lived experiences” (2). The hope for this research is that a multi-faceted picture of the Philippine context for peacebuilding will emerge.

I have sought, in this study, to be informed both by the grounded theory (Glaser 1967, 1992, 1998; Woodgate 2000; Aldiabat and Le Navenec 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) approach to research and the philosophy of phenomenology. This combination offers a view that focuses on the experience of the research participants, honouring the stories and insights that they bring to the research area, and a dynamic approach to the building of theory out of the constructs of narrative. I will describe the grounded theory basis for the research followed by a review of the impact of phenomenological philosophy and method on the research.

Grounded Theory

The role and place of grounded theory has conjured vigorous debate within the scholarly context. Its aim is to work at qualitative research from an understanding that when research “preconceptualiz[es] the problem, [the] theoretical framework, or concepts, have the potential to contaminate the emerging theory, and can result in forcing both the problem and the data into a preconceived model” (Elliot and Higgins 2012). Glaser (1992), cofounder of the grounded theory, asserts that the challenge of generating one’s own concepts as a researcher without struggling to ward off “the derailment provided by the literature in the form of conscious or unrecognised assumptions of what ought to be in the data” is the foundation of the grounded theory approach (31). Grounded theory operates as an approach that highlights the generation of data emerging directly from the research participants. Given the passion that urges the actions of the peacebuilders of this study, grounded theory is especially useful as a vehicle to open the space for the expression of those efforts. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1990), in their work on grounded theory, stress that this approach begins within an area of inquiry rather than setting out to prove a theory. What is essential is researcher openness to immersion in people’s words and lives. Consequently, the literature review in this study follows themes that emerged from the interviews and focussed on highlighting the complexities of those concepts.

My research approach has, consequently, focused on ways to immerse myself in the participants’ stories and ideas. I have recorded the interviews in order to transcribe them verbatim, thus allowing for additional time with their words and stories, chosen interview contexts where I could listen attentively, and created time after the interview to write notes on the interview experience. Grounded theory is an approach that is especially helpful when the researcher seeks “to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective

of those experiencing the phenomenon” (Woodgate 2000, 194). My reflections have benefitted from years of work in the region and a commitment to capture the singularity of vision in the stories embedded in this study. Strauss and Corbin (2007) propose that what is “most important is the desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants” and thus, eventually, developing expanded knowledge in the workings of the particular phenomenon of interest (16).

The choice of the Philippine context for the examination of local peacebuilding has been to uplift the knowledge existent in an environment very familiar with conflict and its impacts and which invariably holds possibilities for new conceptions of peacebuilding work. Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (1994) stress that one of the strengths of qualitative research is the potential for “local groundedness,” research that is conducted close to the source of the phenomenon of interest (10). Conducting research at the source ensures that the dynamics of the local context are embedded within the research structure. One of my hopes for this orientation is to create a “thick description” in order to see meaning emerge from the realities of people’s lives.

In the spirit of grounded theory, the data collected was analyzed for themes and then re-examined for inter-connecting themes, or questions raised, followed by the construction of a narrative or prevailing strategies. In general, as part of grounded theory method an inductive method of analysis was used to analyze the data collected. Thomas (2006) defines inductive analysis as “approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher” (238). The intent of this approach is to allow themes to emerge from the collected data without pre-determining the direction of the research, yet build connections with the research questions. The findings chapter will convey the theories built from the interviews.

Utilizing this approach, I immersed myself in the data collected. I, with the assistance of two Philippine research assistants—adding the value of geography and accent knowledge—transcribed each of the thirty-six interviews. Upon completion of that, I read the transcripts over and over again until I was deeply familiar with what each participant said. Martyn Denscombe (2003) describes this immersion process as useful in helping the researcher to make “intuitive attempt[s] to identify the key categories and connections on the basis of knowing the data very well” (270). To follow the grounded theory process involves a close analysis of the data, making comparisons between the dynamics of the themes that emerge from the interviews and notes, dissecting the data, and reconstructing it to form a pattern that can emerge as a theory, which, as Strauss and Corbin (1998) stress, can be said to “earn its way into your interpretation” (67-69).

The grounded theory analytical procedure focuses on beginning with data that is, then, used to develop a theory. In general, people’s actions and interactions with regard to a particular topic are analyzed utilizing a particular procedure (Creswell 2012). Although there is some variation in the steps of grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest the following steps: open coding, axial coding, selective coding and then the development of a theory. I worked through each transcript to understand key themes and interconnecting themes, looking for patterns that emerged between participants. Constructionist grounded theory approach (Charmaz and Belgrave 2012) focusses on understanding “how participants construct meanings and actions from as close to the inside of the experience as possible,” relying on the researcher to acknowledge one’s standpoint and research location as an essential part of examining the potential patterns (349). To this direction we become co-creators in the research experience. As I edited the transcripts with coloured markers to indicate themes during the axial coding step I formulated five key research areas with sub themes. By the time I got to the selective coding I

had discovered a particular “story line” emerging from the axial themes that became the basis for the findings chapters.

Rooted in Phenomenology

“But what is strange about this faith is that if we seek to articulate it into theses or statements, if we ask ourselves what is this *we*, what *seeing* is, and what *thing* or *world* is, we enter into a labyrinth of difficulties and contradictions.”

French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty 1968, 3

As Merleau-Ponty (1968) asserts, it is perceptions that play an enormous role in our understandings of the world around us. He says of the world that “we must learn to see it” (4). This is what I hoped for as I examined the stories of the interviewees. The phenomenological approach urges us to contemplate the idea that what we see will be what generates our thoughts. For the understanding of the research process, this view is essential to our consideration.

In general, phenomenology is defined as the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness; in essence “to grasp the essential meaning of something” (van Manen 1975, 77). It provides the direction for describing and analyzing “the basics of social existence” (Denscombe 1998, 98). Often referred to as the father of phenomenology (Cohen, 1987; Koch, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1983; Scruton, 1995), Edmund Husserl’s (1859-1938) work led him to believe that those who only focussed on external stimuli “not only missed important variables but ignored context and created a highly artificial situation” (Laverty 2003, 4). Husserl’s work in *Ideas I* (1913) defined phenomenology as “the science of the essence of consciousness” (Husserl 1963, *Ideas I*, 33ff). As such, phenomenology provides a crucial view to the interaction with research participants.

Martyn Descombe’s (1998) work on qualitative methods highlights Husserl’s work on the “lived experience of human beings within the ‘life-world’ (Husserl 1950)” and Martin

Heidegger's philosophical concern "with the nature of 'Being-in-the-world' (Heidegger 1962) as pushing the emergence of significant emphasis on the examination of the routine and ordinary features of social life, and towards questions regarding "how people manage to 'do' the everyday things on which social life depends" (98). David W. Smith's (2016) work on phenomenology regards Heidegger's, *Being and Time* (1927), as essential work and as the moment in which Heidegger—student of Husserl—revealed his approach to phenomenology. Smith's summation of Heidegger is that "we and our activities are always 'in the world', our being is being-in-the-world, so we do not study our activities by bracketing the world, rather we interpret our activities and the meaning things have for us by looking to our contextual relations to things in the world" (Smith 2016). This requires the researcher to approach the interaction as an immersion opportunity and an opportunity to enhance the authenticity of the work.

The implications for social research are immense. The phenomenological approach to qualitative research grants high value to people's everyday thinking. The intended result is that by the process of "looking at multiple perspectives on the same situation, the researcher can then make some generalizations" and construct an overall perspective on a particular phenomenon as people experience it (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 139-140). This constructed pattern from people's experience can be tied to various theories that can, then, generate some practical implications.

This process, of capturing the essence of some phenomenon, requires an attention to the details of people's narratives and time for reflection in order to make "explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience" (van Manen 1975, 77). What is encouraged, through face to face interviews, for example, is direct contact with the lived experience. Phenomenological study invites the researcher to enter into an active space for the intention of discovery, yet with a

freedom that does not dictate the outcome. Max van Manen (1975) refers to this as a “free act of ‘seeing’ meaning” (79).

Research from a phenomenological approach assumes that the researcher enters deeply into the participant stories in order to “hear” meaning and that themes begin to emerge that tell something of what is going on. Working with the collected experiences, van Manen (1975) suggests asking, as one pours over each anecdote, “what is its meaning, its point?” (87). We discover these themes in a concerted effort to discover significance and by opening ourselves, as researchers, to that process of discovery. Merleau-Ponty (1968), in *The visible and the invisible*, reveals some of his approach to preparing for the phenomenological study:

This is the way things are and nobody can do anything about it. It is at the same time true that the world is *what we see* and that, nonetheless, we must learn to see it—first in the sense that we must match this vision with knowledge, take possession of it, *say what we* and what *seeing* are, act therefore as if we knew nothing about it, as if here we still had everything to learn. But philosophy is not a lexicon. . . . It is the things themselves, from the depths of their silence, that it wishes to bring to expression (4).

The challenge in the phenomenological study is to commit to honouring the stories of the research participants—“Anecdotes can teach us” (van Manen 1975, 120). There is richness in the effort to open oneself to the depths of knowledge existent in everyday lives.

As such, researchers are involved in a dialogical construct with the research participant. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) speaks of the “*hermeneutic interview*,” as the way in which the researcher keeps the questions open, thus providing space for insights and discoveries. The interaction of the participant and the research is focussed on arriving “at the heart of the matter” (Tesch 1994, 147). The onus is on the researcher to capture these relational dynamics as truly as possible.

The hermeneutic orientation acknowledges that each person comes with their own interpretation of the event and it is important to acknowledge the biases that we bring into the

research environment. Heidegger's (1962) conception of our being-in-the-world, or *Dasein*, requires that we seek out interpretations of our existence, such that "an interpretation is never a pre-suppositionless apprehending of something presented us" (191). We bring what we know, and a curiosity of what we don't, to the phenomena we are researching.

Research towards building an understanding of human existence is challenging, at best. The methods utilized in this study strive to discover meaning within the stories and lives of those interviewed. Van Manen (1975) reminds us that "[w]e know things through our bodies, through our relations with others, and through interaction with the things of our world" (xiv). For me, sitting in spaces adjacent to the conflict sites for the interviews, hearing the noises of people and traffic, feeling the warm, humid air that encourages an afternoon siesta, and drinking local coffee or mango juice enabled a multi-sensory perspective on the stories being shared. Thus, in addition to the theories that provide foundation to this study is also that which we experience through the interaction with each research participant, as stories mesh with life and the search for meaning. In this study, the search is in regard to the meaning of peacebuilding, done by those closest to the conflict situation.

Methodological constraints or problems: Ethics and Limitations

Although the majority of participants requested that their names be utilized in the study, one of the key constraints of this research is, still, the ability to ensure appropriate confidentiality for the participants. Many of these peacebuilders work in delicate contexts regarding a balance of peace and violence. Peace processes are delicate endeavours and it is important to build a sufficient level of trust in order to procure rich information from the interviewees. Working with trusted and local advisors enhanced my ability to build a relationship with each person

interviewed. As well, I have carefully chosen the content of the quotes to maintain safety for each participant.

Given that confidentiality and trust building are significant aspects to this research, the setting for the interviews were important. Each participant was given the opportunity to designate a location for the interview so that if they preferred a private location that was made possible. Interviews were scheduled for one-hour blocks in order to ease the arrangements that needed to be made.

As well, given the complexity of this conflict context, this research has involved people highly invested in the content of the research. Consequently, I presented my preliminary findings at an event in Davao City, the Philippines on May 13, 2016 to which all those interviewed were invited in addition to other colleagues and peace workers. It enabled an opportunity to check my preliminary findings with an “on the ground” audience of peacebuilders and blur the lines distinguishing who was interviewed in the project and who was an invited guest to the event. The program for the event provided opportunity, for those who wished, to present their “data” or “life anecdotes” and to interact with the themes that stood out for me and to check them with local peacebuilders.

Summary

Research requires the skill of responsiveness, acknowledging the need to move towards more depth and sensing when it might be necessary to grasp a larger landscape. Vulnerability and the ability to be self-reflective provide the basis for interaction with the participants in order to create a meaningful interaction.

The early twentieth century Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, provided a foundation for considering a complex issue via the idea of holding both a universal orientation and a

particular, acknowledging the necessity of being able to move in and out. He differentiated between the system of a language (*langue*) and the ability to speak a particular language (*parole*). This highlighted that the knowledge of a system was a significantly different thing than the practice of speaking. Roy Harris (1988), in his work on Saussure, writes:

Language is no longer regarded as peripheral to our grasp of the world we live in, but as central to it. Words are not mere vocal labels or communicational adjuncts superimposed upon an already given order of things. They are collective products of social interaction, essential instruments through which human beings constitute and articulate their world. This typically twentieth-century view of language has profoundly influenced developments throughout the whole range of human sciences (ix).

This agility to move back and forth between various aspects of social interactions is essential in terms of articulating the complexities of conflict situations.

Lederach's (2005) definition of the moral imagination as the "capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist" also assumes the need for agility and provides further insight to Saussure's idea of moving in different directions almost simultaneously (Lederach 2005b, ix). Considering directions regarding the Philippine context it is helpful to think through the realities of what one already knows combined with the encouragement to move ahead, all the while considering the impacts of power in the shape of colonialism, trauma, and political inequalities. Although Saussure was applying his theories to the discipline of linguistics his quest was "to determine the forces that are. . .universally at work [and through that] deduce the general laws to which all specific historical phenomena can be reduced" (Saussure [1916]1966, 6). Saussure's contribution was to separate what was social from what was individual in the contemplation of the impacts of language and provide a basis for a structuralist analysis (Bouissac 2010, 12). Resources are available to the "individual" if s/he is grounded in the "essential or social" aspects of the system. If one is rooted in the challenges facing a real situation, one's imagination can assist in

provoking the creativity to move beyond the current reality. The challenge is to give birth to new processes of understanding with the express purpose of enhancing the possibilities for the future.

How one goes about gathering the new processes is a crucial aspect to the endeavour. The research approaches utilized here indicate that the orientation of the researcher toward engagement in the context is significant. Alex Khasnabish's work on possibilities, or radical movements, asserts that the researcher has a vital role to play in perceiving "radical challenges to the status quo [or current situation] and. . .cultivating alternatives to it" (Khasnabish 2014, 50). The Radical Imagination Project in Halifax, Nova Scotia, pursued methods grounded in ethnography in order to be more responsive to changes in the social environment. The project's approach was to work on a research methodology "that takes seriously and treats as primary living social realities rather than approaches that offer diagnostics of movements, mapping them onto a political landscape delimited by dominant socio-political and economic institutions, powerful actors, and their attendant ontologies and epistemologies" (Khasnabish 2014, 50). The local realities hold vast amounts of "data" for ascertaining the constructive directions.

Anthropologist David Graeber suggests that ethnography can provide the ability tease out "the tacit logic or principles underlying certain forms of radical practice, and then, not only offering the analysis back to those communities, but using them to formulate new visions" (Graeber 2007, 310). This approach suggests that researchers taking sides in promoting social justice are not violating research methods but are playing significant roles in raising voices that can enhance the current situation (Khasnabish 2014, 51). Khasnabish concluded that in contexts when compelling imaginations might be waning in regard to creating constructive possibilities, researchers "in the field of radical imagination must do more than explore fetishized invocations of it, it must participate in the process of collectively calling it into being" (Khasnabish 2014,

52). This study seeks to tug out possibilities existent within a context potentially rich in guidance towards local peacebuilding.

Chapter 7: Findings from the Forest and the Trees

Introduction

From September to December 2015 I took a leave from my teaching job to go to the Philippines to do the research interviews with the local peacebuilders found within these pages. I had one small grant to cover my airfare—but so thankful for that. Dear friends in the Philippines, Dann/Lakan and Joji Pantoja, offered their spare room in Davao City. They are the founders of the Peacebuilders Community, one of the organizations that became my hub for participant observation work.

But when Dann and Joji offer a room, it isn't just a bed. It's an invitation to become part of the Peacebuilders community. The house and the office are on the same compound. You fluidly move from one to the other. In the mornings I would awaken to the sound and smells of the coffee roaster and conversations with farmers and staff involved with the Coffee for Peace social enterprise project. Every day, at lunch and at dinner, the staff would gather over a marvelous meal, cooked lovingly by Frani, and talk over the issues of the day. The meal was started with a recitation of The Lord's Prayer in Visayan. I was humbled and honoured to be invited, one day, to lead that prayer despite the group knowing that I might stumble over the words. As we would sit together, over food, questions flowed regarding the activities of the day. How was the field trip? Did the farmers get a ruling on their land title? Did you feel safe in the community? Did you say "hi" to the pastor and his wife for me? What are the concerns today? Conversation grounded in the context and a commitment to serve and learn within the space of their community work.

These conversations have influenced these pages as I've contemplated what it means to do peacebuilding in this, to be sure, conflict impacted land, but in a context of passion and

commitment to people's rights and food security as well as a heart for people's relationships and preservation of identity. The invitation to lodge myself, as I interviewed thirty-six amazing peacebuilders, within a community created to work towards increasing peace in Mindanao was a gift. It allowed me to work from a place "within," and to be able to say, "I live just over there, didto na lang."

This chapter profiles the findings that emerged from the interviews, grounded in the context and experiences of the peacebuilding work. The Philippine context is rich and an understanding of it is vital to the work of peacebuilding. Several of these friends wanted me to know how difficult it is to understand the context, even for them, as locals. They seemed to want to indicate to me, in friendship, that I would need to work hard to see the meanings that might lie beneath the surface. Deng Giguiento, the training coordinator for the peacebuilding program for the Peace and Reconciliation Program of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Mindanao knows the pain of Mindanaoans first hand. She recognizes the impacts of intergenerational trauma:

It's actually the trauma brought by colonization and the way we. . .because we have been colonized then we're not used to thinking as one, because we have been so much divided at the convenience of those who are in power. That we do not know how to be one. So, we still have that in our psyche. So, it's difficult. So, my vision for Mindanao really is for us to sit together and start the process of really understanding what is it that we want Mindanao to be and how are we going to get there. What is it that we want to be? And it's everyone's task and responsibility, not just the leaders. We still have a lot of work to do with the common *tawo* (the people), with the common people, because we're so used to leaving things in the hands of leaders, we're not used taking active roles for our country, for our island Mindanao. So that's our role [as people from Mindanao].

Despite the trauma, or perhaps because of the trauma, she invests in taking an active role in peacebuilding and in the lives of community members, because she is also from the island of Mindanao. She is convinced that those from the place have insights and wisdom to share that can lead to healing.

Sharon Obsioma Bulaclac, a faculty member of the History Department of Mindanao State University main campus in Marawi City (as I write, the context of a devastating war), understands that even as an insider she needs to invest time and effort towards understanding the context. It will not come automatically and she realizes that it is crucial for insiders to understand the dynamics around them if they are to be able to contribute to emerging ideas and solutions.

As a student of history, as also a peace advocate, I'm not doing this as an expert. I'm doing this because I have a lot of confusions, and I have a lot of things that I need to understand more because honestly, if you are a Mindanaon, it's—Mindanao is a very multi-faceted place like if you go to Zamboanga, it's a different Mindanao, Sulu Archipelago, it's a different Mindanao. If you go to Cotabato, it's different, if you go to Davao, it's also different, if you go to the Agusan area, and it's different if you go to the Lanao area. So, I studied about Mindanao history, Philippine history, because there are a lot of things I don't understand yet.

Understanding the complexity of a place is crucial. What Deng and Sharon wanted me to know is that everyone needs to acknowledge this, not just outsiders.

The interviews for this research enabled me to sit down with some of the significant participants in peacebuilding within the Mindanao context, specifically, and in the Philippines, in general. Most of the persons interviewed commented that they rarely found the time to reflect on the nature of their work given the constant pressure to respond to the many issues emerging in the region. The questions utilized allowed interviewees to ponder and select stories and learnings of their choice. The agreed upon time of one hour usually expanded into longer conversations. I had not pre-determined precise areas of interest beyond peacebuilding roles and thoughts about how they do their work but, rather, sought to keep things open for the surfacing of peacebuilding methods, strategies, views on peace and conflict, motivations, and experiences significant to the Philippine peacebuilding context. The time spent with each person was rich and garnered many insights for peacebuilding work and strategies. Some comments emerged as unique to the

particular person interviewed and some materialized as key threads that ran through several interviews.

Out of the effort to immerse myself in this complexity, four key themes emerged from the time with these dedicated peacebuilders: First, outsiders must listen to the local voices. Lyndee Prieto pushed me to view hip-hop *tinikling* as a springboard for thinking through the Philippine peacebuilding context. It functions as an overarching framework for contemplating the impacts of colonization on current peacebuilding practices and raises Filipino resourcefulness as a guiding inspiration for approaches and strategies. Second, Philippine peacebuilding is best expressed as “Bamboo style” peacebuilding. Many of those interviewed used bamboo as a metaphor for explaining their approaches to peacebuilding. Third, the definition of peace is contextual. In each interview I asked participants to define peace. Their answers emerged from their embeddedness in the context and highlight the current research asserting that views of peace are shaped by the voices included in the conversation. Fourth, Philippine dialogue has a particular and intuitive emphasis that enables relationship building, to a surprising degree. The area of performativity—that is, the assertion of the ability of speech not merely to communicate but to also construct an identity—provides a framework for examining the type of dialogue utilized in the Philippines as a vehicle for enhancing relationships in contexts of historical conflict.

Tinikling

On May 13, 2016, I organized—with the help of many Filipino friends and the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute staff—an event to present my preliminary research findings to those whom I interviewed for this research, along with other colleagues in the region, and to invite those whom I interviewed to share their experiences of peacebuilding. As a part of my reflections

that day I suggested that, perhaps, Philippine peacebuilding could be linked metaphorically with ballroom dancing—an activity popular around the Philippines. Like the waltz or cha-cha, peacebuilding in the Philippines appears rhythmic and coordinated, done in partnership with others rather than in isolation. There appeared to be some nods of appreciation for that metaphor, acknowledging that those in the room saw themselves as people who enjoy dancing.

Following my comments, a panel of interviewees shared some of their own stories and experiences of peacebuilding work. During the exchange between the panel and audience, someone (kindly) commented from the floor that my references to dance steps imposed by colonial powers might not be the best representation of Philippine peace efforts. Lyndee Prieto, one of the panelists, called out saying, “Wendy, you should be thinking of hip-hop tinikling as a metaphor for our work—it is traditional and innovative.” I am very familiar with tinikling, one of the national dances of the Philippines. It is performed at festivals and significant gatherings. It utilizes the ubiquitous bamboo and the ability of fast moving feet in a complex cooperation of steps and beats. But, hip-hop tinikling. . .this was new to me. What might tinikling, or hip-hop tinikling, say as a metaphor for Philippine peacebuilding?

Journalist Allison Riley (2010), in her article “Tinikling: A dance for the birds,” recounts the origins of tinikling and the recent link with hip-hop. She describes tinikling as dancers hurtling “between bamboo poles controlled by two people who slide and hit them to a beat. The sound of the poles becomes increasingly louder and dancers must avoid getting their feet caught.” Her investigation indicates that one of the discussions regarding the origins of the dance is that the movements are to mimic those of the *tikling* bird (heron) as it jumps to avoid the bamboo traps that rice farmers have set up. The moves of the dancers are quite intricate as they

move in and out of the beating bamboo poles. Those watching understand the importance of this skill of avoiding traps.

Another theory regarding the origins, which is of significance to this study, and Lyndee's comment, is the view that tinikling originated during the 1500s when the Spaniards conquered the Philippines (see Chapter two). The Spanish initiated large plantations, despite local resistance. The local peoples were forced out of their land and on to the new haciendas. Various research sources indicate that the dance was initiated by the forced labourers on the Visayan island of Leyte, that it was the labourers attempting to escape the Spaniards. Riley (2010) asserts that

[t]he dance has also been said to have derived from a punishment that the Spaniards practiced. Those who worked too slowly in the fields would be forced to stand between two bamboo poles that banged against their ankles. They would jump to avoid the poles, giving them the appearance of a heron.

In order to disguise their rebellion, it was the description of the heron that the local people would offer to the *hacienda* owners for explanation of their dance. Thus, tinikling became a way to express (everyday) resistance to the Spanish haciendas and to build communities of support. Tinikling began to function as coded communication in a time of oppression, a skill has been honed over the centuries.

Hip-hop tinikling is a recent adaptation of the original as Filipino teenagers add new rhythmic twists to the traditional tinikling, indicating the ability of the message to survive over the decades. These days the tinikling performance begins in the traditional Philippine style of its origins and then morphs into hip-hop music. Those controlling the bamboo poles clap them in sync to the beat of the hip-hop song while the performers continue jumping in between them but with the addition of some added choreography. The advanced dancers use their hands, as well, to

maneuver in-between the poles. Stagnation appears not to be an option in this region. Constant resourcefulness and quickness of adaptation signal the creativity present in this land.

The Philippines has emerged from a complex history of colonization, greed, discrimination, and weak state leadership. The long-term effect of the colonial legacy cannot be underestimated for its part in the recent civil wars. It is clear that the colonial history has shaped the factors that have been instrumental in leading to civil war in the country. Efforts to pacify the “native” have directed much of the colonial practices in the expansion of empires. Imperialist powers have often used the colonial strategy of the relocation of settlers in “problematic” areas as a means to assert dominance. Spain conquered the Philippines with specific aims of enhancing Spain’s assets. The tinikling dance, created out of this context of colonization, continues to highlight the strong spirit of a people. It is out of this context of resistance (see Chapter four) that Philippine peacebuilding has been shaped.

The tinikling dance reveals, as well, the deep resourcefulness and adaptability of the Philippine psyche and the strength of resistance measures and strategies. Felipe M. de Leon, Jr. (2011), describes the Filipino culture as “intuitive, feeling-oriented, and creatively spontaneous” (15). The Philippine context provides a distinctive blend of attention to the traditional and an attraction to the creative and imaginative. De Leon furthers this description to say that “Cultural identity is the fundamental source of social empowerment” (3). Tinikling, and its specific attempts to both maintain identity and to offer an avenue for resistance, is a key marker of social empowerment.

Hip hop tinikling indicates the ways in which resistance can endure and reveals the creative twists and re-inventions that are possible. Appropriate to this discussion is the Ethiopian proverb cited by Scott (1990) regarding the arts of resistance: “When the great lord passes the

wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts” (v). Dizon et al. (2003) describes the Filipino as able to “adapt to circumstances and any eventualities” (Imamura 2010, 21). F. Landa Jocano, a renowned Filipino anthropologist, educator, and author describes “Flexibility [as] one’s ability to recognize when there is a need to change one’s ways of addressing obstacles and difficulties” (Imamura 2010, 21). Hip-hop tinikling represents this ability to re-invent and adapt to the changing culture and, as such, anchors itself as a metaphor for Philippine peacebuilding; that is, holding on to the traditions and being open to creative moments as the context requires.

Developing a sense of self or of the group is an essential aspect of development. Within conflict contexts, groups need to assert their uniqueness and search out ways to belong. In *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*, Schirch (2005b) suggests that ritual, metaphor, and symbol are significant aspects of exploring solutions to deep-rooted conflict. She encourages peacebuilders to view possibilities for peacebuilding as a stage and, as such, encourages them to gather people “to overserve and take part in the peacebuilding drama” (1). The act of tinikling can function profoundly as such a drama, can strengthen the resilience narrative, and can enhance the identity of a people in their search for ways to move forward from a conflict situation.

Tinikling is always done as a public activity, highlighting the possibilities to “come and see” the ways in which resistance can happen. As such, tinikling calls forth a particular identity that can serve to inspire and serve as a metaphor on the peacebuilding journey. It provides a rich context for reflecting on the peacebuilding principles utilized by those interviewed. The findings of this section will draw on this richness as a basis to illuminate the workings of Philippine peacebuilding.

Imagine the scene! It’s a hot, humid evening and the streets are full of people. As dancers appear carrying their long bamboo poles there is a sense of anticipation. Those responsible for

the rhythm begin to pound out the beat, banging down on the street, and clapping the bamboo poles. These poles, and their beat, are the violence of the oppressors. Unrelenting and haunting. And in come the dancers, swift of feet, moving in and out with complex and agile steps between the poles.

There is danger present in this dance. One wrong move and the ankle is bruised or even crushed. Yet in the urgency of the beat is also a tenacity that comes from figuring out the evasive steps. And then the music box comes out and the hip-hop music resounds. The crowd cheers as the dancers flip back and forth between moves on the feet and the hands.

Tinikling, as a metaphor for peacebuilding, asserts the efforts for resilience and resistance, identity making, and creativity in the peace work witnessed in the Mindanao context. This dance provides a deep nourishment for reflection on the dynamics of peacebuilding in a conflict impacted context. It requires a certain amount of courage to step within the beating bamboo poles and a hope that one has sufficient agility to evade the potential crush. Inspired by the beat of the bamboo poles there is an unrelenting drive for peace and the voices of the onlookers signal encouragement and best wishes for the dancers. Although not spoken, the underlying narrative of cleverness for communicating dissent is present in spirit. The heart of tinikling, for those who were present on May 13th, is its function as a symbol of resistance and perseverance. That energy runs through these pages and the words of the interview participants. *Salamat* (thank you), Lyndee!

Bamboo style peacebuilding

After the May 13, 2016 event in Davao City to present my preliminary findings, I could not shake loose Lyndee's push to consider hip-hop tinikling as an image for Philippine peacebuilding. I was thankful for her assertion that the dancing metaphor needed to repudiate the

colonial legacy. Looking back over the transcripts, themes of right to self-determination, military abuses, need for dialogue, the urgency for resourcefulness and creativity, and the imperative role of relationship building rose to the top of the list. Tinikling, as a dance, denotes both resistance and creativity. It's a complex message lodged within an ongoing community party activity, utilizing the simple ingredients of the dancer's quick feet and the beat of the everyday bamboo.

Bamboo as the symbol to represent the colonial oppressor is significant—the defiance of the super violence emerging from the grassroots. Bamboo peacebuilding emphasizes three aspects of peacebuilding: First, bamboo peacebuilding is strong and creative. Tinikling emphasizes the necessity of continued resistance in the face of oppression. Philippine peacebuilding is driven by the energy to persevere. Naming one's group “All out Peace” in the face of “all-out war” is emblematic of that resistance. Second, bamboo peacebuilding focuses on moving between various groups. Just as the bamboo sways in the wind, so do Philippine peacebuilders act as go-betweens for the various groups in conflict. Third, bamboo peacebuilding accentuates peacebuilders who come alongside those impacted by the conflict. Bamboo never grows alone. Where you find one bamboo stalk you'll find another close by.

Bamboo is ubiquitous in the Philippines and during my interviews it was ever present. It was the material for the cups from which we drank, it adorned the jewellery that many wore, it was the material for the benches on which we sat, and it was the décor of the coffee shops within which we chatted. It is a plant that is metaphorically insightful for explaining the peacebuilding methodologies of the Philippine peacebuilder. MILF peace panel Chairperson Mohagher Iqbal, in his interview, emphasized that one

can never be an accomplished negotiator if you only read literature, but you need really to engage because, you know, negotiations are very broad because you are facing several types of personalities. And if you will not be able to engage [you will not be effective in the challenging space of peacebuilding].

He suggested that “we have to be someone like a bamboo, sturdy, whatever—no matter how strong the wind—we are still standing. So that’s it.” Bamboo—a plant that is an everyday essential to the average Filipino—symbolically captures, beat after beat, the delicacy and complexity facing the local peacebuilder in terms of the issues, methods, and intensity of peacebuilding in this context.

Bamboo has long been of practical usefulness in the Philippines for making products of many different types and uses—from food items to utensils. Yet, culturally, it has also come to symbolically represent “humility, flexibility and strength” (Kelsey, par. 6). Since the beginning of oral traditions, it has played a central role in the telling of sacred creation myths. In Philippine lore, one of the central traditional creation stories has both man and woman emerge together from bamboo stems that had been split during the battle of the Sky and Ocean. Bamboo is tied, in many ways, to what gives life to Filipino people and communities.

Chairman Iqbal leads up to his use of bamboo as a metaphor for his peacebuilding work by saying:

So, nothing is easy. So that’s, I think, the most important thing is that you are aware and, well, engaging in peace is not all downs; it’s ups and downs. So, when you are down, you remember those when you are up, and when you are up remember that someday you will be down. So that would really make you prepared to really engage. . .and, of course, commitment, dedication, perseverance, patience and prayers.

One needs to move easily back and forth, and be as bamboo, to be effective in peacebuilding, to meet the challenges that exist in conflict environments and have the strength to stand up to the forces of injustice. Tying Philippine peacebuilders to bamboo, to a dance of resistance which marks the beat, signals that they have emerged as an everyday pulse in a region deep in conflict. Philippine peacebuilding is “bamboo style” peacebuilding.

Philippine peacebuilders are also “go-betweens” and those who “come alongside” in their work and the next section describes these “bamboo style” peacebuilding dynamics. The section contains significant quotes from the interviews in order to maintain the focus on the wisdom generated from the peacebuilders and exhibits the connection to being “like a bamboo.”

Finding #1: Insiders of both worlds: Peacebuilders as Go-betweens

Philippine peacebuilders go between. They see paths and bridges where some might see despair. Working as go-betweens is a challenging position in a context where anxiety regarding the “other” is often nurtured by community leaders, politicians, and religious institutions. Although the go-betweens might not strike fear, it is certain that their peacebuilding persistence is being noticed. This section discusses the impact and strategies of the “go-between” peacebuilder and the question of how that role is made possible. Consider the nimble steps of the tinikling dancer. The peacebuilders described here have developed the ability to move in-between. It might have cost them more than a bruised ankle in the process.

In contemporary peacebuilding literature, being an insider to the complexities of the conflict places one at a crossroad regarding questions of how best to navigate involvement in the relationships impacted by violence and the ensuing dynamics. Although there are certain perils that come with proximity, many of those interviewed perceived the asset that their localized position afforded in terms of developing their peacebuilding work. Yet, this is a complex designation and not easily defined or ascertained.

This insider position, shall we say, has created the environment for “go-between” peacebuilders to flourish in the Philippines, specifically in the role of naming the peace being sought and nurturing the strategies for peacebuilding efforts to emerge. They have functioned as the undercurrent beat of peacebuilding—moving into places where people would not normally

work things through together. These folks have strength and diversity, have shown that they will remain standing in the midst of strong winds, and have multiple relationships. Mussolini “Musso” Sinsuat Lidasan, Executive Director of the Al Qalam Institute for Islamic Identities and Dialogue in Southeast Asia at Ateneo University in Davao City told me:

All of my life, I have been educated in a Catholic school, and now I’m working in a Catholic university. So somehow, on a personal level, it [working with Christians] did not affect me, or it did not lessen my belief in my religion, in my faith. It even made me somehow a better Muslim. For me, a good Christian is a Muslim, and a good Muslim is a Christian. Somehow, that’s an insider of both worlds. I see the dynamics, I see the socio-political landscape, and also, I can be an outsider. I can go out and look out at things differently. And my observations, I share it with my Christian friends. And my observations in the Christian communities, I share it with my Muslim communities. That’s the way things are.

Being an “insider of both worlds” has pushed Musso to see the good in both religions and to build constructive relationships, affording Musso the ability to be a “go-between” peacebuilder.

Musso has discovered strong advantages emerging from the opportunity of being immersed within multiple cultures and perspectives. Yet, it can create discomforts and the possibility of danger. Musso relates that:

Well, suspicion is always there. Even my brother would say, “Hey! You’re becoming a Jesuit.” That’s been the challenge, actually, [having my people understand that I am not giving up the Islamic faith]. But somehow, based on the things that I do, the things that I accomplished, people see that. So, that’s their judgment. At the end of the day, what do I bring in the community? I tried before to be defensive [of my work], but realized that it takes much of my time, so, the important thing is you have to be very transparent. People should see what you are doing. Because in the Shiite community, they see me as a Sunni. In the Sunni community, they see me as Shiite. Because this institute doesn’t cater for one particular school of thought. So, we try to bring them all together.

The result of Musso’s careful work, being mindful of how “going between” communities can be perceived, is that he is a highly regarded and trusted person within both the multiple Muslim groups and Christian communities in Mindanao. Musso is seen as an insider in a variety of contexts and is invited into significant conversations in a diverse set of situations. He is in great

demand as a resource and consultant in conflict situations. He honours the speaking invitations he receives, acknowledging that they hold opportunity to further immerse himself in peacebuilding efforts that utilize his ability to “go-between.”

This advantage for peacebuilding, of moving in and out of different communities, is not lost on Carino “Rockrock” Antequiso, a peacebuilding consultant, who is not originally from the island of Mindanao. His family transferred to Mindanao and he went to university in Marawi:

After my graduation—even before graduation, I started to do volunteer work in Marawi and Lanao del Sur; and it was quite a reverse situation because when I started working with some organizations in Marawi and elsewhere, there were times I was the only Christian and all my companions were Muslims.

And then, uh, everybody [Christian] was saying, “Don’t go to the other side of the lake” because that’s where the kidnappers were. And I have the guts to go around the lake. And then I discovered, well, the . . . this is the reason why people are scared is because they don’t really know. They don’t even, uh, many of those who are telling me before that the Muslims are bad, they haven’t met Muslims. . . . And those who are saying, “Don’t go to Marawi. Don’t go to Lanao del Sur.” They haven’t gone to Lanao del Sur. They didn’t even come to Marawi.

So, I said, “There must be something to be done with these prejudices.” And that started my journey as a peacebuilder in Mindanao.

Rockrock discovered that much conflict emerges out of fear of the other and that unless he was willing to immerse himself in efforts to understand the context, even at some personal risk, his peacebuilding work would not amount to a depth significant enough to impact the potential for change and understanding. He recognizes that in conflict situations, where fear is high, those who have made the efforts to connect—to “go between”—with different communities are the peacebuilding resources. The fact that he is comfortable a variety of different contexts in Mindanao has put him in place for compelling peacebuilding work.

Father Roberto “Father Bert” C. Layson, OMI, coordinator of the Inter-Religious Dialogue Ministry of his Catholic congregation in the war ridden area of Pikit in Mindanao,

knows the consequences of fear and broken relationships. His untiring work during times of war in Mindanao, the resulting dislocation, and frequent initiations for dialogue has granted him the respect from the many different parties in the region. Intervening in frequent clashes between community members and military units, he eventually realized the range and depth of misunderstandings existent in the region. His “go-between” access prompted his not insignificant efforts of educating various sectors on the complex history of Mindanao:

[FATHER BERT:] Just last week, I gave a talk to the military in Carmen because they invited me.

[WENDY:] And what did you say to them?

[FATHER BERT:] It’s about history of Mindanao and the role of conflict. It’s their first time to understand the history of Mindanao.

[WENDY:] Wow! Because many of them are coming from outside the area, right?

[FATHER BERT:] But even among Mindanaoans [there is a lack of understanding]. Unlike before, they don’t know the history of Mindanao. It’s not integrated in the curriculum. Actually, that’s when I started to research—why these wars? Why these endless wars? That’s when I started to understand why the Muslims are taking rebellion against the government.

That’s why one time, I gave a talk to all the generals in Camp Aguinaldo. And after my talk there, they said, “Father, now we know that we are part of the problem, now we want to become part of the solution.” That’s why part of our [teaching] module [now] is history of Mindanao.

Father Bert recognizes his admittance into diverse spaces as an opportunity to build understandings amongst those who don’t have connections with each other. Fear and misunderstandings isolate many of the parties within the conflict. Every person interviewed in this study uttered the word “trust” at least once within the conversation. One does not arrive at the position of “go-between” without the development of trust. Years of “going between” various conflict actors and focusing on ways to build understanding has earned Father Bert the trust that provides him access into a wide variety of communities—access that he utilizes as the vehicle for building relationships and peace.

In a collectivist culture such as the Philippines, the nature of relationships is such that trust is a key component of social cohesion. Yet, years of war and conflict have created smaller and smaller units of trust, creating a challenge for peacebuilding efforts. Father Bert's style of work in the ethnically and religiously diverse context of Pikit affirms that

you have to develop and gain the trust. You cannot impose it, [especially] if you are religious, you cannot impose it. You have to gain it, you have to prove it. Trust is very important. Even if you have skills but they know you are sometimes sarcastic or you know. . .they don't trust you.

All the expertise in the world will not substitute for a trust that you have worked to earn. You have to earn your role as a "go-between."

These "go-between" peacebuilders have become valuable and dear participants in the peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao. Father Bert was re-located, at one point, to another parish after spending many years in the Pikit parish. He tells me that a Muslim member of the Pikit community welcomed him back upon his eventual return. "He was crying because I [had been] out of Pikit for six years. I came back last year. He was a Muslim, a barangay secretary, and I'm a Catholic priest." Father Bert's overtures towards building relationships between Christians and Muslims had become deeply meaningful to the community.

Some of my staff were saying to me, "Father, some of the village leaders [in] neighbouring villages, they wanted to extend our project in their own villages as well." Trust is important even among the MILF—they accept me. [They tell me] You are not partisan, but you are a mediator, universal, non-selective, but inclusive.

Not everyone is able to build these solid relationships of trust. Father Bert has been able to bridge communities and religious leaders with his attention to the humanity of all. This has created a niche for the church's peacebuilding efforts in this conflict impacted region.

Nanette Antequisa, executive director of Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, acknowledges that

the social capital that we have is very, very important really in peacebuilding. Based on that experience, it taught us some lessons. [In] peace work, especially at the community level, [the] most important thing is trust in facilitating resolution among them, [it] cannot be done by one entity alone but should be multi-stakeholder and you just have to earn the trust and confidence of these different stakeholders for them to also contribute and also do the role and believe that you can really facilitate the process.

The focus of Nanette's peace work is community-based, working on conflict transformation around resource-based conflicts. These conflicts incorporate complex dynamics involving dispossession of land, large land owners, government, military, local government units, community members, insurgency groups, militias, and other groups all with varying interests and outcome desires in the region. To be a "go-between" in this diverse set of actors, in a volatile area of the country, has necessitated some delicate work and speaks to the significant efforts made by Nanette and many community based organizations.

The "go-between" role has emerged as an essential aspect of the peacebuilding work in Mindanao, in particular. It has enabled opportunities for relationship shifts within contexts of fear and mistrust built over years of violence. Yet, is it because of the insider-outsider dynamic? I realized, as I went through the transcript of my conversation with Mussolini "Musso" Sinsuat Lidasan, that I had interjected the descriptor "insider" into the conversation and into his analysis of his role and work. What was the coded communication that I was to hear within the words of his conversation? Looking at other places in my conversation with him I considered this further. He says:

I also carry the hat as one of the *Datus* in Maguindanao. As a traditional leader, somehow, they see me as a different breed. But, my personal background also connects with my character, with my reputation in the community. I belong to a family where we are respected because we negotiate. . .that's in our family where my forefathers were former sultans in my place. . .where my father is a lawyer, but he is more on the alternative conflict resolution. My grandfather has been a municipal mayor of our town for several years. In my mother side also, we've been into political power for almost several decades. But the good thing is, I somehow do not dwell into that kind of politics. I, somehow, try to mediate the communities in such a way that we try to identify what's

going to be the common good, what's going to be the good things that can help our communities? Even before [working at] Ateneo, that has been my background, and when I worked as a UN volunteer for five years, that's also one of the things what made me effective in my work. Because they. . . before, when I entered in a community, they thought I'm a spy, because I'm a community organizer. These are conflict-affected areas. So, I told them, "You can check, here's my father, this is who I am. There is nothing that you can skeptical or be afraid of. I'm very transparent. I'm just here to help you." *Alhamdulillah*, we were able to build a good number of peace and development communities in that short span of time.

The distinction of insider-outsider does not emerge as the defining factor in the description of assets that emerge a discussion of being a "go-between." Musso has been embedded in his diverse context for generations. He merely needs to cite his lineage for suspicions to drop. Outsiders look for the insiders. Insiders just are.

My interview with Myla Leguro, the program director for Advancing Interreligious Peacebuilding for Catholic Relief Services (CRS), who is also a Mindanaon re-confirms this. She talks of her insider [my word] asset as embeddedness. Embeddedness is the word that she has chosen:

The embeddedness, I think, is a strength because we are from here and the investment is that this is our life. It's not like we can just say, "Okay, this is, like, for a particular period of our particular project as outside civil society." But because we are an embedded civil society that it's really part of our own future also. We have a big stake to that. So, the embeddedness. And also, the embeddedness comes with understanding of the dynamics and how we actually work through the very complex Mindanao conflict because it's a very complex conflict.

The compassion, caring and perseverance of an insider's efforts bring strong assets to peacebuilding work in complex conflict situations. And beyond the simple aspect of the work it is a deep accountability to the community members and the future of relationships.

Abdullah, someone with extensive experience in community-based organizations in the Cotabato region, echoes Myla's feelings. He emphasizes that,

We were born here, and maybe we will die here, so this is our place, and therefore we need to be active in finding ways by which we can make this place a better place to live

in. Many of us, I'm speaking for myself, I am a student of these realities for a long time. . . . I know what violence is and what is non-violence, I've already learned about this war from 20 years ago. . .and it is depriving us this place and opportunity to build our communities instead of being displaced all the time. The education of our students is also affected, and mostly affected by war. Social cohesion. Some people are now living in Manila, or elsewhere, adapting a different life, continuing marginalization; and therefore, I think, from our end, we really need to draw a very active role in helping finding means. . .so, I think the commitment is there, we have no other place to live.

I hear so much passion in these voices as they speak of the places to which they are so attached, heart beats in the midst of, many times, great pain. There is valuable energy for peacebuilding especially when there is the understanding that the stakes are high and that many of the best resources are already available in the context.

These “go-between” peacebuilders have modeled what deliberate trust building can do for peacebuilding work in this region. Yet, this trust building is possible because of the embeddedness from which these peacebuilders work. I realize that many of these embedded peacebuilders were not even born within their jurisdictions of work, yet they are embedded. Without trust as the foundation, positive relationships are quickly dismantled, and the “go-between” work impossible. The “go-between” role is essential to peace work in Mindanao and it occurs through the work of the—hard-to-define—embedded local actors in the space. It is a dynamic space. Several themes have emerged as significant areas of practice in the embedded “go-between” bamboo style of the peacebuilders interviewed.

Keep looking to the forest: New approaches and enthusiasm

Bamboo style peacebuilding moves in the directions needed, just as the hip-hop addition to tinikling emerged. To become fixed on a few issues will hold the peace process back. It is important to remain relevant. In the peacebuilding stories in this research there was an intuitive sense of when and how to move in order to respond to the presenting challenges. Chairman Iqbal

feels strongly that peace workers need to keep widening the scope, to view the biggest picture possible:

Disappointment, frustration are part of the human system; they are normal. . .it [is] something problematic because some civil society organizations are very particular about one or two issues. They forget about the forest. They are more concentrated on individual trees. . .some civil society organizations push for just one or two agendas, for instance, women agenda, Indigenous people agenda. Of course, those are very important but, if you stay rooted on those two agenda and forget the rest of the other issues, then you are getting, you are emphasizing one or two, and then trying to forget the bigger picture. That's one area wherein you find some problems in trying to reach out to civil society organizations. But the more important thing is the forest rather than the trees. . .the forest cannot be forest unless there are [many] trees.

Chairman Iqbal believes that it is essential to keep pushing at the edges with a zeal that must be reckoned with. We must create a noticeable forest in our peace work, not limiting the potential hope for change by managing only a few trees.

What are the ideas that will enable peacebuilding efforts to move forward in this next presidential (Duterte) era in the Philippines? Bong Montesa teaches creative thinking techniques and believes strongly that civil society needs to be creative and proactively think through new roles and possibilities for peacemaking. His mind is going many directions at one time and it was all I could do to follow the many streams of thought:

What if civil society, for example, was the primary driver of peace agreements rather than simply as an accessory or supporter? Let the government and the armed groups lead us to civil society. . . . With the power of media, Facebook, it can help. So, the dominant idea is that civil society helps and leads the parties to think through the efforts needed. [What if we] reverse [the method] to the parties helping the civil society accomplish peace. . .this is heresy, you know. . .[thinking] that civil society should provide the atmosphere, bring the parties together.

Of course, Bong believes that indeed it must be civil society and those committed to peacebuilding that should provide the atmosphere, but asserts that this will take courage. In his estimation, without creative thinking and openness to turning status quo methods on their head,

change will not happen. And if the change does not provide space for bottom-up discourse, peace will be very hard to come by.

How will this change take hold? How does Bong answer this?

Well, the new thinking will come if you ask the question for those who are working in peace. What if there is no peace agreement? How would we run things? How are we going to have peace without peace agreements? Because there must be some agreements without written peace agreements. Because the written peace agreements operate as if it's once and for all. It should be more dynamic. And though it's a complex thing of negotiating, talking. . .if the facilitator or one of the key members or key personalities of the groups are imaginative or creative enough, they...I mean it can start small in municipality or—but if they ask the question: How can we make this place where we can all be happy? Simply, how can we do that knowing that everyone is trying to compete for power and all the. . .this human condition that we are. . .complicit in, original sin or I don't know? How to structure our society? If we start with those basic agreements, I believe the people will find their happiness. . . . I have yet to find someone that says no to something that will bring their children to a better future.

Bong specifically sees the new directions as a peacebuilder's obligation—to change society, and do it creatively, is a mark of someone committed to the cause.

Ging Deles thinks similarly. People do not have to be stuck, waiting for the government to move:

When the government is ready for peace and is moving, then you have to be smarter about taking their position and being able to move that even further, sometimes they [local peacebuilders] stayed on an issue too long when actually there was already a resolution by the parties that in fact they could go with this and move on to something else and civil society was still there saying, "Solve this problem this way." Yeah, you have to be ready, you know.

Ging pushes her belief that we move forward based on local change makers and that we're limited only by our own imaginations.

Building simultaneously: Horizontal and Vertical Peacebuilding

Imagine the intricate steps that tinikling dancers take. Delicately stepping this way and that. Bamboo style peacebuilding takes in new angles and directions, open to moments of spontaneity and inspiration. It requires the juggling of ideas and relationships on multiple planes.

Father Bert sees value in examining challenges from numerous angles. Perspectives must be challenged in order to create substantial and sustainable change.

So, it's a vertical approach and a horizontal approach. We have to build simultaneously. We cannot just rely on peace to happen from the government and the MILF talking together. We have to continue something. That's why we are also doing our part here promoting peace at the grassroots at a horizontal level among the local inhabitants because. . . [there is] heated anger, relationships broken also. There's no peace. If there's no peace among the neighbours, there's also casualties. . . . That's why the horizontal peace process is what we are doing right now. That's why I told you the story of reconciliation because that's part of post-conflict. It's healing the past—that's personal peace. Of course, no more war, and then post-rehabilitation—we're also engaged in that. That's why socio-economic addressing of the structural violence, poverty and so forth, is so important. It's a comprehensive approach—personal peace, structural, social, cultural, religion.

A sustainable peace recognizes the need for acting in multi-faceted ways, enabling growth and healing within communities.

Karen Tañada, Executive Director of the Gaston Z. Ortigas (GZO) Peace Institute, started her activism in the martial law days. She knows that there is a strong history of Philippines activists and peacebuilders asking the tough questions. When former President Cory Aquino started negotiations with the New Democratic Front (NDF) “that's when the civil society got together to say, ‘You know, we have a stake in this, too. It shouldn't be just the government and the NDF, but we should have a role.’ And the people got together to form different political groups.” She believes that this energy—the push to work at multiple levels—needs to re-assert itself in this era of the Philippines.

In fact, Memen Lauzon asserts that

[y]ou cannot make any change in the society if that movement will not really be felt on the ground. Any impact of what we are doing here if not felt on the ground, doesn't make sense. While you have, for instance, the support of national or the leadership of the MILF or whoever will be the new government, if those just on top, if the ground level is not ready for that, does not even know, the ground level doesn't care, it doesn't amount to anything. . . we want [possibilities for] power.

In addition to multiple angles, there must be connections between the various sectors as they work at the issues.

Likewise, Myla Leguro asserts that

the very simple framework that we use is the horizontal and vertical peacebuilding. So, horizontal, the people to people engagement, local structures at the horizontal level, that's where we have been working for many, many years and now we have begun to really strategically think about how again how we can leverage that people to people engagement to address more the structural issues, which is more at the vertical level.

Working at multiple levels can bring about change and is essential for effective engagement. The agility to move in a legion of directions is crucial for peacebuilding.

We're doing all-out-peace: Creativity and fun as tools

The gales of laughter that emerge during tinikling is contagious. Audience members don't quite know if they should cheer for the dancers or those pounding out the beat. This infectious energy, as a model of peacebuilding, is evidenced in many peace events and planning meetings in the Philippines. As I came into the *Coffee for Peace* coffee shop one afternoon, a group of Davao peace activists were settled into a corner, with their flip chart pages up on the walls and ideas being proclaimed with passion. One of them said to me, "if the government can engage in all-out-war, then we can engage in all-out-peace." Just like the bamboo beat, so are Philippine peacebuilders saying that they won't give up, that they will be a constant presence when and where most needed.

Davao City is a hub of NGO and CSO work for peace in Mindanao. Benny Bacani emphasizes that there is creative energy for peace:

And there have been innovative programs that have been done. I think MPI is one of those. Precisely, Davao has become like a center of this significant cause of the involvement, of so many organizations outside of government involved in this peace process. You know that MPI is more CSO driven than academe.

The energy and passion for peace is driving the innovation and possibilities.

It is important to examine what nurtures this creativity. Deng Giguiento is one of those hopeful peacebuilders in Mindanao, full of dreams:

First, I think the ability to laugh at ourselves is a big part of our success. Yeah, it is a brilliant asset in the community. Sometimes they are already in tears and then they'll turn to laughter and say, "you know what, when you did this to me, this happened to me," and they would laugh about it; and I was like, oh, my gosh, it's painful; why are they laughing? But I guess that helps us through. It's really, you know, laughter is an asset. The ability to laugh at ourselves is an asset that my people have. Maybe not just in Mindanao but particularly in Mindanao especially if you walk in the hinterlands.

Finding ways to maintain hope is a crucial thing. Filipinos have nurtured laughter as one of those avenues for hope.

Deng tells a wonderful story regarding the role of laughter in creating a platform to talk about traumatic and challenging dynamics in the community:

[DENG:] I climbed three kilometers up the mountain to attend a particular assembly of ninety-nine people in a community. And when I reached there, I was really so tired and sweaty and I didn't bring an extra t-shirt so I was like doing like this [fanning herself] while all the men were taking off their shirts, I was like also wanting to take off my shirt, but they're like no, no. I was like, "why? You only can take off your shirt? What about me?" And they were like. . .and you know what, when we started the meeting, the first thing they did was to laugh. And this was a meeting because a company was already encroaching on their ancestral domain that they applied for. But in the map of the municipality, even in the map of DENR, nothing showed that this company was encroaching at this area. And they were like, "Ma'am you are here. Look at the fence. You see that. That's their fence. If we walk towards that, there would already be an armed man looking at us." "Okay, stay there. Do not cross the fence." "But that is our land." So, visually, I saw even if it's not in the map, they're there; and they're constantly threatened by the presence of the guards. It was very serious.
[WENDY:] Yes.

[DENG:] But they started with laughing. I said, “Okay, why the laughter?” They said, “Ma’am, it took you thirty minutes to come up three kilometers, thirty-two minutes. Congratulations.” I was like, “okay, thank you. Thank you. But why laugh?” “Because ma’am. . .” And then they told me [that the] DENR when they came up, it took them an hour and two of their staff collapsed. So, they were saying, “She’s old. Will she make it or not?” [Laughter] I said, “You’re talking to me about me.” They said, “Yes, we’re talking about you.”

[WENDY:] They were making bets on you. [Laughter]

[DENG:] They were betting on me. [Laughter] “Oh, she’s old. Will she make it? How long will it take her to come?” I was laughing after that. I said, “With all the seriousness, you have the time to do that.” [Laughter] But you know, they said like, “look, you gave us inspiration.”

[WENDY:] An old woman made it in thirty-two minutes. [Laughter]

[DENG:] “Yeah, and you came. We’re not worth it, but you came.” That was the inspiration. They thought I would not come. So, then they started talking about their hopes for their children, their land, and stuff like that. I was like okay, they laughed at me first and then they go all serious talking about their future. If that’s my contribution here, I’m fine. That’s it. That’s one asset that I really love about Mindanaoans.

A spirit of joy and love of being together holds the Philippine peace community together.

Traditionally, when there has been a death in the family, on the fortieth day there is a vigil to remember the loved one. The activists in Davao decided that they would use this tradition as a symbolic way to push for a national day of remembering, as a way to highlight the need for peace in the country. Augusto “Gus” Miclat Jr., Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), based in Davao City, told me that it became an inspiration for planning a peace campaign:

So, it’s combined with this all-out-peace launch. So, we were able to galvanize, not only civil society, but all over the country to declare this day, after the fortieth day, after Mamasapano, we declared it a national day towards healing for peace and justice. So, it was our way of addressing, if you note, look here, there’s justice there, and justice is not only for the Mamasapano incident, but for all who were victims, not just with the police, but justice in the broader sense. Justice with the Bangsamoro, justice for Mindanao. So that was the time for that. So, we were able to. Yeah! I think it was one success story where we were able to bring in different sectors, including the security sector—the chair, but definitely the civil society from all over the country—Visayas, Mindanao—simultaneously. And the senate came up with a resolution supporting it, the house was about to, and the President was waiting for it so he could declare it, too. But, it didn’t happen. Although personally, I had two minds about it. I didn’t also want the government to come in and declare it like it’s theirs still. But maybe declaring supporting this,

because it was a civil society initiative purely, although a lot of government officials joined in.

Understanding the cultural symbols in the context can provide inspiration for the planning of campaigns. The peacebuilders know that they'll need to creatively build on what already exists.

A number of the peacebuilders that I interviewed were part of a creative peacebuilding event that has already become an inspiration to encourage people in the continuance of pursuing innovative actions. I asked Memen Lauzon to tell me that story:

[WENDY:] There's a story that I would like to get recorded that you have told me. This happened during the GPH-MILF negotiations that happened, I think, in Insular Hotel, here, in Davao, where there was knowledge of the sort of civil society peace organizations that they were at a difficult negotiation point and some of you decided to intervene and give them some creativity back. Can you tell that story?

[MEMEN:] Yeah, that was last year.

[WENDY:] Last year, okay.

[MEMEN:] And there was difficulty in moving the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law. So the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law. . .so there was a commission, the BTC, Bangsamoro Transition Commission, and they already submitted the draft to the government, to the president. And then the president needed some comments, too many problems, because they're really very, very concerned about the scrutiny by the Supreme Court so all the legal and constitutional aspects. They really have to make sure that they did all the homework, due diligence. So, they had to give it back to Bangsamoro Transition Commission and a lot of these things were not acceptable also to the Bangsamoro Transition Commission. So, both sides, they had to elevate it to the panel again so the MILF and the government peace panel had to [sit] together. So, they had to meet, here, in Davao, in Insular, and then they had several days of exchanging talks and a lot of negotiations between them happened; and we know this is very, very critical so we, the peace sector, said that there's something that we should do to really encourage them not to give up. So, we were saying we have to give them all positive energy because it's really difficult. We could understand. They start morning until afternoon talking and meeting and then it's not done. In the evening, they will have their own caucus. They will have some meeting. . . . We can imagine how difficult it was and all of us were saying we have to do something. And we got, not as a way of pressure, but really to encourage them and we wanted them to stay the course. Nobody should give up. Nobody should leave without resolving this. They were there for a week already and then we thought maybe we could celebrate them. Anything that would really lighten up or even break some kind of very heavy mind work. We organized a serenade. We even had to practice among ourselves. We had a script of what's possible songs, modern, pop, old songs, that we even changed the lyrics to become more peace relevant. So like songs they remember, "I will survive," you know? First, I was afraid. I was petrified. We had a series. It's a medley. So that's one of the gimmicks that we did. We asked permission from both sides if we can

go there and, during the break, just to lighten up the mood because we know how tense both sides are. So, we asked permission if we could sing for them. So, during their break we were allowed to go. We even prepared flowers. We bought flowers. We bought chocolates. Something sweet and then we also had Davao fruits. We brought because Davao fruits is something special.

[WENDY:] Of course.

[MEMEN:] So we had fruits for them. But, on several days, I think we had one, two, three days. It's not just one day. So, on one day, we had that singing and chocolates. And then, the next day, we had the flower and the fruits, I think.

[WENDY:] Oh, you did two days?

[MEMEN:] Yeah, because you have to go back. We have to make sure, so we will still come back. We will still bring you some more. Something like that. Just to let them know that we are there. That we are accompanying them. That we will not give up on them. They shouldn't give up on the process. And then too, also, like, sort of, it's not really an entertainment. It's something that would really loosen up a bit the tense situation. But we saw and we even witnessed the dynamics. [Laughter] We saw how the exclusive meeting, negotiation, even Ging was here. So that's one of the things we did as peace groups, here, in Davao. We're all based, here, in Davao at the time and we really wanted to provide that encouragement. We were already in Insular [Hotel] and that's the first thing that we did just to show them some, that we are concerned, that we are following and that we want them to be energetic. We wanted to wish them luck. . . . We were thinking like we should provide them the encouragement. So as civil society, we should be the one that will really, not just a pressure group, but we have to make ourselves visible. That we are still here. That we are available if there is anything they want from us. Even if you don't ask from us, we will make our presence felt just for you to know that there is a peace constituency. There's a constituency that's really waiting for this, for this peace process to succeed. There's a constituency that really are aspiring for genuine and lasting peace for the Bangsamoro. So that's what we want to put across and even if there is just few of us, but still making ourselves visible, and we are willing to do, and I was saying, I was joking at the time, "we'll do anything for peace." [Laughter] We even tried to have a choreography when we were singing the "I will survive." So, anything for peace [Laughter]. So, we were having like, we were having fun. We know that it's really serious but it's a break. Just to break the monotony of the tense and intense intellectual discourse with all the other difficulties in that negative, like a breather, a break. We wanted them to feel that we as peace constituency are also trying to contribute to that.

As creative as the peacebuilders are that I interviewed, all of them know deep down that the creativity must be coupled with courage. To speak truth in the face of violence will need both.

As well, there is a strong commitment to creativity that acts as that which is supportive to all involved in the work. The focus of the creativity is to make a strong contribution to the peacebuilding efforts.

Lyndee Prieto recognizes her theatre background as an asset and brings it into her peacebuilding work:

So, I use training and dialogue. And aside from that because of our background, because a few of the managers here are either singers, in a band, so the creative aspect and the popular education approach and the kind of guidance from theatre and the adult education would really influence also our methodologies here, not only training. So, I do a lot of concerts, peace camps. I do a lot of this kind of biking for peace, bringing the biker from Visayas to go here and go to the MILF area and bike some more into the—that was in 2012. I organized for the youth this. . . music video. So, we brought in artists in the middle of the evacuation camp in Pikit in 2003. There were artists there trying—because it was also my internal advocacy that artists should be part of this because what artists are doing are peacebuilding. So, I was acting as a link. So, I was bringing my former colleagues in the artist community to sing, dance, and even to create, create productions about the war and all. So, it was really that kind of constituency that I love to develop.

Lyndee recognizes that it is essential that a peacebuilder has a large “tool box” of options in order to build the peace in conflict situations.

Myla Leguro asserts that peacebuilding has many limitations, from political and gender barriers, to geography, or to finances. Yet, the limitations hold the possibility that new ideas can emerge:

So being always aware of the limitations. And there are certain things that I have to accept as givens to be able to function healthily because if not, then I would always question and I’m not effective anymore. So, there are certain things that I have to accept. But at the same time by accepting that given, I’m able to creatively say, “Okay, if I’m not allowed to speak then I will find somebody who can speak my agenda.” [Laughter].

The resourcefulness witnessed in this region has at its base a serious purpose. And it’s clear that very little will deter these peacebuilders from their goal of a sustainable peace in Mindanao.

The rest is history: Recognize turning points

Often a venture into the unknown, for peacebuilding programs, is difficult when funding or reporting requires an assertion of certain results. There is, in Mindanao, a respect for the

intuitive and the freedom to declare that there is a moment that needs to be captured and that activities need to be altered. Gus Miclat wanted me to hear one of those stories:

I've been talking about Bantay Ceasefire (a grassroots organization first formed to monitor the ceasefire agreement between the MILF and the GPh). . . . One not well-known story, turning point, which I think that could have, may have, possibly started this civil society engagement process in a more strategic manner. So, once upon a time, when the all-out-war was declared by (then President) Erap, and when IID was not involved in local activism. . . . We are a regional NGO—East Timor, Burma, ASEAN. And we said, it's not our job; really, we decided that's not our mandate because there are a thousand others doing things locally. All we wanted to do is link our work to internationalist agenda and vice versa, although we have local partners. . . . Anyway, when the all-out-war happened, our partners were like, "What can we do? What can we do further?" So, we convened partners from Mindanao to a conversation. These were partners from the communities that we usually bring our interns to, these are partner NGOs who are partners in this program, and some other groups working in these processes. So, we brought them together in Samal [Island, near Davao City] and discussed the issue—what to do, sharing, conversing. . .and when we were about to leave, when the meeting was about to be over, this is again another moment of, "Hey, before we leave, we can do three things. . . . One, we leave, and go back to our respective contexts, organizations and constituents and tell them about the meeting – share to them how we were enriched." That's the first option. "The second option is to do the same and to keep in touch. But we're all here already, there's also a third option. We can organize ourselves, and not just to keep in touch, but since we are not ready maybe to be. . .I mean it's not that intentional, but there's this need and potential not only to converse and to keep in touch, but to do some action together." And that's the third option. Before we go, we organized into some sort of a caucus—at least a caucus because we are conversing. But in a caucus, we converse programmatically and respond to these issues. And the people that participated decided to go for the third option. And so, we established the MTC—Mindanao Tri-People Caucus—which was the precursor of Mindanao People's Caucus. Well, the rest is history, which established Bantay Ceasefire, it's on its own now. . .but then we also established the Peace Weavers afterwards. But to me, I think that was a turning point—organizationally for us, too—because we became engaged and committed with the peace process network, and also for civil society and grassroots communities—the marriage of grassroots energy and wisdom and NGO advocates and us together in this conversation and in this process, and established a network that became a pioneer in the peace process. So, that's one story that we were part of, and happy to be part of that. But since MPC has become independent, in which we, of course, strategically intended anyway to happen, but it's like letting go of a baby. . .not being part of it anymore. . .but then, that's not the point. The point is at least, then it started, and it started something. Whatever happened now, at least it was something that we were proud of, and very happy about. Again, capturing the moment, seeing the opportunity, seeing the possibilities and the need for empowering each other was I think what happened then.

Gus emphasized a number of times in this conversation that, at least, they had done something. By being receptive to the energy that was gathering, a good thing happened. The success of many creative moments is the energy to put forward and to have the energy to be open to the nudging from various directions.

Bishop Tondero has also had experience with unexpected moments and opportunities for creativity. For him, the decision was whether to embrace that moment or not. He admits that he usually seeks to move forward methodically and with much thought. But a moment presented itself and he realized that he needed to decide whether to jump in or not. The decision changed the course of the events for the workings of the PCEC and their engagement in the peace process. That decision also impacted events that were happening within the peace process and created new relationships that couldn't have been imagined previously:

[BISHOP TONDERO:] But what happened about engagement with Chairman Iqbal was one time, Dann Pantoja, I think that's about eight years ago, we came to chat for a bit of time. He sent me a text saying, "The cease fire violation escalated and it can go out again into an all-out war." Because during the time of President Estrada, his policy is an all-out war policy. And that was not. . .we really did not like that. Although I think we were more on the sideline so we were not able to take part. So, under President Arroyo then she continued the peace process. And there was another time when Dann texted saying, "Pray for the situation because there is the possibility of another all-out war." So, I responded to him saying, "Yes, I'll pray for you," and he said, "No, we need more. If you are really serious about our advocacy for peacemaking and peacebuilding we want you to come. I challenge you to go and lead a delegation of pastors and imams to talk with the leadership of the military and with the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and say, as evangelicals, we are really serious about peace." That was July if I am not mistaken 2000. . . . I know the date, it's July 4, because American Independence Day.

[WENDY:] Right!

[BISHOP TONDERO:] It was July 4, 2000. . .the year 7 or 8; I am not so sure.

[WENDY:] Okay.

[BISHOP TONDERO:] But the. . .so I told him after he says, we want you to come. "How will I respond to this?" I said to him, "Let me ask my wife." Yes, because in any decision, major decisions like that, I want to make sure that she is with me. Driving home that night, I was asking my wife and I told her, "I have been invited." I thought she'll say, "It's a little bit dangerous," but my dear wife said, "If you don't want to go, don't use me as an excuse." [Laughter] I said "Wow!" So, I had to really think it

through. Do I really want to put myself on the line? Because I remember that there was one general of the marines who went in there and was not able to come out for the next two months. Because of the trust relationship I had with Dann, then I said, “We can do it, I can go.” So, I went there. The first day, it was an easy interaction with the military. The western Mindanao command of Major General Ferrer was there and he brought the different brigade commanders and they say, “You know, we are also for peace. Our families are being sacrificed. As military, you have to understand this also, that we want to have peace although we have our position. . .we will hold and protect our position but we will not attack, but we will have to put up a proper position. We will not be sitting ducks when they attack us. Also, can you pray for us?” Following day, that’s July 4 when we went to the Camp Darapanan. I remember that during that time the head of the armed forces called me saying, “You’re going there?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “It’s a little bit dangerous.” I said “No, we are there with religious leaders.” So that was a very good interaction because arriving in Camp Darapanan, *Datu* Mike Mastura asked us, “Why are you here? Are you sent here by the government?” The president then was Arroyo. “Are you sent by the government?” I said, “No, we are not sent by the government. In fact, we came on our own because as followers of Jesus, the prince of peace, we want to have peace. In fact, Jesus says, ‘Let us have peacemakers,’ and we know that as followers—you know people who are created in the image of God we need to have peaceful coexistence.” And he said, “If that’s the reason, then let’s sit down; let’s talk.” At that time, I was there, first time to meet with Chairman Mohagher and I told him, “Chairman I recognize you for your commitment to really pursue peace because you’ve been the negotiator for these, for several years, chief negotiator and, as evangelical leader, I would like to say that we are also for peace.” And I gave him a one-page letter that shows our commitment to have peace. And he gave me in return about one-inch thick compilation and he says, “In here are all the agreements and negotiations we have done with the Philippine government. I want you to read this for understanding also.” And from that time on we exchanged—he become my text mate. And I tried to encourage him in terms of peace and I try to say or pray for him so that when they try to do again the MOA-AD memorandum on ancestral domain, we supported that. By the way, before I sign anything, I try to talk it out with the leadership, with the board so that it is a decision made by the board, not just by me. Although some of them it’s really because they, the long trust that we have with them, that they trusted the judgement that I have. Now, there are some people who do not understand the detractors and but, at least, the leadership are there. So that’s how I came to know Chairman Mohagher. July 4, 2008, from the time on until now. Although very little, in-between my schedule, I have texted him and we continue to seek the peace process. So, we do that now. Now when it comes to the National Democratic front, I learned that the Norwegian government became the volunteer facilitator for the National Democratic front. So again, I tried to talk to our president, President Arroyo, and say, “What can we do to help?” And she said, “Well, maybe you can connect with what they are doing, with the national, with the interfaith group at the National Ecumenical Consultative committee.” That’s where I get to know that they have the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform. I think it’s also that same year that the Norwegian Ambassador came—met with us and said, “What can we do to bring together again the people in the table?” Well, I said, “The religious people are here today. . .they have the taxability on both sides so maybe

you need to increase the interaction with the religious.” And so that time also PCEC became very much engaged as part of the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform whose main task or mission is to advocate for the peace process between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front. With the support of the Norwegian government, that also provided a way for me, together with the communities of the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform to go to Norway and on the way to visit the leadership of National Democratic Front in Utrecht. And try to tell them that, as evangelicals, we are supportive of the peace process and we want you to go to the table. So that has been way engagement so the basic pillar—the basic framework of the four legs of the chair and we are the fourth leg and we also want to make sure that we are interfaith group working together. Okay!

Bishop Tondero’s work was transformed in that moment in which he did the unthinkable—he built a relationship with someone who for years he would have considered the enemy of the state. By being open to hearing someone’s story he found a way to think through the options of common ground. Many organizations in the Philippines have emerged as a result of people responding to what they see in front of them, knowing that a response is needed.

Creating space to respond creatively is important to Lyndee Prieto:

Yes. Strategic thinking is very important but there has to be a careful interplay with what is beyond, what is unknown, and sometimes there are certain tools that would help us with that so you just have to allot a space for flexibilities and for surprises and for that something that will stretch your energy.

It’s not simply creativity for creativity’s sake. Somehow a balance must be found between strategic and spontaneous approaches. Yet, it is clear that to lean only towards strategic thinking would be greatly inadequate for the challenges faced.

The peacebuilders interviewed here have a large toolbox of techniques, methods of working, and analysis skills for assessing powerful ways of working through profound dynamics of conflict. Yet, each person indicates a commitment to working with others and striving to bring about a context that is life giving and supportive to each community member. This bamboo continues to sway, moving back and forth between contexts of need, and in the hopes of paths for reconciliation.

Findings #2: We are in the context: Peacebuilders coming alongside

Many of the peacebuilding stories that I heard focussed on creating a strong community with relationships that were strengthened amid the diversity in the region and the often-competing interests. Bamboo trees clump together and bamboo peacebuilding focusses on coming alongside. For those peacemaking Mindanaoans who invest in enhancing their knowledge and in building safe relational spaces across communities, the rewards are meaningful. Mia McKenzie (2015), a blogger on issues of solidarity (amongst other things), writes that “Solidarity is action. That’s it. What we DO in solidarity is all that counts.” The doing aspect of the stories below comes out clearly.

The community organization, Balay Mindanaw Foundation Incorporated (BMFI), has been creating safe community spaces for twenty years, accompanying and supporting year in and year out. Its movement from providing social services to acts of solidarity highlights the possibilities for sustainable peacebuilding when the work revolves around those who understand the issues and people best. Eileen “I-i” Ipulan-Bautista, a program coordinator, admits that in 2003, when the request for involvement in a conflict situation materialized, the organization had:

zero experience in peace building. Even on the peace process, we were actually hesitant at first to take it on because it was both the principals from the revolutionary group and the GRP representative who came and requested [our ED] to become the mediator and [the organization] Balay Mindanaw to become the independent secretariat. I think there was hesitation at first because we did not have any experience on how to mediate on anything, any knowledge on peace process and everything, or anything peace negotiations. But, because the major feature of the. . . what both principals from the revolutionary group and the government, what do you call that, their vision for this peace process was to give more emphasis on the community development and community participation. That is why they requested Balay Mindanaw because this was our pitch when we started in 1996. Our community-based work is really something that we can be proud of and we can hold on to, so they are saying, “It’s okay; we will find organizations that can help you, that can guide you,” and the [ED] was one who sent a consultant to help us be better in terms of mediation and independent secretariat work. But they said, more than that it is your expertise in terms of involving, engaging the local communities to be part of the peace process. . . more than that, the basis of the

negotiation should be what the communities intend to happen. The panel talks are not based on panels' decisions or perceptions but it should be coming from the ground. That's why the local peace consultation was really an integral part, an integral part of the process. The framework is not peace dividends, like after a paper is signed, after an agreement is met, and that's the time we involve the communities. This time we wanted them to be involved in the process and not after the process.

Perhaps it would be accurate to say that they entered into their solidarity work "kicking and screaming," not wanting to venture where they weren't best suited. But their years of coming alongside spoke volumes. They had been focusing on doing. I-i's story highlights the strong impact of peace actions that reflect a desire to come alongside those who are marginalized. Just as clumping bamboo grows slowly and stays within a small area, Balay Mindanaw's long term commitment to regionally supportive activities is significant.

I asked I-i, since the government and revolutionary groups had turned down international assistance, what she thought Balay Mindanaw could offer that international groups did not:

That maybe an international body could not? Yeah, because we understand the context, we are in the context, so maybe that is our edge. Because for international agencies, then they will still be hiring other people. It would take time for them to. . .while they may have all these ideas and theories, they might be wrong because they will never know the real situation if they are not in that situation.

Balay Mindanaw has taken some risks by entering conflict areas. The lessons that they have learned regarding local participation are valuable. I-i asserts that one of the challenges of working in solidarity with people is that

It's difficult to be neutral. Our work is very political. While we are part of the independent secretariat, but, clearly, our bias is still the people and communities that are affected. . .even if we have a certain bias for people or communities that are experiencing inequity, underdevelopment and peace, we also have a credibility of really ensuring that, although it came later, the term inclusivity or inclusive, even before we were already making sure that all stakeholders are included in the process, so I think that was one of the reasons. Our credibility of really ensuring, although they know that we have a certain bias for the poor, for the marginalized, for the farmers and everything, but we really ensure that despite that bias, we still provide spaces for everyone to share and hear everyone's voice.

Balay Mindanaw's efforts to understand the people and the needs of the community has not gone unnoticed and has built their credibility.

Charmaine Mae XX Dagapioso, I-i's colleague at Balay Mindanaw, is the peace education coordinator under the International Center for Peace with the community-based work at Aleosan, North Cotabato, in Maguindanao. She concurs with I-i's assessment that those who situate themselves closely with conflict impacted communities have a valuable contribution to make in working with the conflict situation in Mindanao and that those contributions stem from long term relationships.

[WENDY:] And where did those relationships come from [that enabled you to begin the work]?

[XX:] Okay, [our ED], again [laughter]

[WENDY:] Hey! A key person, for sure!

[XX:] Of course, because [he] is, uh, he grew up in Cotabato.

[WENDY:] Ahh, I see. . .

[XX:] Since he experienced the martial law and all these years he lived here; and then he has a classmate who is the very key person, also, in the [group]. It's basically. . . I think he is open to the head of the army. . . all these alliances also provide these spaces for us to connect, as well. And I could still remember it was in 2006 that, in this area, we gathered the MILF, the RPMM, and another faction of the CPLA, at that time, to discuss what are the peace frameworks they have, because they have been engaged into a peace process. So, we provided that space to different groups; and, for us, to also learn from them what are their peace building frameworks that led them to engage in a formal peace talks with the government. So, I think that was also key why we were also able to at least open up some of these spaces to talk with them. So, that's it.

The executive director of Balay Mindanaw has been in the community for years, he is part of the community. He recognized the role that those who are willing to accompany the groups on the edges can play towards effective peacebuilding efforts and worked to bring appropriate parties together. This grounding is a significant asset in contexts of violence and mistrust. Many of those interviewed have strong ties to the region and to specific people that open up crucial possibilities for peacebuilding work.

Teresita “Ging” Quintos Deles, Secretary of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) until May 2016, started her peace activism in the realm of civil society. She reflects on the significant role that peace companions can have on the shaping of the peace process:

There are some segments of civil society that are, right now [December 2015], very helpful. For example, shepherding legislators to understand what this [peace process] is all about, which is important because legislators want to get input, want to get this advice from someone else other than the executive, because the executive has something it’s selling and they want to be able to really study that and critique it so that they’re not just a rubber stamp on the draft, the bill. It’s important that there are such groups and, yes, at this time.

Ging understands the strength that can come from a movement when committed local players are involved in discussing the possible directions and future.

In a long-term conflict context, the presence of active local peacebuilders in the various intervention processes, can reassure community members within the situation that there is a strong foundation to the information being received and shaping the nature of the policies or resolutions. As well, in each story that I heard, the emphasis was the fact that community members recognized their work and invited them to participate. Accompaniment work does not happen because one says, “pick me, pick me!” It happens only when the community appoints you to the role. The work goes on even if unrecognized.

We are able to do something in this place: Action matters

The experiences of our lives make a difference in terms of how we work at the challenges that we face. Many of the peacebuilders interviewed here not only told me where they came from, what place they call home, but also spoke of significant moments in the context. The stories from the persons in this section encompass moments that brought tears, silence, or a touch into our interview space. These moments moved our conversation into different, and deeper,

places. The fact that these stories were told was also to indicate that the commitment to their peace work was about being from a place, as well as being profoundly invested in its well-being. They had seen and experienced things that had altered who they were and, consequently, pushed them onto the journey of peacebuilding whether they had planned that route or not. It is home. They will do something for it.

Musso Lidasan speaks as someone older than he actually is. I immediately sensed that he is a person of wisdom, a wisdom that comes from some deep place. He told me:

So, as a peacemaker, you should not be discouraged. You have to start building it again [and again, if needed]. It has to be your passion and your commitment to do it, to continue doing what you have to do. So, you don't be easily discouraged, you also somehow have to be realistic, be pragmatic of the situation. But, at the end of the day, when you have done everything, you hope and pray that things would happen.

[WENDY:] The issues facing your community right now are huge. I mean, you're struggling to think about what are some of the scenarios if the BBL passes, or doesn't pass. The Mamasapano event really revealed prejudices that are still so much at the surface for many Filipinos and Mindanaoans. . . what are your hopes at this point, your hopes and dreams around peace?

[MUSSO:] Before I answer that question. . . last week, I was visited by a student from Amsterdam, a PhD student.

[WENDY:] Yes, I just met him last week, too, and he told me that he had met you.

[MUSSO:] Yeah, so I gave him my ideas, my honest to goodness theoretical answers about peace, and after a few hours, my relatives were ambushed. . . . I was so confident in the morning to tell him about my. . .

[WENDY:] hopes. . .

[MUSSO:] Yeah, and then in the afternoon, my aunt, her daughter, her grandchildren—a three-year-old kid, were totally killed. They were all shot in the head because of family feud. So, I'm still hopeful. . .

[WENDY:] oooh. . . Musso, I'm so sorry. For you to say you're hopeful in that context, that takes a lot for you to maintain hope.

[MUSSO:] It does. I've been discussing *rido* (family feud) for several years because my family have been in *rido* since I was a small kid. I've seen so many people die, so many families. . . so many individuals have lost their humanity because of that. . . so, when I see my kid, my family, my children, that's the only thing I think, someone has to do this. Someone has to hope, has to dream, otherwise, if all of us will be tempted to go the wrong way. . .

[WENDY:] I'm so sorry for your loss. It's one thing to be working in a place like this, and talking about peace, and then in your personal life, the issue is so real. It's probably one of the gifts that you're offering to this place, that it's both the head and the heart for you.

[MUSO:] I try. I went home to Cotabato last weekend to talk with my relatives because they were really in the mood for revenge. . .and among our generation, I asked them, “Who is the leader of our clan anymore?” Because my dad is old, his cousins are also old. . . . We would say, “We cannot rely on the legal system because it won’t take us anywhere, so the best way is to retaliate. I asked them, “If we do this, the thing that happened to my aunt. . .there’s a precedent, something happened even before. So somewhere, this has to stop. Yesterday, it was the 7th day *Kanduli* They see my point. They see where I am coming from, but, it’s hard to sustain it, to keep the track, to keep the going because eventually, there are things that are going to happen. But, it’s not just about BBL. It’s a complex situation.

[WENDY:] Right. Well, in some ways, the violence is often seen as what’s the most practical, it’s the most immediate. . .where does that leave you? It sounds like you’re in a great despair if you can’t hold on to hope that involves non-violence, which I think I hear you saying something about, which has a very different look and hope than *rido* as the option. And how do you change minds to conceptualize peace in a different way?

[MUSO:] Especially those who were victims, or aggrieved families. . .

[WENDY:] Yes, so, how do they interact with you when you ask those questions like “What happens if we keep doing it this way?”

[MUSO:] They have high respect for me. I think that’s the only thing that makes me entitled to say that.

[WENDY:] So, you have to earn the right in a sense to ask some of those questions because those are very delicate questions?

[MUSO:] Yes! For me, I think, in the family and in the entire clan, in the community, I bring that hope. I bring that light. If at the end of the day, if I myself would be turning like them, then all of us are doomed. Somehow, they admit that it’s an uphill battle, but we cannot accept that all of us will give up the respect that my family, my dad has given, and that the community has also passed on to me.

Musso is determined that they will not be “doomed.” His intellectual and emotional challenge of teaching peace and doing peace is a real, and regular, struggle. That struggle of integrity is also what earns him the respect to hold back the instincts of revenge in the youth of his community, even though it puts his life at risk to do so.

Father Bert has spent many years in the Pikit community. He came as a fresh priest, eager to serve his community. After years of experiencing war, helping people escape in the middle of the night and praying over bodies he has deepened his peace ministry as a spiritual ministry.

You know, as a missionary priest, when you hear the sounds of mothers weeping and children crying in the night, you don’t anymore ask whether they are Muslims or Christians. If there’s any little humanity left in you, you have to do something to alleviate them from their suffering. I remember I would just cry and shed my tears. . .alone by

myself there. So, that's when I was able to become a good missionary, you have really to transcend that bias and hatred and anger to be an instrument of God's peace and compassion to every human being.

What he has seen of war could have resulted in bitterness but has emerged as a path to peace and compassion and a view that all are his neighbours.

Rexall Kaalim, currently with NonViolent Peace Force in Cotabato City, began his peace work with IID and was placed in Pikit with Father Bert. It was an awkward beginning:

Although I'm a Muslim, I stayed in the convent in Pikit, listening to this person's (Father Bert) wisdom and actions, I joined him in his visits in the community. That also gave me more to think about regarding my perspective in human rights, that is that the assertion of human rights has responsibilities, the promotion of peace and being able to contribute to that and to listen and. . .because at that time, I was already a father, I already have small children of my own and seeing the suffering of children in evacuation camps, children having asthma attacks in very crowded place with all the. . .and seeing these children and seeing my own son, I think those are the experiences that gave me the heart for this work.

Rexall has emerged as a peacebuilder deeply immersed in peace work, touched by the violence and suffering he saw, and has connected with a number of organizations that have benefited from his experiences of moving back and forth between Christian and Muslim communities.

As Chairman Iqbal explains all that he has gone through in striving to achieve the rights and recognitions for his people, he says: "And then aside from that, I have seen with my own eyes in my lifetime how the sufferings of the people and other victims of war are." It is clear that as he speaks of these experiences, flickers of memories are always in his thoughts. "And I told myself that there has to be an end to this [violence] and the only way to it is to seek for peace." He seeks to convince himself that this is the road that he must keep to. Despite feelings of betrayal and processes that come and go, he is determined to keep speaking of peace.

Abdullah is another tireless peace worker. He has attended numerous peace workshops. Many times during the interview he would remind me of a particular peace theory that he is trying to use to guide his strategies:

I've never been to Canada, Wendy. I don't know if Canada is better than Mindanao, but Mindanao is our own place. Aside from us, the generations that will come up, they need not inherit the kind of oppressions we are dealing with. That's why I thought when I started to become a peace advocate, we are able to do something to this place, and my children will be able to enjoy the blessings of non-violence.

It is his vision for the future, the future of his children, which motivates his continued peace work. He acknowledges that every day he needs to commit himself to a peace vision in the face of so much violence and oppression.

Jo Genna "Jude" Martin Jover is from the Teduray tribe and is a member of the Kutawato Council for Justice and Peace. Jude's story is heart-wrenching at points. Much of her growing up years were spent seeking moments of refuge:

I experienced conflict. I experienced displacement. In the middle of the night, we slept in open space and I'm thinking, what is happening. So, I entered high school, what triggers all my [policies] are those discriminations that I, myself, encountered and with my people because the Teduray are described as ignorant, uneducated, un-schooled, they have no food, no slippers. They look at us as third-class citizen, last class. They view us as pagan. Also, aside from discrimination, our lands were also taken without our knowledge because the Indigenous people are really loving people and they don't want people to come to their place, so when they come to their place, they will go [further up the mountain]. And because their concept of their lands, lands is life. Land is given by God. No one can take it away. Land can be utilized by anybody.

Today, Jude is a tireless peace activist, although admitting to me that she could easily have turned to taking up arms if not for opportunities that posed some alternatives for her. Jude, and so many of those whom I interviewed, have had experiences that one might think would turn them away from nonviolent and peaceful strategies in the struggle to gain some control over the violence and conflict in their midst. Yet, significant to the profound work of these peacebuilders, amid these experiences of fear and oppression, they decided to take the road not so easily taken. Peace in the face of unpeace.

It is attached to me: Everything is peace work

Bamboo sways in the gentle breezes and in the typhoons. It remains rooted, it remains as bamboo, but has great flexibility. Such are the peacebuilders of Mindanao. Their lives are steady and focused on the peace work at hand as well as being ready to adjust whenever needed. Former OPAPP Secretary Ging Deles has devoted much of her life to peace work and says that “peace is the issue that will be the last issue of my life, [it] is an issue that’s very much attached to me, to my persona.” Ging articulates this desire to be rooted in peace at her core as “faithfulness.” “I think my sense of faithfulness is strong and I think that has been very important for the peace movement. It can’t be just because it’s the flavour of the season. . . . You stay there until you’re no longer needed or it’s done. . .for peace.” It comes out of her conviction that:

You have to play your part to make it a better world. You can’t just stay put there, just to enjoy the ride. You have to have input here. . .so that’s part of what I am. . . . Life has to be about something bigger than me, bigger than just my small family. So, there are things that need to be done. And, well, in a way, I think it has been a gift to me that at every stage of my life, it seems so clear what that was going to be about. So, I started as a teacher, then social worker in development, OPAPP, always, I knew where I should be. So, I said, women, so you need to do what’s there in front of you. It’s not like you couldn’t know that there’s something to be done.

For Ging, her commitment to peace work is intertwined with all that she does. Nothing deters her in her peace journey.

Melinda “Lyndee” A. Prieto, manager of the Pilipinas Program for Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), is similar to everyone that I interviewed in the sense that she has made a deliberate decision to invest in the issues and activities pertaining to the possibilities of building a sustainable peace in Mindanao and in the Philippines. She has come and gone from IID, needing space, at times, to heal and recover from the intensity of the work. But, for Lyndee, to make distinctions between her activism and her personal life is a false approach. Lyndee’s day is not confined to 9 to 5. Mobile phone calls are answered at all times of day, responding to the

issues that can emerge in a conflict context. Meetings can spring up at a moment's notice, gathering other peace workers, ensuring that connections are being made. Timing is of the essence for many of the issues in this region. This is not the account of a workaholic who is without any attention to self-care. She, like others interviewed, has chosen a way of life, a commitment to something larger than their personal goals.

Gus Miclat, her colleague at IID, says it this way:

I cannot separate my individual persona from the work, from what IID does. But on a certain level, I would be more involved in strategic thinking or in the linking of our work to all possible opportunities, possible networks, possible actors who could help become involved in the process. But this doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's in a context of always looking out for those opportunities. So, one would be [prepared for what needs to be done for] the establishment of all-out-peace. The all-out-peace movement, Lyndee might have told you about it, was the response to what happened in Mamasapano. After Mamasapano, there was this huge [groundswell that desired] all-out-war, so we had to try to turn the discourse around—if there's all-out-war, there should be all-out-peace. So, these are the things I try to do to latch onto the pulse of people—what's happening—and ground them as much as possible and convince your allies and your champions about the soundness of. . .convince and discuss with them, so it becomes enriched – these ideas are enriched and developed. . .my role is more to be a spider in a web, some sort of that kind of a role. I'm trying to harness collective energies of different networks.

This means that, as Gus moves in and out of consultations or coffee with friends, he is spinning webs, drawing people into conversations, and encouraging them to be part of all-out-peace in Mindanao.

Jasmin Nario-Galace jokes with me when I ask about her various roles within the peacebuilding community in the Philippines. “Really, I have difficulty distinguishing between the professional and the personal because it's like a personal thing for me.” Peace work is at the root of all that she does, from her activism, her teaching, and to the mothering of her sons.

Maria Carmen “Memen” Lauzon-Gatmaytan, is the Program Development Officer for Nonviolent Peaceforce in Cotabato City, Philippines. She, as well, has thought through the nature of her commitment to peacebuilding work:

So, I was really, like, if you’re a peace advocate, it’s not just like work. To me, it’s already a personal commitment. It’s really my life already and I believe that I was trying—why am I so passionate about this? I’ve been very passionate ever since, even as an activist. But it’s passionate because it’s not just my work. It’s because I believe that that’s what is needed in Mindanao and I’m now in Mindanao. I know how it is. I know how dangerous it could be if we live in a very violent society, violent community. So, I’m really wishing that within my lifetime I would see peace in Mindanao. So, it’s not just work for me.

Once Memen is convicted of something, she acts on it. She moved to Mindanao and has grounded her being on peace.

Thirty-six passionate peacebuilders interviewed. All understanding that for extraordinary changes to be made extraordinary efforts will need to be made. This peacebuilding work has formed their community, thus embracing their families, and supports them in challenging times. For each one to live is to do peace.

Building a critical mass: Grassroots emphasis

As I listened to these peacebuilder stories over a period of four months, it seemed that they drew their nourishment, or energy, from what is close at hand. The local environment is seen as the context from which support and wisdom emerge. In this study, what emerges is a civil agency reflected by committed people, tied to the context, and focused on adding to the possibilities of a sustainable peace. These peacebuilders are oriented to enacting “everyday initiatives” by way of celebrating or declaring the possibilities for peace. If local agency is truly crucial to bringing about sustainable peace, it is influenced by a deliberate, and daily, attention to the workings of the past, present and future realities.

Arnold Cruz Abejaron, the Executive Secretary of the University Community Engagement and Advocacy Council of the Ateneo de Davao University has considered the peacebuilding possibilities that exist for the university. Ateneo is committed to “really be[ing] able to discuss their respective ideas, to be really able to address conflicts” and views itself as a partnering community organization. This is indicative of the organizational climate in Mindanao—a variety of organizations, seeking out ways to engage in peace activities and to focus on ways to strengthen their constituency. On a regular basis—and he is tasked to do so—Arnold observes what is around him and takes action, recognizing that one action is linked to another:

If you're able to identify a concerned individual, you also take effort. You don't necessarily wait for them to come to you. We actually also go to them through the other offices in the university. If it would come to our attention and we know that we can do something, and if our resources would allow, the policy of the university would also allow, then we also do our best to extend the necessary help we can do. . . we, considering that Ateneo is somehow considered an institution not just in Davao, but in the whole region in Mindanao, we take advantage of that position to also engage multiple sectors. . . . We're trying to use the influence that we have, so we write letters to the key leaders to really have dialogue with them, to discuss some of the problems and how to. . . some issues really have a specific context. . . . There's a group of Lumad for example, having a problem with their Ancestral Domain. Because they can't really trust so much the, say, the military, and they also don't trust so much the local government, and they also don't want any other possible groups that may possibly take advantage of the situation and use them, so that they will be placed in the middle of a conflict; they actually decided to come to us. So, from there, we started to connect with agencies that we think can really help them address their problem.

Arnold acknowledges that his initiative emerges from thinking consciously about what the university's assets are and how they can best utilize the connections and abilities present in the system.

This is not a context of passivity. The stakes are high and communities in Mindanao are often well informed on issues pertaining to their security. Mike Alar agrees that local actors want

to create some impact regarding the peace for their communities. In the context of Mike's work, he hears that community people:

don't [simply] want to be bystanders; they want to get involved. . . . These are actually people who also come from the grassroots, quite rooted, I mean it's their communities that are affected by the conflict. A lot of them have said, "Enough is enough. We don't just want to be bystanders of people who are negotiating for our future. We want to get involved." And at first, I think the major platform for them, for that involvement, was the Bantay Ceasefire.

Bantay Ceasefire, formed in 2002 out of a consortium of peace organizations, is a prime example of the energy that is exerted on the grassroots level in Mindanao. It recognized the need to monitor the ceasefire agreement between the government and the MILF and emerged as a strong voice of local peoples, declaring that they wanted to assert themselves into the peace process through the daily monitoring of what was happening in their communities.

Miriam Coronel-Ferrer is an academic, a campaign activist on a number of issues and, most recently, was Chairperson of the peace panel of the Government of the Philippines in the negotiation with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front during the Aquino administration. As someone who was an active member of civil society, she, in her peace panel role, looked to encourage spaces for civil society involvement. Significant to the work of negotiation is "a vibrant civil society sector. . .interfacing [with the parties] . . . [willing] to push the agenda. . .that would really convince and would be the voices, counter voices to that kind of public sentiment that would emerge after every test, crisis." Miriam believes societal health and flourishing comes by way of the initiatives of an active civil society.

Strengthening work at the roots is a key focus for Irene Santiago. Irene is driven. She was the key organizer of the UN Beijing Women's conference in 1995 and she has not eased up on her commitment to engage at local levels. She is a peace activist, founder of Kahayag in 1976, Chair Emerita and Chief Executive Officer of the Mindanao Commission on Women (MCW),

and a former peace panel member and Chair of the Government Implementing Panel for the Bangsamoro Peace Accords under President Duterte. She has long considered what makes for successful peacebuilding. At the heart of one's work is the commitment that one makes to make a difference. "So, you have your capacity, your potency, you act, so there's action, but there's also value. There's values. You can't just act. You can't just have the potency. You have to have values, also. If you do that, then it's transformative." Deliberate attention to your guiding principles is essential for Irene.

And second is the VMG [Vision Mission Goal] of the organization. That's the reason of your existence. What are you trying to build? And sometimes a part of that is the kind of vision of tomorrow. . . . What a peacebuilder should be, it has to start. It should start from somewhere. It should start from within. Because you cannot sustain that. . . and just use. . . peace concepts and peace theories. . . because that's too cold. It's not real. . . we have to imbibe it and that's the important part because it needs a lot of revolution. [Laughter].

Start local, start close to home, start at your heart level to transform society.

Memen's work in WEAct 1325 focused on raising the value of women's participation in political decision-making. She believes that valuing women's participation will change the possibilities for peacebuilding in Mindanao:

So, we're starting to have that kind of mass, a critical mass. I see that potential because, with all our trainings, a lot of women are really starting to come out and speak about, "yes, we believe that we also could do what men could do." They're also saying something like, "yeah, we believe that our faith, our culture, should not dictate that we are only secondarily to men, just for home or just only for taking care of our families." So, they are starting to look at it that way. That's why I'm happy because we've been trying to impart a kind of information that we should not be limited to as women. We have potential. And there are international laws that say we are. It's worldwide globally recognized so now they know that so somehow it empowers them. That's why I'm imagining them building a critical mass of Moro women. It's not only us doing that here in Mindanao. That's why eventually I know we'll build a critical mass.

Memen is excited about the transformation she is seeing result from the grassroots gender training that is the focus of WEAct. The organization has focused on empowering local women

with skills to enhance their local and national involvement in the issues of justice pertaining to them and their communities.

It takes a new sense of vision to recognize that the solution for peace lies close at hand. Many of the messages received by the communities is that they should let their fate be decided by the leaders of society. Father Bert discovered long ago that to do peacebuilding work in Mindanao would require the ability to view each person encountered as worthy of attention:

You know, as a missionary priest, when you hear the sounds of mothers weeping and children crying in the night, you don't anymore ask whether they are Muslims or Christians. If there's little humanity left in you, you have to do something to alleviate them from their suffering. I remember I would just cry and shed my tears. . . alone by myself there. So, that's when I was able to become a good missionary, you have really to transcend that bias and hatred and anger to be an instrument of God's peace and compassion to every human being. And that's when we started to organize also a disaster response team, composed mainly of Christians and Muslims.

His peacebuilding work truly began, he says, when he was able to reach out to each person who came to his door during times of war and unrest, despite the suspicions that people had regarding a Catholic priest who helped Muslims. His grassroots peacebuilding began when he no longer divided communities into categories and saw their destinies linked. Father Bert has led, and mobilized, many communities in establishing Spaces for Peace, a declaration of peace and an agreement made between the tri-people (Christians, Muslims and Indigenous) of Mindanao as well as the military and MILF camps, in order to cease any hostilities in the *barangays*. This approach has now been replicated in many communities.

The idea of attention to rootedness and the value of the assets in the community is closely linked to peacebuilding approaches in Mindanao. As chair of the MILF peace panel, Mohagher Iqbal is no stranger to the question of what values guide his work. As part of a revolutionary force, he is frequently challenged regarding the sincerity of his orientation and hopes. He

acknowledges that to engage with sincerity requires some soul searching. Perhaps surprisingly, he responded to my question about his peace orientation by saying that

I think, I do not do a strategy, but, primarily, something. . . noble, but the search for peace is something that has to be valued by everybody so it's our interest and our sincerity to work finding that peace. It is a genuine search for peace. From the bottom of our hearts, we need to seek and establish peace. Because if your hearts are not pure and dedicated to peace then you'll never be able to at least start a real honest to goodness search for peace. That's why we really need to be sincere in our finding for peace and justice. So, I think, simply said, that it's in our hearts, the pursuit of real and genuine peace. And then, of course, when you deal with someone, especially the government, then you have to be truthful to what you say. You have to be truthful to what you say and, if there are obligations, if there are agreements signed, then you have to comply. And this explains why we have reached this far. And I think the sincerity to find peace in Mindanao is what makes up our strength because people in the government and the MILF, practically, there is no comparison. Government is government and we are just an ordinary revolutionary organization. But our strength is that we are true to our words and we stand by, and we are willing to risk everything just to be sure that we start surely on the basis of sincerity and truthfulness.

The key to community strength is to work with integrity, to give evidence of your sincerity and apply weight to your words so that they can be heard as truthfulness. Chairman Iqbal, as he has navigated the challenge of holding his community together through difficult times and, as well, negotiating with government teams has thought this through carefully. Community strength is worthy of one's efforts and only results when one puts in great effort.

Jude tells me that she came from a poor family, with constant struggles to achieve basic needs and describes herself as an activist for her Indigenous people. The question of grassroots involvement is not an academic point for her. She knows marginalization first hand and says, simply:

Like for the Indigenous women, we want to be part in the planning, in the decision-making, in the implementation. We want to be also in the structure, not just always the beneficiary because we want things. Also, in the structure, those who are there cannot mirror what we want and our aspirations also. This is just our vision, [our desire to be involved]. We continue engaging.

Day by day Jude works to mediate conflicts between neighbours, advocating for non-violent solutions. Working side by side is her approach.

And then Jude tells me a most moving story:

I'm telling you some of the success stories so you know where I get my passion. And because of my experiences also. . . . I ask people, IP women, to be part of this because when I said, when I pass over this world because this life is a gift from God and they lend us this life. So, for this year, I am in this work so I can when I go to somewhere, heaven or whatever I will, I leave my legacy to the people, at least I did something, something good. I was not remembered as a bad girl. So last November (2015) I was. . .you know, N-Peace Award? I was not thinking of that award. So, when Jasmin (Nario-Galace) nominated me for N-Peace Award, so we have three for the Philippines. Finally, I am the lone winner from the Philippines. So, an email from Jasmin said, "Congratulations to Jude." So, my [award] category is the untold stories, what I am doing. I'm working for nonviolence and the Indigenous people. So, I was in the UN in New York last October 23 to receive that award along with ten Asian awardees from Pakistan, Nepal, and Malaysia. I only stayed there for four days, just for that award, N-Peace Award.

[WENDY:] Wow. Congratulations!

[JUDE:] [Laughter] The untold stories.

[WENDY:] Yeah.

[JUDE:] So Jasmin always said to let your story be known to the world.

[WENDY:] Yes!

[JUDE:] Because this is the only contribution we have to the bigger peace process. So, we can say that women can do something on the ground, not necessarily we are like Iqbal. . .or like somebody else, but we women can do something at the ground. We can transform our community in our little way so we don't have to be popular. We don't have to be recognized also. So, in a way I am proud and also let the world know of the contribution of women in this bigger peace process.

Jude is a great example of work that focuses on the local community, tirelessly working to strengthen capacities. She sees her recognition of pointing to the bigger peace process. She wanted me to know that she dedicated her award to her Indigenous community and to the women with whom she works:

The day before I leave for New York, the Roman Catholic Church in my place offered me a special mass. And I invited all the women and all walks of religious sector. The church was full of people. And when I acknowledged the women, I let them stand. The women who attended the mass, the award is for you, for us, because of your support, because of our work in the community. Because the award, I cannot claim as myself because without them the award is nothing. But the award is not so much important to me but what is important is how I transform the community.

Every day the focus is on the well-being of the community and the quest for a durable peace.

These peacebuilders live out their commitments to local communities. Each person interviewed was clear that the basis of their peacebuilding work was set upon a core of values that guided them through the very difficult challenges of peacebuilding work in their region. Peacebuilding, in the Mindanao context, indicates that clumping bamboo style peacebuilding—accompaniment, local investment, capacity building, living within the context of one’s work, personal soul searching, and focus on the community good—is the heart of enduring peacebuilding.

You could get killed: Pushing deliberately and courageously

Dancing between pairs of beating bamboo is dangerous. Years ago, I remember hearing, in a radio interview, an Irish pastor of a tiny church which managed to be involved in myriad peace initiatives in the region saying simply, “I believe in the bigness of the smallness.” Nothing stops the big peacebuilding dreams in Mindanao. Each of these peacebuilders is deliberate about their work and understands that danger is a reality. Peacebuilding for those interviewed is not simply a list of activities, it is a commitment—a passion—to addressing structural dimensions and to what will allow for the recovery of communities and relationships.

Gus Miclat’s work has taken him into situations where it has been paramount for him to be able to articulate why he became involved in the conflict. Many situations have the tone of “life or death” and cannot be taken lightly. In thinking through the basis of his peacebuilding work and activism, he says:

I think. . .passion, all these nice big words. . .commitment, etc., but. . .constant study. Not getting tired of learning also from others. Knowing what you have and what you know is just as good as where you are. That’s just there. You need to continue to evolve, continue to reinvent, and reimagine yourself and your strategies. . .and that should

cascade and emanate. . .project to where you are at and to the groups and people that you are working with.

Gus is fiercely passionate about his work. Nothing is taken lightly. The stakes are high in this region and he is deeply committed.

When asked about characteristics essential to peacebuilding, many of those interviewed named courage as one of those. Naming difficult issues or crossing over to meet with different sides as a local peacebuilder impacts multiple layers of one's place within the community. It is risky. Deng Giguiento named many characteristics but came back to courage:

Courage. Courage to say no. Courage to say yes. It's always, you know, it takes courage to stand up for truth, right. You could get killed. Also, it takes courage to confront the truth, challenge the truth, because sometimes people's truths are born out of their telling so many lies that they believe it's the truth so it takes courage to challenge it. But it also takes courage, I think, to stand in the middle. To be able to say I have my own stand in this, but at this moment I want them to understand each other. It takes that courage also because people who do that, who facilitate, who take the middle ground, are often accused of being lukewarm or wanting to present the status quo, so many accusations but. . .you have to sometimes play that role, right?

This show of courage is complex. One might, on first glance, assume that the extreme positions might be the locations of risk. Yet, in this context, it is creating the invitational middle space that takes the courage.

Sharon Bulaclac teaches in Marawi City. Over the years the conflict has been very strong in that region. She struggles with what it means to teach from a peace lens in that context—both because of the complexity of the situation and because of the risk it could entail:

Sometimes, it's not easy for me to be radical and open-minded because you will receive also some threats through private messages, or sometimes, because there are also some conservative or the extremist group that will think that maybe. . .because some students would say about our discussion, "Our teacher in history told us this and that, told us this and that." And eventually it gets around and as they say, a little knowledge is dangerous. . .and then the majority [of teachers] would say, maybe I will not teach so much about Islam. I try also to weigh things, wondering if a Muslim will talk about my faith, maybe I'm also offended.

Sharon's reflection on courage reveals that this journey requires a reflective practice. She asks herself regularly: Sharon, are you able to listen to difficult topics—topics that might push at the sacred elements of your own life?

Memem Lauzon works on a project focused on women and security. The project area has a history of violent conflict. Yet, she says:

Yeah, we will not be giving up. We continue to engage. The challenge is about the security because, whether we like it or not, the security situation on the ground is still very, very volatile. No matter happens in most conflict situations, it is always that our women are vulnerable.

Memem has contemplated the risks and has decided that the larger vision is what will drive her approach.

Father Bert, over the years, began to see his peace work as a professional choice. When he arrived as a parish priest in Pikit he was not thinking about peacebuilding as his prime vocation. As times of war hit his community and he built relationships with Muslim communities and interacted with soldiers in the fight, he shifted. "The soldiers are prepared to die in war, peace advocates are also prepared to sacrifice for peace. That's always my challenge to peace advocates." When working for justice, one needs to contemplate the costs. Working for justice is not a decision towards involvement in a particular event or cause, it is a life orientation question. This echoes Chairman Iqbal's assertion that "But the more important thing is the forest rather than the trees" —the idea that one's peace work is guided by attentiveness to a larger vision.

Fatima "Shalom" Allian, of Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro or The Women for Justice in the Bangsamoro in Zamboanga City, furthers the comments regarding the passions of these peacebuilders. Shalom wanted me to know that her accompaniment work could result in a risk to her life. That is a risk that she is willing to take, such is her commitment to coming alongside in those spaces where peace is so much needed:

When the outsiders say these are the only things that the BBL should have and they make a statement out of that, I find that very offensive. My point is you are not from the place. . . . Because for those within, like us, we have to work triple the effort because if anything bad will happen, the people outside are not going to go to inside the communities. They're not going to risk their lives because their families are outside. While we, on the other hand, we are from here and we are going to risk our lives. If that means we have to die, then we have to because we have families. And even if you don't have families but you're a Bangsamoro, there's that strong connect, the brotherhood sisterhood thing. So, I think that's something that [those not fully and deeply connected] should be very careful [about] in handling the situation and be very sensitive.

Shalom is passionately interested in engaging with others to move conflict situations into contexts of stability. Those interactions, though, must include local wisdom and genuine desires for equality of voice and participation.

Given the complexities of peacebuilding work in the Philippines it is vital that those involved have a clear idea and commitment to what they put their energies into. Froilyn Mendoza has considered this carefully:

I think as a peace worker, especially for me, for example, very important that you must, what do you call this, that the agenda for you is clear. Because if your agenda is not clear, then in this situation that is very fragile, then you will be lost. So that is one thing and I think that is also one thing that evolved in me. . .that I said I have the people. This is the agenda. This is what they want. And, of course, the people also, there is really a need to empower and restore them. Because if you have the people, then they are the same. They're legitimate; they are not just making noise. But, no, this is not done overnight; this is not just an ordinary thing that you just put someone to represent. Okay, there is now an Indigenous woman representative of the people. The representative is not just decorations and token. This is about life. This is not a joke.

Froilyn is small in stature but is a feisty and passionate peacebuilder. "This is about life. This is not a joke." The strength in her voice was almost astounding and I wondered if those in the coffee shop could feel the reverberations of her energy.

Chairman Iqbal is pragmatic about his peacebuilding work. He sees it as important to be able to clearly articulate the context and goals for one's peace work:

Well, first, right from the start, we are all aware by reading experiences of other workers around the world that finding peace is protracted. So right at the beginning, we were

already aware that finding a peaceful settlement of a country, like the Moro issue, the Moro problem is a long process. It's a long process so we were already prepared at the start. We were already prepared at the start that it is really going to be a protracted engagement. So, when your mind is prepared, whatever difficulties that you encounter, at least you are aware that this is why I am alert and your mind is already prepared to accept that. So, nothing is easy. So that's, I think, the most important thing is that you are aware and then you have already accepted that the process is going to be a protracted one. And then corollary to that, well, engaging in peace on the other side is not all downs; it's ups and downs. So, when you are down, you remember those when you are up, and when you are up remember that someday you will be down. So that would really make you prepared to really engage in the negotiation and, of course, commitment, dedication, perseverance, patience and prayers.

One needs to be braced for the challenges ahead. In fact, one must assume that the challenges will be there.

The work, as every person described it, needs to be unfailing. Father Bert puts it very simply: "the more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war." "XX" Dagapio so reiterates that the focus must be unwavering:

All of the principles, or attitude, or characteristics that we live by, becoming grounded because if we are not that grounded, we are not people who come from somewhere else and impose some things. So, if we are grounded—we are people. So, at least, because of that we could relate, we empathize and then yeah, we consider ourselves as we are part also of the process. That's one thing that we are always reminding ourselves—we are grounded.

The ability to say that they come from a place creates the foundation for persevering in their work.

Memen Lauzon acknowledges that the results will most likely not be immediate, making a certain fortitude required:

I think, at a certain point, maybe, we have to define how many years from now that we'll be able to see the impact of the training that we've been doing so that's how you will really build a culture because women are the ones really promoting a culture of peace, trying to really change the culture of violence in the Bangsamoro communities. So, with all these women taking part maybe that would be one indication that there's some impact to what we've been doing. But maybe that would be three, four years from now to see.

The practical questions of where, how, and when do occur within these peacebuilder conversations. Yet, every interview comes back to this idea of the “forest,” maintaining a vision despite all obstacles.

Those interviewed for this study have set deliberate efforts for their peacebuilding work. Based on their values and goals, the intention is to discover paths that can lead to a lasting peace in Mindanao, a peace shared by the diversity of peoples who inhabit that space. Decades of war create high stakes for this endeavour. Coming alongside is no easy task in this context. And these peacebuilders know that.

Summary

Bamboo peacebuilding in the Philippines is a “dance” that is both deliberate and focused. The actors are consciously aware of the assets that they can bring into a conflict situation and seek to move respectfully within spaces that experienced violence and trauma. Their steps are strong and practiced, desirous of the strength to continue to persevere in moving in and out of the bamboo beats.

Organizations and individuals have recognized that they have their niche for the work required. For some it is the ability to go-between in complex situations that require strong and diverse networks, years of relationship building, and known entities in the communities. Those focusing their work on solidarity and coming alongside have risked many things in the process. This work requires commitment, cultural sensitivity, and trust building. Although there are potentially many more directions that could be described as peacebuilding in this context, it is these two areas that characteristically mark the work being done in Mindanao.

Contextual Definitions of Peace

Introduction

I was determined to get to Cotabato City for interviews despite warnings that it was not a safe place for me to venture alone. But I have friends in the city and, together, we determined that I'd stay at the Alnor Hotel which is situated in a "compound" that includes NGO offices, a couple of coffee shops, and a new mall. This would provide a context of safety and locations for meeting with interview participants.

On one of the evenings there, I arranged to meet Professor Abhoud Syed M. Lingga, the Executive Director for the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies in Cotabato City, Philippines. He is an Islamic scholar and previous member of peace panels. He has seen much. He is wise and thoughtful. Many of the interview participants stated that the definition of peace is something difficult to capture, indicating that one must not hold on to it dogmatically for risk of losing one's responsiveness to the situation at hand. Professor Lingga's words were powerful in this regard:

[Lingga:] The problem of defining peace . . .

[Wendy:] [Laughter] Yeah. . .

[Lingga:] is that you set the barometer but it shifts every day. So, this one [definition] is no longer relevant in time. That's really a problem.

[Wendy:] I understand that.

[Lingga:] For me, it's not really peace when you negotiate, because you might need something you think will be the best for your people. I think it's unfair using the word peace, peace, peace when in fact what you are bargaining for is what you think is the best you could have. It is called peace because if you achieve that, then fighting will stop and you achieve peace whether you call that peace or not. Because if you do not achieve that, your people will remain discontented, you will continue fighting so there will be no peace. I am not really very comfortable using complicated words. I'm a person who wants simple things. I'm not really a writer. I'm a communicator. I'm a person who wants to communicate with my own people. . . words that will lead to peace, to achieving the best for our community.

We sat in silence for a while as glasses clinked and words buzzed around us in the coffee shop. He wanted me to pause in the moment of the conversation and absorb the stories forthcoming. Abhoud is a wise man with many experiences of working with people amid deep conflict. I learned much from his cautions to me to not be overzealous in trying to contain the ideas of peace that I was collecting.

His words rang in my head throughout the rest of my interviews. My experience was that the question regarding each person's definition of peace was shared as something shaped by personal experiences and commitments. The silences, tears, and intonation get lost in a simple transmission of written words. Mac Ginty and Firchow (2016) stress that the definitions are enmeshed with the "very real human costs of conflict" (309). Yes! Memories, emotions, and relationships are at the heart of this content. Professor Lingga is a teacher and he offered me a gift. When he indicates that one must hold definitions of peace more loosely, I take notice. Lives are lost and gained in these interactions towards peace.

Anderson and Olson (2003) assert that "to talk about improving effectiveness, we need first to know where we want to get" (11). Thus, in every interview each participant was asked to reflect on their definition of peace. I must emphasize that none of the comments are exhaustive for each person and are rather a sample as a way to indicate the breadth of thought existent on this topic of definitions. For a few, the definitional dynamics developed quickly within the conversation. For others, the complexity of the idea was a challenge to articulate. This question emerges from the theoretical discussion above that indicates the necessity of understanding where one is going in order to determine the strategies and to reiterate the importance of grassroots voices.

The following section presents not only the variety of definitions that have emerged from the participants but the multiple dimensions that peace holds in this context. It seemed imperative to ask each interviewee to define peace. Given that “the answers will, to a large extent, determine what sorts of intervention we design,” the exploration of the definition of peace is a valuable precursor to the discussion of specific peacebuilding methodologies for local actors and in the Philippine context it is something to be forthright about (Cheldelin et al. 2008, 15). The literature, as previously discussed (Chapter Four), reveals a complex discussion pertaining to the locus of interactions of peacebuilding discourse and variations on the meanings of the word peace. Definitions tend to follow and indicate a predisposition to certain worldviews and ideologies. Consequently, I did not want to impose a specific repository of definitions in advance of the reflections lodged within this chapter. These words, here, are what carry the weight of this project. It is a fact that peace is at the heart of the efforts of those interviewed here. As Myla Leguro has stressed: “The embeddedness, I think, is a strength because we are from here and the investment is that this is our life.” The conversations are about real conflicts and real hopes for the future of a people. The perspectives from the peacebuilders within these pages provide rich data.

The edges of peace work need to be pushed and challenged. If not looking outside of the traditional political arenas, hegemonic peace is easily installed in conflict zones instead of one that considers the needs of the individuals and groups within those regions (Richmond 2005, 119). A reflexive peace framework holds the possibility of accountability regarding power if engaged with local actors. Conflict resolution work cannot simply remain within one locale of technique or research but must be able to move between various schools of thought in order to be responsive to the conflict situations that arise. Close attention to the local context and needs is

crucial. When working with complex ideas and situations it is helpful to pursue ideas that can help to expand, or stretch, the space for discussion regarding definitions of peace and ways to pursue peace—creating multidimensional peacebuilding.

The literature on definitions of peace highlights the importance of acknowledging that perceptions of peace strongly influence the decisions regarding way in which peace is pursued. Yet, the ambiguities and challenges in defining peace are both great and wide. Regan (2014) postulates that “the scientific community [still has] no way to operationalize such a vague concept” as positive peace (348). Listening to the voices of peacebuilders within these pages, it is apparent that there isn’t room for naïveté in the task of defining peace for contexts of conflict. The layers are complex and the stakes, in today’s world, for achieving peace are high. And there is desire to find ways to create paths towards a peace that is sustainable.

The definitions run between a variety of markers. Gijsbert van Iterson Scholten’s (2016) research in Mindanao reveals categories of some overlap to the ones revealed in the space of the interviews that I conducted regarding conceptions of peace. A summary of his articulations can be viewed in Table 2 below. Akin to Lederach’s (2003) lenses for conflict transformation some participants spoke as more oriented to individual perspectives and others more directed at community possibilities. These are levels of relationships and potential for conflict transformation or, as Mac Ginty and Firchow (2016) express, the positionality undertaken by the speaker (309). Another dimension present considers the spheres of focus between the psychological, political, and social domains (van Iterson Scholten 2016). And lastly, there is, as van Iterson Scholten (2016) indicates, the ontological aspect of peace that analyzes peace as a dimension indicating movement (6).

Dimension	Elements
Level	individual community national international
Domain	Political Social Psychological
Ontology	Goal Process Method

Table 2: “dimensions of different concepts of peace,” van Iterson Scholten 2016, 6.

Findings: Definitions of Peace

Spivak (1988) cautions about speaking for the subaltern. The following sections will highlight the words of the participants (see the chapter “About the participants” for the specific biographies and work contexts) in this research as a way to explore various concepts of peace. To move forward in this discussion, we, as researchers, must listen to the peacebuilders themselves regarding definitions and contexts. This section will focus on the definitions that emerge directly from those within the local context. The quotes below, in response to the question: “What is your definition of peace?” reveal the profound vision present for the challenging work of peacebuilding in which they engage on a daily basis—their work as go-betweens and those coming alongside all while dancing the intricate steps within the beating bamboo.

Five key areas emerged from the discussions regarding perceptions of peace: Well-being, Structural Dimensions, Good Relationships, Doing Peace, and a focus on the Comprehensive. I have decided to use some substantial quotes to denote my commitment to opening space for the

voices of those doing the peacebuilding. Key words will be highlighted as a way to assist the reader in the flow of the different conversations.

Well-being: personal towards the collective

Being able to live with an absence of fear and to have peace of mind is significant for those living in Mindanao. After years of war and violence, many of those interviewed indicated a yearning for a different way of living. The absence of fear encompasses issues of safety and the ability to meet the needs of daily living. The quotes below articulate the perspectives of those who have personally experienced the dislocation of war or have stood between those in conflict. Their work requires the courage to speak truth and to stand in solidarity. Fear dissipates as one is mindful of inner peace resulting in the ability to live out one's convictions with integrity in the community.

Key words: Absence of fear, peace of mind, peace within, being able to live life

[NANETTE:] But, of course, [it is] when people are able to live without fear. When people are able to express without fear. When they are able to exercise their rights as human beings with dignity and the rights as provided in the law. So, when people are deprived of these rights because of the existence of, we say, conflict or because of the absence of the rule of law, so there is then absence of peace. Of course, it's not only about peace agreement.

[WENDY:] Right.

[NANETTE:] but it's really translating all these agreements that people are able to live in dignity and able to enjoy liberty, enjoy living exercising their freedom, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, so they have this basic right as a human being.

[MEMEN:] Of course, there is the traditional meaning of absence of war, but it's really about the security. When I think that when really my kids are safe. There will be no bombs coming up on any part of the street. It's really like how people are really able to sustain their lives. That they're able to provide for themselves. . .or being interrupted because there's some violent incident and issues like, even, killing. To me, if those economic provisions are not there for the families, there would be no peace. So, it's really more encompassing. When families feel secure that they have peace. When they know that they will not be disrupted in their livelihood, in their everyday lives.

[MARK:] Peace, for me, I realized that there are many definitions of peace. When you lectured to us about peace, it was really difficult to define it.

[WENDY:] [Laughter] Even more difficult now?

[MARK:] Yeah. Because for example, for communities near the coastal municipalities of Lanao Del Norte, peace equals presence of armed men like police, military. But if you have the chance to go to the hinterland communities or the interior communities, Bantal, Lunai, just the mere presence of one soldier, it's really very un-peaceful for them. So, for me, peace is the absence of fear. . . . For Iligan city people, they think that they're abandoned by the military, so for them, it is already unpeaceful, uncomfortable already. It's really the absence of fear. When you go outside your house at eleven o'clock in the evening and you feel like you're still safe, that, for me, is peace. And peace may only be achieved if there is understanding among people, collaboration.

[MARK:] And now also it's really true that you could only achieve peace at all levels if you achieve peace within yourself, also. Peace within yourself, also, because there are people working in civil society organizations that say, "why are you working for peace center when you are not even peaceful?" [Laughter] So peace really is for people to believe in your centre, to have trust in your centre, you really must be able to, also, show them that you are a role model. There should not be dissonance. So that. How can you encourage them well if you yourself do not have peace, your actions betray your thoughts?

[LYNDEE:] Yeah, where would I start? It's a state of mind, we say. It has a lot of concepts.

[WENDY:] It has a lot, yeah.

[LYNDEE:] Yeah, they even would say there's a positive and a negative peace. It's a state of mind. But, for me, it's that kind of harmony that you experience. You should personally experience it. It's not only a state of mind. You should feel it and it should flow into you and outwards. And when it flows outwards, you reach out to others. So that kind of thing. Peace can be contagious if you're at peace within. For me, there's a certain level if you are calm, you're in harmony. Your self is in harmony with your own immediate family, relatives, bigger family. That's the crudest, the simple one. . . . So, peace is everywhere, but it has to start somewhere. It has to start from yourself.

[FROILYN:] When I asked my mother about what this peace was all about. . . . [You say] peace because it is English. . . it's about the peace of mind. That's how you define it. That you have peace within. [We say] that you'll feel very important, that you cannot harm people. That when you say something [the focus is that] we cannot harm people because when we harm people there is no peace anymore. So, you don't destroy the feelings of other people. So that's the basic definition of peace for us. For IP people, we need to feel *Kefiyofedew*. That's peace of mind.

[WENDY:] This whole word is peace of mind, *Kefiyofedew*?

[FROILYN:] Yes, meaning you're freeing your mind. So that's good feelings and thoughts.

[SHARON:] For me, peace always come from within. So, if you are at peace with yourself, it's easy for you to keep peace with others. You cannot get peace somewhere. Nobody can be peaceful on your behalf, so it has to start from within because if you are not at

peace in yourself, the kind of peace that you are giving is a very shallow kind of peace, so you have to start from within. It's not an overnight thing to be peaceful from within. But for you to be peaceful from within, sometimes it has something to do with spirituality also. In Christianity, we get to say, may the peace of Christ dwell in your heart. How you can get that peace, of course, in the book of Romans it was mentioned that, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace." So, if you go on the spiritual aspect, Christ is the peace Himself. He's brought into your being, and if he's brought into your being, He's the kind of peace we share to others.

[ROCKROCK:] And the other thing I always associate with peace is, peace, also, is a kind of a space where people, individual or group, they are in control of. There are spaces that they always feel they are in control or they're free to do something. In bigger sense, in Mindanao, the Muslims would always, the Moros would always assert that there is peace if there is *galak* [joy]. They're free to practice their faith. And, so with the Christians also, they would say they have peace if we are not threatened by Muslims. So, these kinds of safe spaces, free from fear, where people could express themselves in terms of their culture, in terms of their religion, so that's [what] peace is. Yeah, I think that's it.

[REXALL:] Peace is the absence of violence in communities. It is when people can be content and happy, have enough food, go to school and sleep without being threatened. Sometimes we think that there is little to do, but there are so many possible collaborative efforts that can be done.

[MYLA:] So it's really very basic. People being able to experience safety and security in terms of the living environment; and with that enabling environment, they are given opportunities to actually achieve full human flourishing. Because it's the negative peace, which is absence of war, but it's also really about just existence, just life. Just life like, really, you have all the necessarily opportunities, capacities, assets you need to have to be able to actually achieve your own human flourishing. So, it's both the negative and positive and we're far from it. [Laughter]

[I-I:] Definitely peace is not just the absence of war, that's why peace and development is really very much related because even families that are in the hinterlands, not having a meal, only having a meal in a day or not being able to send their children to school, is a cause of unpeace so, yeah. So, peace comes in different ways, it's not just the absence of war. Even as simple as a child not having a pen and paper when going to school, or a child walking five kilometers. . . . So that, in itself, is unpeace.

These peacebuilders understanding the nuanced differences between positive and negative peace. In the fragile and conflict impacted contexts in which they live, requests are often "simple"—the ability to sleep through the night or freely walk to school. After years and decades of conflict, a primary focus is the well-being of the community.

Structural dimensions: social towards political

Many of the participants in this study are peace activists and connect with organizations oriented towards a quest for righting the wrongs within society. There is a colonial legacy within the region that has impacted the abilities for communities to work together and to achieve the reparations for past wrongs. Many interviewees commented on the need to seek out the root causes as part of the process for enabling justice and a sustainable peace to flourish.

This conversation about structural dimensions of peace was fiery. Interviewees leaned forward to impress on me the vehemence they brought to the question. Let me begin this section with a lengthy excerpt from my conversation with Lyndee:

[LYNDEE:] But when you look at the [definition of peace], for me, there are pieces there. There is a situation wherein there is a small peace and a big peace. But sometimes when you look at the generic peace, it's very important especially here in the Philippines. And we have this history of decades of conflict and various experience of exclusion and minority issues here. It's very important that at least peace is basically addressing the root causes of conflict because of this kind of reality that we have as a third world country. So, when you address that, you are able to put food on the table, you have jobs, respect members of the community, able to go to go to school, able to do a little bit of recreation. When you say this is our land and that land is shared, land is tilled by the farmers, crops and harvest being shared; and it doesn't go to international investors who are based in Makati [the business district of Manila], but they are basically based around the world. So, the wealth should be, first and foremost, we share with the people who offered their lives. It's addressing the root causes of conflict. For me, peace in Mindanao is also trying to look at the history of unpeace and settling it because we wanted to mend relationships. So, it covers time and it covers not only space, because there's also land issues on it, but it also covers that element of time. You have to go back. When you want to mend broken relationships, you have to talk about the previous lives and connections of people before. It occupies that space now. So that's why we have this for us in this political solution, this concept of transitional justice and all this. It's very important in mending broken relationships. It's very important for us here. It has to be part in the entire peace process. Yeah, and when you say peace and it's not only political settlement, peace is also an ongoing thing because there will always be problems, conflict will always be there. We just have to work on how to lessen the impact, mitigate the impact. That's the best thing about managing it. Peace, for me, should also exist in all dimensions, spheres of our lives. I've already talked about an ordinary family who will be able to send their own sons and daughters [to school] so it has to be for me in the economic, social, in the culture, while being in all aspects of socio-political. It's also psychological. Yeah, that's peace for me. It has to flow into these levels, domains. It has to start. It's important that it has to start

somewhere. For me, peace should start in the person. I would say I experience that. That's why it's only a state of mind. It's just a state of mind, but who's validating that it's a state of mind? It's a person so the person should live with peace. So that person should flow peace. But you're looking at a perfect individual, perfect society. That will not happen but that's what the peace educators and culture of peace [facilitators] are trying to promote. That kind of peace thinking in a world of imperfections. We also wanted to be good because we wanted to stretch our survival. We wanted to protect the world that we have. We don't want it to look like things that we'd want to migrate in Mars or elsewhere.

[WENDY:] Yeah, yeah.

[LYNDEE:] And we're looking at, I don't know, generations. By that time, we're six feet under the ground.

[WENDY:] Yes.

[LYNDEE:] But we really want to build this kind of roadmap.

Key words: Social Justice, root causes, right to self-determination, resources

[BONG:] And I would say that like Iqbal and everyone, if there's justice and there is acknowledgement of their historical roles, they could be happy. And then there will be peace. I talk to their kids. To their young kids. Go with them to teach them some skills and they are happy. . . . At the same time, I see, you know people who are in Cotabato—Catholics or Christians. I want them to be happy as well. Not to be afraid of the Bangsamoro camps and the armed forces. . . .so, I see the meaning of peace as a sense of happiness, not being fearful.

[GING:] On the ground, it means. . . I guess the most important is that the mother that goes to their child knows that that child has the possibility of a life where he or she can have choices and bring the best of his or her potential to solution, which means that they can feed their children. Therefore, it has to be connected with the social services in the most difficult and remote situations, knowing that it will be better, it can be better. The government services are there. That should be there.

[JASMIN:] So, it's also my definition of peace—it's really resources trickling down to the poorest of the poor, that there's food on the table, that there's employment, there's livelihood, children can go to school. That's peace for me. So, it's not just stop the war, but I think that both are essential because you cannot. . .it's so difficult for those things to happen if there's war, so war has to stop. So both. These are both my definitions of peace—stop that war, get on the peace process, advocate and support it so that these things could take place—the development that is real and not just the transportation of amenities and western facilities, no not that. Just have food on the table. Children they get to go to school, livelihood that can sustain them. You know, my friend Jude was saying, “You know the indigenous communities don't actually need a lot of luxuries. Just have to have food on the table and people are happy.” Even that. You know that people won't go hungry. There's peace in it, I don't know if it's shallow, but that's the peace I believe. I

don't think there's going to be peace if war stops and people are still poor. So, that's my operational definition.

[ELVIE:] As I've said, that is always, to some extent, in terms of context, it's a big dream for everybody but it's not just a dream. It's not that abstract, or abstract concept. But, it's the desire that, that eventually we will have peace, where we are able to live, play uninterrupted, to be able to sleep soundly—all those very basic things. Then there's peaceful sleep that you are able to go on with your normal family life. Children are going to school, you are able to work, to get access to all services and have economic activities uninterrupted by these conflicts or evacuation. To have a quality of life that we're supposed to picture on. Eventually we want to transform this situation.

[BISHOP TENDERO:] When we talk of peace, first of all, we want to address the kind of process of the unpeace situation. So, is it economic issues? Is it political concerns? Is it religious? So, what are the factors why is there a conflict? So, it's important for us to first of all identify the problem. The context in Mindanao issue is not religious, it is socio-economic. When it comes to the conflict with the communist party: yes, there is ideology there but the ideology is also because of the socio-economic injustices that the people are having. And, therefore, if we want to have peace, we need to address the root causes of the conflict. Identify the root causes of conflicts and provide an equitable and sustainable solution to those causes of conflict.

[USTADZ:] Sometimes they define peace as the absence of war. And sometimes I cannot believe that there is peace if there is no war. But, for me, if there is good life, there is something happening, then everybody enjoying, then there is good treatment to everyone, there is a good system, which is upright to all people. What I mean by system is there a government, which focuses their efforts on the people. What I mean is the focus of the government is that it has responsibility and accountability to the people. There is no corruption and what is for the people is for the people. That is what we want and I consider that kind of a system as peace. And everybody is allowed to manage and everybody is accommodated and there is also a freedom for everyone. Then there is justice because peace without justice is not peace. Justice for all and that is peace for me.

[OMPONG:] My view of peace includes seeking justice for the marginalization of the Lumad and the Moro communities, hardly [a peace] confined to peace negotiations between the government and rebel groups. My sense of justice and seeking for justice for perceived injustice, my sense of mission, all these come operating as spontaneous expressions from inside me.

[CHAIRMAN IQBAL:] The absence of fighting does not necessarily mean that there is peace but my ultimate definition of peace is that peace is with justice. Unless there is justice then there can be no peace because peace and justice are parts of the same coin. The two faces of the coin: justice and peace. You cannot separate one from the other so it must go together. If you have peace, meaning there is no fighting, that is not peace. There has to be peace with justice. And that's why I do not believe in the saying that forgive and forget. Maybe I can forgive, for personal, maybe, I can forgive, but historical injustice

against our people, there has to be restitution. There has to be justice at the end of the day. So, if there is no sort of restitution or some justice to be rendered, then I am afraid it will be repeated. Not necessarily that we will take revenge. But, maybe, the same route who have done that great injustice against our people will be repeated. So, I said I do not believe in forgive and forget. Maybe on the individual basis, then I can forgive because that is only concerning me; but for the collective historical injustice against our people, I think that would be very difficult. And that's the reason why the two panels organized the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission in order to revisit the past and because it's part of healing process. And the most difficult to heal is when your feelings are wounded. So that is part of the whole process of healing. And, of course, forgiveness is part of the healing process, but, to forgive everything, then I don't believe in that. There has to be some justice rendered. It cannot be given in the form it was taken for instance but there are other ways of giving justice. People's apology is a form of trying to render justice, but apology is not enough. It has to be more than that. So, I repeat my definition of peace is that it is part of a single entity. Justice and peace must be together. Justice without peace and peace without justice is not real justice and not real peace. So that's how you, justice, so that is how I define peace.

[BENNY:] Social justice. You know. . . people in this peace process, for this BBL, are saying they are actually in line with the constitution because the constitution is a social justice document. So yeah, that's part of peace. There's social justice. So, for me, it's not just the absence of conflict because all these conflicts are actually symptoms of inequality. If I adopt that definition, then you won't have any peace because it's like saying that you resolve the problems of the Philippines first before you can resolve [this]. Because the problem is structural in the whole country. Distribution of resources, so, and even if you give the Bangsamoro all their right to self-determination and all that, in the end, it's just the same. It will just mirror what the national, you know, very feudal structures as well, very elite. And now you even have the economic model for the Bangsamoro as the plantation model. And you know very well that the plantation model has been so discredited in other countries. It's not really that promising in addressing poverty. Anyway, so social justice in the real sense and community. Peace means the community gets to enjoy, experience security, human security, and human development. And then the family can bring kids to school and not worry of displacement. Yeah, for me, that's my idea of peace.

[BONG:] It is justice, power, and the right to live in accordance to their faith. Peace? It won't happen without justice there.

[ROCKROCK:] Peace. . . what always come to my mind when I hear the word peace is a relationship where people have equal access to power. I think that definition to me started when I realized that one of the causes of unpeace in Mindanao is the imbalance of power and that's where we come to the issue around justice also. So, peace is, I believe unpeace is something that is the absence of equal access to power. Peace also thrives in justice. Unpeace thrives when injustice is happening, also. So, when people feel that their rights are not respected, they feel they are unjustly treated, then there is always that tendency to assert your right and that would create—that would [lead] people to violence.

[ABDULLAH:] We want to see a society, for instance in Mindanao, where the Bangsamoro is able to transcend marginalization, where our legitimate grievances are responded to, and historical injustices committed against the Bangsamoro are addressed. And then, start to build the foundation of institutional reform. There should be respect of the cultural identity of the Moro people, but at the same time, this is not supposed to be exclusive. On the other hand, the Moro should be able to exercise their rights. So, we're looking at peace in terms of equity, in terms of addressing our legitimate grievances and that is in the context of the Bangsamoro's right to self-determination. That to me already starts the beginning of peace. If they're not able to. . .because I also consider reforming non-functioning institutions as a means to achieve sustainable peace. We can have our economic today, but without reformed institution, it won't be as sustainable as we want. So, peace with me, is also living with others. There's tolerance—cultural, religious—sorry, I think it's going to be monotonous to have one kind of life in this world. We need a good variety of very good music. [Laughter]. In the end I think, if we can be co-equal with the rest of the Filipinos, if we are treated more or less equally with the rest of the Filipinos that can also be peace to me. For as long as we treated like second or third class of the republic it won't work. So, peace building must address all these. But at the end of the line, there needs to be cooperation of all people. I don't think the Bangsamoro can live in exclusivity. It has to be interdependent with the rest of the people. But where the rights are respected and legitimate grievances are addressed, I think we are building the foundation of peace. And peacebuilding, again, is a sense of order. If that happens in the next 10 years? You need tons and tons of time. It may not be me, not even my son. Maybe my granddaughter will enjoy this state. That's my peace.

[GUS:] Well, the context of our work is accompaniment. . .peace should be the achievement of the self-determination of peoples, the achievement of the struggle for their own self-determination. That's also broad. As much as possible, peace should. . . that's my caveat. But I'm not saying I don't respect—I respect all arenas of assertion, but in our role as IID, we try to advocate or accompany, or help in the peaceful process. . . that being achieved through peaceful means. . .so, peace to me is the achievement of the self-determination aspirations of peoples without running roughshod over others' RSDs. So then, that's where you see this whole dynamic between the Lumad and the Bangsamoro. So, if you are for RSD, you have to work for RSD for all. Of course, with balance and the tactics and real politics come into play, that's another story. And that's maybe not our role as peace advocates, or maybe this is, I don't know, or maybe a combination with other types of people like politicians—to help see us through this knot. Of course a big word also that should be there is justice—transitional justice, economic justice, social justice—those cannot be taught for peace's sake, cannot be placed on the peace table. . .based on peace agreement, but. . .people go to sleep with the notion that they're going to have a meal tomorrow, their child is going to school without being bothered by a checkpoint or by someone. They have work in the farm or wherever they are without being bothered or being afraid. . . . This is my idea. But if you see our calling card, it says there, bridging people, bridging peace. We build peace by bridging people. There's always assumptions in that slogan, that is, when you bridge people's lives, their

identity is unsuspected, their identity bridged, it is embraced. . .and once you achieve that, you build a genuine peace.

[REG:] My organization has a specific mandate towards the conflict between the government and the communist party. So, for us, achieving peace is giving justice to the victims of human rights violations since this conflict started, which is forty years ago, so giving justice to families and, basically, stopping violence and a ceasefire between the military and the communist party, stopping all the killings and tortures of people not part of the conflict, but who are being caught in the middle. And so, peace and justice is like our call, like peace and justice and human rights, and recognizing the human rights of every individual whether they're rich or poor. We have equal human rights and that's how we call for peace: to recognize the rights of everyone.

The structural dimensions of peace can be overwhelming. This group of peacebuilders does not shy away from naming the difficult topics. Indeed, they recognize that moving forward depends upon strong analysis and naming those issues that have deep meaning for those impacted.

Good relationships: from community to the national

The language of seeking out ways to ensure harmony is a significant theme within the interviews. It was highlighted that it is important to live in ways that provide for "smooth" relationships in a context of respect and equality. It is essential that peacebuilding work moves towards that peace goal of being able to live together, across differences.

Key words: Living in harmony, respect for all, equality, building understanding, living life

[JASMIN:] And also another one, Wendy, that's very strong for me is the respect for one another. That there's peace despite the differences in opinion, in the way we operate, in ethnicity, in culture and religion.

[AMINA:] More and more I think that peace is not the end goal. There will never be a time when there is absolute peace. So, I think it's a state or condition where people are able to have a certain level of respect, trust, and understanding of each other and that there are mechanisms to address whatever conflicts that arise. So, it may not be a situation where there's no more conflict at all. We are prone to conflicts. But if there's a situation where we have a means or mechanisms which people trust that will just resolve their conflicts, I think we are closer to peace. So, I think there can be peace even when we are looking at peace as an end goal, even during the process of doing it, as long as there's a minimum

level of trust, acceptance and understanding between different people with different interests, and that there are mechanisms which work and which you trust to be just to you. Of course, the minimum will be an absence of war, reduced acts of hostilities, and structures that support the minimum level of equal distribution of resources.

[REG:] I think when I use the word peace I imagine community, I imagine harmony, a community of people who were living together who don't necessarily have conflict, but who might have conflict, but know how to deal with them and deal with them non-violently. That's how I see peace. And I think it's a whole bit still too far from where I am right now.

[ARNOLD:] For me, it's a situation where people are able to live together. It may not necessarily mean the absence of conflict, but, there are ways by which people have a way of resolving their issues and concerns without resorting to the use of violence. I'd like to connect it more with the idea of conflict management. It's a situation where people can define boundaries, respect each other's rights, living in harmony with others.

[JUDE:] I'm still working with the indigenous women for the peace. I'm dreaming of a peace community where there is equality, respect for women, recognition of women, and respect for human rights. There's the rule of law, and this is the peace that I dream of. And the people can always understand each other, they can meet together, I can go to my farm, and I can go anywhere without [fear]. That is my dream of peace.

[XX:] I would just like to define it like. . . What should I say—right relationships—although it's always there. I mean it has always been given the definition right relationships and. . . Yes, at all levels, like I could remember one conversation we had with my son and my husband at one table. When he saw me, he saw me providing a lecture on the BBL with some church workers here. And then she [a church member] confronted me affront, and said "You've given a lecture for one hour and still I don't understand what BBL is," and then said, "Don't you know that when you share this, don't you know that there, that they [Moros] brought harm. The Moros brought harm to my family. Don't you know that? That it's like this? And then so what you're saying is not true and I don't believe in it." And I did not expect that my son, when we are conversing in the evening, that he felt so angry at that woman. "Why did she speak to you that way? But I could define it like peace is something like you can share what are your aspirations are, but still having this right relationship. We could still bash each other, we could still talk about anything else; but, still, we consider ourselves as friends and family. That we may be, have different opinions, but key for me with that is we still look out for each other.

[WENDY:] Yeah!

[XX:] And at the same time, I am looking at that church member also, she was free to tell me up front that no, no because this is like this, without any inhibitions.

[WENDY:] Right!

[XX:] So, somehow, for me, I really appreciated that. I am not disgusted, I'm not angry, but for me it was also letting her get it out, and letting people realize that this is one thing that we need in the church. Maybe our relationships become open and talking about all

these things, not necessarily defending what has been said; that's key, that's, for me, that's peace. Because even when you express to yourself what has been bothering you, it's a relief. [Laughter] And that's something that we can work on. She was already able to express something. It's already the beginning of how we can journey together. That's one of my learnings. I don't want to see a thirteen-year-old boy hold a gun anymore. Any part of the NPA or any revolutionary group; and say that he wants to change the world. Because I think that is where my energy comes from [for changing the world]. What is then our role as a church in these communities? I think I don't want any more to see children risking their lives for somebody else's ideology or if they don't understand anything at all.

[SHALOM:] To me, different levels for me. Peace would mean that ordinary Bangsamoro people would have access to better education, would have access to water, would have services, and would not be discriminated against because of their identity. They would not be discriminated against because they do not know how to speak in English or in the national language. That they're accepted for who they are as a people. Peace would also mean when they are able to sleep soundly, they are able to harvest rice, harvest seafood, or whatever that is, without any fear, without bringing any weapons. Peace, to me, would also be making sure that the culture of having guns will somehow disappear because when you don't have that kind of psyche, that for better protection I should have a weapon, then it would still be very peaceful. If you do not have that psyche anymore, then you can say peace definitely is very possible. Peace, to me, also would mean that the Filipino people will accept the Bangsamoro as part of this country. Because, at the moment, we do not feel that we are Filipinos and that we're part of this country because they have boxed us into the international labelling of terrorism that these people are radicals, these people are fundamentalists. And we're saying, "Hell, fundamentalism didn't start in Islam." Right? Fundamentalism started during the Crusade movements in the Christian world, so why are you boxed into this? That to me would be peace and that would also mean that the media will also try to build an objective image of who we are as a people. That they do not use identities in saying, a Muslim killed this, or a Muslim kidnapped this. Because we go and say, why don't you say, a Christian killed this, or a Catholic kidnapped this. But how come if it is within our people, you always love to tag us with that kind of identity? Once that is removed, then I can definitely say, hey, I'm ready to say that is a peaceful place and I'm ready to embrace that I am a Filipino. But at the moment, I am not ready to say that because you have very, very deep prejudice against us that may be baseless most of the time, and may have basis, I guess for some, because we also have bad apples. In a full basket there are always some bad apples.

[WENDY:] Yeah.

[SHALOM:] But it doesn't mean all the apples are bad. So that, to me, is peace. It might take a long while. I may be dead by that time but I hope before I die I can somehow say that I'm at peace with this country. But at the moment, I don't feel like I'm part of this country and I think some of us feel the same way. But we pay our taxes. We're good citizens. We pay taxes. We have to pay our bills and all these things. But it's the attitude thing that when they know that you're a Muslim. So that to me is peace.

Strategies, on their own, will not clear the path to peace. How one *does* peace is an essential dimension of achieving peace. In a cultural context, such as the Philippines, good relationships are no small part of the considerations in a peace definition. And these peacebuilders are acknowledging that there are deep resentments and historical groundings for the discrimination that won't easily disappear. This is long and necessary work.

Doing Peace: It's a process

The people interviewed in this research are busy people. They are part of networks and organizations. They are connected to communities of people. They have vision and are acting on that vision. It is an acknowledgement that one is part of making change happen. "There is no way to peace; peace is the way," a quote by the Christian pacifist A.J. Muste, is appropriate as a way to describe the energy of these peacebuilders for whom doing is an essential aspect of the beliefs.

Key words: Doing, working to make it better, process, nonviolence as a method

[IRENE:] For me, peace is a process. Decreasing dividers and increasing connectors so that development can occur. So, peace is not development and development is not peace because you have to be very clear about the dividers and the connectors. Development. There are parts of development that, of course, can divide and some that can connect. But those that are—that's the process of bringing about the peace. Because my definition of development is the process, again, the process of increasing capacities and decreasing vulnerabilities so that we can live long happy lives. What else, you know? Well, as easy as that, then you realized, oh my god, we can have peace so easily. When I teach this to my students, they go, "Huh?" Yes, it's easy to strategize. It's easy to see what you're supposed to do because it's so simple. What is dividing people? And what is connecting them? So, you decrease the dividers and you increase the connectors and then you have peace. So that development can occur. Housing will come and the other things will come.

[DENG:] It's a vision of nirvana. [Laughter] It's a vision where everybody is really enjoying life. What I mean enjoying life is not happy, smiling, etc. but it is really living a very meaningful life. . . . Peace is not the absence of conflict because conflict will always be there. But peace is really knowing how to live with conflict and knowing how to work through your tensions. Your relationship becomes better because of what you went through. It would be painful at the start because conflicts, because you know different

feelings inside. It would be painful at the start saying, “You know, I’m sorry, but I’m saying I was hurt by what I just heard from you. I just felt my heart break. I am now feeling I’m not appreciated.” So, all this stuff is hurting someone. It’s going to be hurtful. And you’re not going to be better tomorrow; but you’re working towards it. And that’s what counts. And that’s what peace is. You’re working towards making things better for yourself and the other.

[MUSSO:] I think peace can be defined as when we all decide not to kill. Even though how bad has happened to you, to your family, but you can still say to yourself, “I will not kill anymore, I will not retaliate. I would rather do my best to serve my community.” For me, that’s the only way that peace could be achieved. People would realize the value of human being is precious and you cannot fight fire with fire. So, for me, peace would be the time when we decide to stop killing each other and do something good.

[GING:] Politically, it’s the belief and a reality where you can really have ideas, pushing ideas themselves without the use of force. So, politically, it’s a system of politics and governance where the use of arms is seen as completely illegitimate on any side so for the state and for armed parties. I think that’s important. It’s not a place where you don’t have different ideas or you don’t have opposing ideas, but you understand that you have to fight it out on the level of what’s the better idea, which well, yeah, is not so unique in other parts of the world, but, certainly, still a struggle here.

[WENDY:] So, how do Maguindanaons talk about peace or what they’re looking for?

[ABHOUD:] The usual term is *kalilintad*.

[WENDY:] Okay, is that similar to *kalinaw* (peace in the Visayan language) or no?

[ABHOUD:] Yes, yes, like *kalinaw*. The problem with the terminology, *kalilintad*, is like water, it’s calm, very calm; but my problem with that definition is when it is calm, it means it’s static. It’s not dynamic. And peace is not static. Peace is dynamic. You have to do it.

Doing peace requires moving out of one’s comfort zone into contexts where risk is part of the commitment. Adherence to non-violent ways of strategizing for peace is a large part of the conversation in these peacebuilding circles. It is both a commitment to taking active steps and to acknowledging that how we do these steps will impact the sustainability of the peace achieved.

Comprehensive: the big picture

In a context of decades of conflict and violence it is indeed challenging to articulate the vision despite, and within, the involvement in the doing of peace. It is understood that the journey to a sustainable level of peace requires a complex set of strategies and tools. As well, it

needs to be oriented towards reconciliation and a broad engagement in order engage in a long-lasting peace.

Key words: Reconciliation, holistic

[FATHER BERT:] Peace is not just the absence of war. That's what we are promoting. Even if there's a peace agreement, it's not a guarantee that there will be peace in Mindanao as long as there's that hatred and anger in the hearts of people that we have to address also. That's why the horizontal peace process that we are doing right now. That's why I told you the story of reconciliation because that's part of post-conflict. It's healing the past—that's personal peace. Of course, no more war, and then post-rehabilitation. We're also engaged in that. That's why socio-economic addressing the structural violence, poverty and so forth. It's a comprehensive approach—personal peace, structural, social, cultural, religion—it's comprehensive. Peace is not just the absence of war, that's why it's a collaborative effort. We cannot do it alone.

[JUDE:] We also are tired of living in conflict so we want a peaceful community. Peaceful community means respect for human rights at least with employment and we can do things here, social services of the government, and the wholeness of what is one peace, not just the absence of the barrel of the gun, but the holistic peace. So, we want this peace to be, because at our stage, we say that this is not anymore for us, but for the next generations so our intervention now is more on how to engage with the youth, also from the early stage of which should be. Because of our time, we perhaps cannot attain this vision for peace, maybe the next generation can continue, can taste this. . . . So, work continues.

[MYLA:] But the other dimension to that is solidarity because, in Mindanao, it's not just your own but it's really how you engage with other groups of people. It is part of Mindanao peace as it is. We really have to figure out how we can live justly and peacefully with each other because we are here. This is shared Mindanao so that's part of how you find peace.

[MIRIAM:] Of course, first level, why are having this negotiations with the MILF? We want to stop the armed conflict. That's the first goal. Stop the fighting. Make the ceasefire permanent. Transform the relationship. Then, of course, towards what direction? Then that's where the other peace elements come in, the socio-economic, the reconciliation, the healing, and the political. The political is this kind of autonomy, the one that would serve the right to self-determination component of the struggle. So, but you cannot do that without really solving the first. Permanently installing the ceasefire and changing the relationship from enemies to partners. And we already are there. We're already there. That's why at this point we already have a very good relationship with the MILF. The ceasefire is still holding. That's why we need now the other elements of the peace process to be really sustained, and to be put in place and to be able to sustain this, because some elements are already also in place. But the political solution, the normalization components and the long-term. Maybe the one that will really last longer

will be the reconciliation elements. So, I think the comprehensive agreement on the Bangsamoro is a very comprehensive formula for peace. That's the framework that we're operationalizing.

[KAREN:] Well for me, the thing about social justice would be an aspect [of peace]. Another [is the] workshop with Indigenous women. So, we also tend to work a lot with Indigenous Peoples and women. We were trying to discuss something like, "peace is sort of the sibling of human rights." It's holistic.

[MIKE:] I guess my definition of peace, having peace, has become broader than what it was. I'm now exposed to like these different aspects, but also seeing it on the ground. I mean, the political process defines peace as political reform, development in Mindanao, genuine autonomy so you can attach it there.

[WENDY:] Yeah.

[MIKE:] But you also understand that that is not enough. That kind of peace is not enough because, as we're seeing after Mamasapano, if there is no peace in terms of understanding who the Muslims are, what Islam is about, then you will end up with a kind of peace that is suspect and the kind of peace that will never be trusted by the rest of the Philippines; and that's why I think there has to be, I mean, the whole thing about Mindanao is it's not enough that we silence the guns in Mindanao. It's not enough that we build new structures of governance in Mindanao. It's not enough that we bring jobs to Mindanao. People in the rest of the Philippines have to understand why we need to do that, the reason behind it, because they still don't understand it. Peace has to be reconciliation. Peace has to be acceptance by the rest of the Filipinos. . . . Yeah, yeah. I mean I think there are different types of peace, peace cannot just be one thing in Mindanao. It has to be so many things at many different levels. I guess that's what I'm saying. . . . I think peacemaking, we should not see it as a continuum that, okay, and you do this first, and then do that. I think already while you're negotiating, you should already be tilling the soil, preparing the ground.

[FRED:] It's not just a matter of ending the war. There is also an aspect of injustices there, which is more structural. Presence of addressing the development aspects of it: creation of jobs, food. The classic definition of that is defined by economics which are jobs, justice, and freedom. So, they identify things, right to self-determination is present. So, you would see the kind of broad spectrum where you address the truths of war is arms. And that's why the context of my work is to be done, but it's not enough to really have that kind of broader work for peace. . . . So, there's all sorts of definitions that has different layers, but from my experience I appreciated the global solidarity, that works. So, this could probably mean solidarity with different actors and people are joined together to address specific issue, which then we achieved and so it just adds on to that layers of definition wherein peace really means about people, valuing people's relationships. So, it is now in line with that building peace solutions for peace as long as building is about relationships and then what is more important relationships. So, addressing all these. Then from those things, you then involve yourself in peace agreements. You tell them that peace is a negotiated thing wherein people compromise to accept, tolerance, diversity, identity, just living harmoniously together, and be able to

address conflicts in dialogical manner rather than keeping each other. It's a broad definition. Then I start to see, you know what, achieve freedom through politically negotiated agreements with the Bangsamoro is not enough. We need to address right to jobs, creating opportunities for families to have better quality of health, then pursue, what we now pursued, justice.

Although most of the peacebuilders here are working in a particular context, and perhaps organization, they recognize that sustainable peace entails working within towards the larger picture of peace. This involves broad ranging partnerships and conversations, ensuring that they are not isolated in their own smaller pictures of peace. They carry the long view of peace, knowing that peace might lie in the next generations.

Summary

These definitions are sharply revealing of the work and motivation of the peacebuilders within these pages. As Sandra Cheldelin, Daniel Druckman, Larissa Fast, and Kevin Clements (2008) indicate “the answers will, to a large extent, determine what sorts of intervention we design,” thus making the exploration of the definition of peace a valuable precursor to the discussion of specific peacebuilding methodologies for local actors (15). In essence, the words here are the peace theories that have emerged out of lived experiences and shape the interventions utilized by these practitioners. Lederach, Neufeldt, and Culbertson (2007) “seeing ourselves as theorists, is a matter of recognizing the pervasiveness of theory in everyday life” (3). We should not be leaving theory simply to the academics as the richness of this data confirms. Theories of peace and peacebuilding are emerging through the reflection on the doing and immersion in the conflict context. These definitions are rich resources for contemplating interventions and strategies in the field.

Peace Credo produced in 1996 by Rudy “Ompong” Rodil

Tagalog (original)	English
Kalinaw Mindanaw!	Peace Mindanaw!
Lumad, Muslim, Kristiyano	Lumad, Muslim, Christian
Magkaiba, magkaisa	They are different, they can be one
Isang Diyos	One God
Isang lupain	One land
Isang adhikain	One dream
Kalinaw Mindanaw!	Peace Mindanaw!

Performativity and Dialogue

Introduction

Deng is a longtime friend and peacebuilding colleague. Although we have had numerous conversations over the years regarding peacebuilding strategies and challenges, it was an honour to sit down, more formally, with her to record her peacebuilding theories that have emerged out of a life lived with a focus on building relationships within stressed communities.

Of course, Deng talked about dialogue as an avenue for peacebuilding. It is the heart of much of the peacebuilding work at Catholic Relief Services in Mindanao. I can almost see her brain churning as she seeks to convey to me the role that dialogue plays in her peacebuilding work. She says:

My interest is kind of helping people understand themselves better. That's the thing that I really work on. But also, so that they begin to understand what's happening to the other person, not thinking simply, "so. . . I know, I went through this," and you know maybe that is what the other person is going through also. So, my working on myself is not only to increase my own understanding of myself but for me to discover what is going on in the other. So, it's actually geared towards dialogue. So learning how to understand the other. . . . So, you work on the person and that makes the person better. . . . And one thing that also really excites me in what I'm doing is when people that I work with learn how to dialogue and this gets them excited to see how we can use that skill actually in talking through their tensions and finding solutions.

It was in this conversation that it occurred to me that she was describing an essential aspect of the dialogue process, as used in Mindanao. It is not merely a tool in the toolbox of

strategies for peacebuilding in Mindanao. There is something more here. The people who enter the dialogue process, who enter into the conversation, emerge with a new identity forged through the experience. How was I going to figure out what enabled that?

Dialogue emerged as one of the key activities for the peacebuilders interviewed. In listening to the stories of how they were using dialogue in their work it was, of course, as an opportunity for conflict parties to share a common space and to hear each other's perceptions on difficult issues. Yet, in their words, there was also a sense that in the process of the conversation there was a shift in, not only, ways of thinking but ways of being:

[MUSSO:] First, we look into where they are coming from. Like for example, in terms of inter-faith dialogue, we try to transcend the religious divides. Like for example, the Christians would say the history of Mindanao or the whole country started when we were Christianized. But then the Moros, or the Muslims would say, 'No! That's not the start of our history. Our history started when the sultanates were organized.' We provide them with basic facts, basic archeological findings. But no, our civilization actually existed far beyond these religions! We are into ancient times, there are good ways to show that we have a rich culture, we have rich commonalities. Now unfortunately, I tell them, "Why is it that religion should divide us when in fact we have a rich history?" So, at some point, when those who are not aware of it [become aware of the history], somehow it breaks the wall. It breaks the prejudices and biases and they further realize that they are actually. . . we have many commonalities. So, that's it! We started looking at our difference, commonalities, and transcending our differences. In terms of intra-faith dialogue, at one point, we are able to bring in Imams, even Ustadzes, religious leaders coming from the Muslim communities, Shiites, Sunni, even a Wahabi. We brought them all together in one room, but we did not talk about, or discuss about religion. We just talked about what's happening in the world today—climate change, and certain issues—and what can Islam do about it. That way, somehow, we were able to bring them all together.

[ARNOLD:] As a university, of course we consider ourselves as a venue where we can really allow the sharing of ideas—basically that's how we see ourselves as a university. We can be a place where we would really be able to discuss their respective ideas, to be really able to address conflicts because there are many conflicts in Mindanao. . . . Dialogue has a way to build bridges, by exposing different lenses, it involves creating spaces for various perspectives, middle space, you talk to everyone, the role of an insider, your reputation matters, you use your strengths.

[FATHER BERT:] The framework is always universal. We are all human beings, we are brothers and sisters because we belong to the same human family. This world is our only home while we are here on earth—we have to take care of it. We have to promote peace and unity and compassion for each other. We have to have universal values, otherwise, it is just myopic. But, you have to transcend again those biases and prejudices—on my part, the hatred and anger. So, that’s what we are promoting now [as our way to conduct dialogues].

[OMPONG:] At this point I feel there is an urgent need to produce a single book on Mindanao-Sulu History. We have experienced in many years a history of mutual rejection; the solution is to produce another history of mutual acceptance. Given the many tribes in the region and the impact of colonial impositions, we need to give birth to a shared vision, and shared values and create new institutional arrangements. This should be the product of active dialogues at the community level, of people to people engagements. . .with acceptance and respect with each other’s identity.

People leave these dialogue circles with conscious, new conceptions of possibilities for co-existence and integration. As well, there was an indication that some deeper sense of self and community had been developed in these dialogue spaces. In fact, the word “space” was usually utilized when talking about dialogue.

There is a body of literature on the theme of timing or “ripeness.” “Ripeness” theory proposes that conflict parties will resolve their conflict only when they are ready to do so. The dominant view is that this is usually when their unilateral means of achieving a satisfactory result are blocked and the parties assess that they are in a costly predicament. When that ripe moment is recognized, parties agree to options that were proposed in the past but only appear possible when other options seem impossible. The peacebuilders here did not use the word “ripeness” but did convey that they sensed opportunities for building relationships.

The timing of intervention efforts is an important consideration for peacebuilding. Jeffrey Rubin (1991) asserts that “analysts and/or practitioners need to continue to look for ways of creating ripeness” (22). Rubin believes that, unfortunately, many practitioners dismiss the study of timing because of its subjective aspects. Careful assessment is required in order to weigh out

the options. Zartman (2008) writes of the perception change of parties—what he calls the “mutually hurting state” (MHS)—as they realize that new options are required for resolution to have a chance of success (22). It is a point of perception, when it seems that other options must be considered, and the “ripe moment” has emerged in order to make peace a possibility (23). This moment is often assisted by mediators, or supporters, who encourage the participants to recognize the challenges if they do not divert from the path that they are on.

The ripe moments benefit from evaluations in terms of the timing and context of the situation. “Ripeness is not just waiting for the apple to fall” (Zartman 2008, 27). Conflict analysis is a delicate challenge. Ripeness is not easily discerned. By identifying obstacles ripeness can even be revealed and space created for it (30). In Zartman’s analysis, third parties have a large part to play in assisting parties to recognize the dynamics that could lead to a change in the situation.

There is debate in the field of “ripeness.” Lederach (2008) proposes that the key question to be asked is whether “it is possible to negotiate while the fighting is still raging?” (36). He cautions that the metaphor of ripeness might not be appropriate for determining the transition from violence to dialogue (37). The metaphor places immense pressure on negotiators to recognize when the ripeness occurs and the timing for transition is at hand. Lederach’s observation is that often that moment appears only in hindsight, recognizing events once they had passed (38). Predictions are very difficult in times of conflict. Another aspect that Lederach considers is that “ripeness is in the eye of the beholder,” although many in the midst of the conflict might not have the “luxury of such vision” (39). Yet, those who live in the context might have the ability to determine ripeness for the simple reason that they are knowledgeable about their environment.

It is valuable to consider the observations of insiders in assessing action points in a conflict. Lederach's (2008) preferred metaphor is that of cultivation (41). This provides a way of establishing a context in which participants are nurturing relationships strategic for the resolution of the conflict and being deliberate in assessing the situation on a regular basis. The motivation for cultivation rests on a "genuine concern" for the parties involved in the conflict and highlights the assets of those immersed in the conflict context. The usefulness of timing mechanisms in conflict requires full participation of local parties in order to recognize the subtle changes in dynamics and relationships. Those deeply engaged in a context "know intuitively that efforts to rebuild trust, encourage dialogue between conflicting groups, or heal divisions and wounds between them makes sense and makes a difference" (Lederach et al. 2007, 1). It is this idea that encouraged me to look at the field of performativity to explore this further.

Dialogue as Performativity: Straddling Findings and Further research

I began to think that there was an, often, unconscious, but specifically Mindanaon, approach for how dialogue was done in their conflict context. Reading Judith Butler's (1993, 1997, 2015a, 2015b) work on performativity, it appears that it could hold significant potential as a vehicle to view the dialogue approaches utilized in Mindanao. Butler (2015a) describes J.L. Austin as responsible for the term performativity, describing it as "an utterance [that] brings what it states into being. . .or makes a set of events happen as a consequence of the utterance being made. . .performativity is a way of naming a power language has to bring about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects" (29). Around the dialogue circle words are spoken that begin to re-shape the relationships within that space and the community. Is it the repeated iteration of desires for change and reconciliation within the dialogue space that which can transform the individuals circling that space?

Cultural anthropologist Saba Mahmood's (2005), *Politics of Piety*, builds on Butler regarding the ways in which the intertwining of the "outward" and the "interiority" is accomplished (161). Mahmood indicates, in terms of her exploration of the use of the veil by Muslim women, that "a modest bodily form (the veiled body) did not simply express the self's interiority *but was the means* [my emphasis] by which [the changed self] was acquired" (161). One of Mahmood's (2005) conclusions is that the possibility for unsettling the established patterns and norms of a particular context involves "*literally* [Mahmood's emphasis] retutoring the body," denoting that "what is required is a much deeper engagement with the architecture of the self that undergirds a particular mode of living" (166). This deeper engagement, I believe, is instinctively shaping the dialogue processes in Mindanao.

Mahmood's belief is that "any discussion of the issue of transformation must begin with an analysis of the specific practices of subjectivation that make the subjects of a particular social imaginary possible" (154). Is dialogue, in Mindanao, then, a means by which the interiority of a belief in co-existence and commitment to joint peacebuilding accomplished? By gathering and re-gathering around the dialogue circle can transformation be accomplished? It is clear from the words of the peacebuilders that there is a conscious intent for transformation within the dialogue process.

I thought about Mahmood's idea of "retutoring" the body while listening to the experiences of Father Bert. He works in a community exposed to violence and war over many decades. The feelings of animosity were very strong between the Christian and Muslim communities in the region. He, too, had his own experiences that made him suspect of the military and its ways of intervention:

[WENDY:] So, how do you do it? I mean, as you said, people come with a lot of hatred and anger, they're hurt, they've lived in evacuation camps—how do you manage this dialogue? Or how did you learn how to do it?

[FATHER BERT:] Precisely because I have my own personal experience on that also. Because when I was small, I was a high school student, I was slapped on the face by a military during martial law days. And that's when I started to hate all men in uniform. I did not want to deal with them.

When I was assigned in Jolo for nine years, in 1997, I was the parish priest there of Mt. Carmel Cathedral—when the late Bishop Benjamin de Jesus was murdered in front of the Cathedral. And I also started to hate all Muslim—I generalized it. But when I was assigned in Pikit, a few months after the murder of Bishop Ben, war broke out. And that's when I really experience the suffering of people in various evacuations centres—Muslims, Christians, but especially Muslims, even children. It was very. . .you know as a missionary priest, when you hear the sounds of mothers weeping and children crying in the night, you don't anymore ask whether they are Muslims or Christians. If there's little humanity left in you, you have to do something to alleviate them from their suffering. I remember I would just cry and shed my. . .alone by myself there.

So, that's when I was able to become a good missionary, you have really to transcend that biases and hatred and anger to be instrument of God's peace and compassion to every human being. And that's when we started to organize also a disaster response team, composed mainly of Christians and Muslims. Even under the rain or scorching heat of the sun, and even amid bullet fires, we would go to various evacuations centers and give food to starving evacuees.

We cannot just rely on the government. We cannot do it alone. Imagine the all-out-war, almost more than a million evacuees. In Pikit alone, almost forty plus thousand. More than half stayed in the evacuation centres for months. And that's why also many Muslims stayed there and we took care of them for months—six months almost. That's why when they left, they were crying. They could not imagine that these are Catholics, these are Christians helping them, and they are Muslims. And their enemies are supposed to be are military who are Christians. So, it was a really very hard transformation on our part. But, I guess you have to transcend that to be an instrument of peace to everybody—to show God's compassion despite those experience of the people on the ground.

Father Bert has worked at his feelings of hate with repeated actions and words of love and compassion. He has worked to utter words of compassion to all and, in that process, see his personal transformation. What has emerged over the years of missionary work, investing in

community projects, and sitting with Muslims in evacuation centres was an acknowledged sense of compassion for the Muslim community members and for the military. It belies the power of working together towards transformation, speaking about the transformational opportunities, and finding that in the midst of it one's own "interiority" is transformed. And he documents the transformation of those in the evacuation camps.

Mahmood (2005) utilizes Butler's work on performativity as a way to contemplate the notion that "social norms are the necessary ground through which the subject is realized and comes to enact her agency" and, thus, a way for her to contemplate the role of certain activities in the lives of Muslim women and their concept of how their bodies become the medium of their specific participation in the expression of their faith (19). Jillian R. Cavanaugh (2015), in the Oxford Bibliographies on "Performativity" defines it as "the power of language to effect change in the world: language does not simply describe the world but may instead (or also) function as a form of social action" (Cavanaugh 2015). Butler (2015b), in an interview with Arne De Boever, reflects on the implications for public acts from the standpoint of performativity theory:

So for me, that meant thinking about what happens when we act in common, what happens when we act in concert. . .[Those participating] are also embodied creatures in public space who are calling attention to the embodied character of their lives.

The agency of a group can be developed through events, such as dialogue, that nurture an interiority of desired changes. This means that we have the opportunity to incorporate that of which we are speaking into the depths of our being.

Father Bert, near the end of our conversation, stresses:

So, my approach is dialogical—it's very important. That's why even fellow Christians who hated you, you have to dialogue. Military, MILF, you have to dialogue to convey your message. It's a dialogical approach, but appeals to the heart because there's basic goodness in the heart of every one of them. You know it, you believe it. Otherwise if you don't believe, you're not better than them, they are all bad. I cannot blame. . .as I said, no one has the monopoly of goodness in this world. . .even myself, I have my own

weaknesses also. It's just based on that. That's why slowly, slowly, slowly. . .it's very important.

Over and again the conversations begin, with Muslims and Christians, with communities and the military, speaking of their needs and desires until slowly, slowly the change begins to emerge and hope for a sustainable peace becomes a thought that takes root.

Even Butler concedes that not all theory makes a practice evolve (Mahmood 2005, 163). Yet, the notion of performativity holds rich possibilities for the contemplation of conflict transformation tools. To contemplate that the gathering of people who deeply desire peace, who speak out those desires to those around them, might indeed acquire the potentiality of change with those acts, is cause for hope.

[FATHER BERT:] But dialogue—to do that [live in harmony], you have to dialogue, you have to communicate, you have to deal with the person. Dialogue will happen, forgiveness will happen and mercy will happen.

Embedded in the Mindanao work of peacebuilding is the deeply held belief that in spaces of committed conversation persons will be transformed.

Summary

Circles of dialogue are something dynamic, allowing for change to take place in the moment. At times it is a conscious effort. At times it is unconscious and emerges when least expected. Leading dialogue requires one, at times, to relinquish control in order to allow moments of possibility to take hold. The thirty-six practitioners in this study have spent hours sitting with traumatized people, fearful people, and hopeful people in the dialogue space. Thinking of performativity “as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena” lends power to the words used within those dynamic, and sacred spaces (Butler 1993, 2). Dialogue is practiced in Mindanao to produce the phenomena of transformation.

Ustadz, Deng, and Lyndee seek to explain how dialogue “works” in their context:

[USTADZ:] Interfaith dialogue is an instrument for the tri-people to respect each other because when you respect each other then there will be peace because if there is no respect, if you cannot respect other people, conflict will happen. But by the conduct of this interfaith dialogue, I recommend this as an option because the focus of this tri-people dialogue is to let different people understand each different culture. So, they understand different cultures, that’s the way that we can respect each other. If you cannot understand the culture, you cannot respect that.

[DENG:] I can see the movement. I can see the movement towards each [other], exchanging of phone numbers. I could see the movement from eating together and I could see the changing of places. I can see the one from where you came from come and join the person from the other. And they were talking. So, I can see and, you know, sometimes people think we’re just trainers or we are just facilitating these things. But this, actually, humbles me more to not take my craft for granted.

[LYNDEE:] I do a lot of dialoguing. It’s part of the network building that you try to manifest in your work but it really entails a lot of trying to see the other and trying to understand the other so that we would be able to agree on certain things because our guiding framework here is the trying to live the Mindanao people’s peace agenda. . .okay, this is how talking is, talking with people through this history of conflict and solving, addressing conflict, peacemaking. . .all because we wanted peace to be ordinary.

Abdullah thinks of the dialogue as a journey to be undertaken despite concerns that change is not possible. “I think I’ve said enough [in this interview],” he says and pauses. I know that he senses that there is something more to be considered about the kind of dialoging that is taking place in the communities in his region. He continues: “But on the other hand, there’s this thing that can also be explored more. . .continuing dialogue within this reconciliation process. It’s a long process, but I think we also need. . .maybe the dialogue can take a new form. Not only dialogue of peace, but also dialogue in life.”

Several phrases continue to swirl in my mind as I reflect on the interviews conducted. I realize that many sense the possibilities for transformation within the work that they do and struggle to communicate exactly what it is that is transpiring around the circle. Yet, they trust their instincts and continue these gathered times:

[USTADZ:] But by the conduct of this interfaith dialogue. . .they understand different cultures.

[DENG:] I can see the movement. I can see the movement towards each [other].

[DENG:] Sometimes people think we're just trainers or we are just facilitating these things

[LYNDEE:] All because we wanted peace to be ordinary.

[ABDULLAH:] Maybe the dialogue can take a new form. . . . Not only dialogue of peace, but also dialogue in life.

Understanding performativity as “acts through which subjects are formed” creates new vision for those dialogue opportunities around a circle (Mahmood 2012, 162). The instinctive approaches already being undertaken have become part of the transformation efforts in the Mindanao context. What might be the deliberate edges for expansion with a deliberate contemplation of the utilization of the performativity; deliberate actions geared towards new formations of community. This approach holds great potential for enhancing the prospects of sustainable peace. Dialogue utilized with awareness of performativity and in the framework of bamboo peacebuilding holds powerful fortuity.

Chapter 8: Looking ahead

Introduction

On May 13, 2016 participants in this study, along with friends from many sectors, gathered at Ateneo de Davao University to hear reflections from those interviewed and a presentation on my preliminary findings. I didn't know what to expect. I was nervous to relate what I had heard to those who had contributed the data I was using. Dann Pantoja, one my hosts for the period of time that I was in the field told me that he "wouldn't miss it" and that he'd be bringing along young staff from his organization to "assist them in thinking through how their work impacted peacebuilding in the region." Another friend told me that she saw this as an opportunity to connect with the peacebuilding "family" in Mindanao. "Wendy, we don't have time to theorize when we're so busy doing. The idea of this gathering is exciting." And there was an excitement in the room as I entered, hugs between people who hadn't seen each other for some time, and updates on latest activities. These are people for whom their life's work is peacebuilding. As the emcees gathered us, I knew that I was in for a rich afternoon.

Peacebuilding in the midst of deep-seated conflicts is an immense task. What are the best strategies and approaches? It is already recognized that more than policy reforms and strategizing are required. Citizens are imagining their own futures and creating opportunities for new relationships and structures. The Alliance for Peacebuilding speaks of the formal "advent of citizen-based organizations as builders of peace [as being] one of the most exciting and significant new developments" post-Cold War (Zelizer and Rubenstein 2009, xv). Numerous writers in the peacebuilding field have turned their faces to the discussion on best practices.

Anderson and Olson (2003) assert that when examining “activities at the Socio/Political level, work with More People is not enough if it does not reach Key People, and work with Key People is not enough if it does not reach More People” (55). Facilitation of these activities is a significant aspect to working together to build something authentic. Developing social capital, that is, building trust between social groups can bring strength to the peace endeavour (Ricigliano 2012, 45). The approach taken is key to the success and resiliency of the activities selected.

To create the possibility of fostering conflict transformation, it is appropriate to consider the possibilities for changing the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate conflict relationships and to develop mutually acceptable strategies to address the main conflict issues. Rudy and Leguro (2010) highlight the significant role that Culture of Peace (COP) trainings have made in the context of Mindanao. These trainings focus on “changing the way people think about their own history, culture and patterns of interacting with others” (21). Viewing peacebuilding, ultimately, as an initiative that involves multi-sector, and multidimensional, work to effect changes in people’s lives requires the acknowledgement that changes are needed in structural conditions, a positive peace, and that a comprehensive approach to that end will create broader possibilities.

William Ury, in *The Third Side*, describes ten roles for those desiring to assist in stopping conflict: the provider, the teacher, the bridge-builder, the mediator, the arbiter, the equalizer, the healer, the witness, the referee, and the peacekeeper (Ury 2000). Ury’s approach lays out a broad range of roles for local actors to insert within a conflict situation. There is a plethora of options when considering the potential roles for local actors. It is significant to consider not only the range of roles but the contexts and political dynamics impacting local realities.

Conflict situations require comprehensive approaches that involve multiple methods and a diverse set of actors for the best possible chance for success. This discussion is not to say that only local actors have significant roles to play within peacebuilding efforts. Clements (2004) observes that “higher levels of complementarity must be ensured; at maximum it is vital to know when to transfer different activities to other groups more specialised than our own” (18). Bush (2004) views this complementarity as a twofold project of “*deconstructing* the structures of violence, and *constructing* the structures of peace” (25). He is clear that these two aspects require simultaneous coordination. For peacebuilding work to have a chance of success this combination provides the opportunity for a positive peace impact. The challenge is to identify the opportunities to “nurture the political, economic, and social spaces, within which *indigenous* actors can identify” and utilize that various factors and resources that can assist in creating a positive peace (Bush 2004, 25). This is indeed a challenge in contexts familiar with years of war and violence.

Thus, the role of local peacebuilding actors is crucial to the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts despite the complexities of voices, access, ideologies, resources, to name a few. Funk (2012) concludes that:

newer approaches can recognize conflict resolution as a cultural activity and seek forms of partnership that help to midwife local efforts. This means rethinking the role of context in shaping peacemaking practice, balancing the need for innovation with the necessity of historical continuity, and emphasizing the renewable and potentially dynamic nature of local cultural resources” (407).

This approach suggests the collaboration between the different peacebuilding sectors and the deep knowledge of the context required.

Craig Zelizer and Robert A. Rubenstein (2009) write similarly of lessons learned they’ve in the field: peacebuilding is a long-term process; practice needs to be located in local culture

and contexts; outsiders can play a vital role in peacebuilding; assessment is key; peacebuilding is not a linear process; collaboration among peacebuilding actors is critical; cross-sectoral work is increasingly important; and gender sensitivity is important (12-13). These are all important aspects to be added to the peacebuilder “toolkit.”

It is clear that this is a field of practice and strategy that has no end of challenges. Lund (2003) writes that players within the peacebuilding field can often be their own worst enemies given the insufficient synergies between peacebuilders. “Energies are dispersed in hundreds of different directions but the myriad of activities is not guided by an underlying grounded theory, or overall strategy, only vague assumptions” (21). This study has revealed, despite numerous challenges, that local actor participation is vital to long-term stability and to the strength of peacebuilding endeavours.

In addition to local actor roles, research suggests that an orientation to broad collaboration across lines and sectors will support the strengthening of collective systems across many levels. Peacebuilding is most effective from a comprehensive lens, local actors as leaders, and inviting outsiders with assets to participate in the efforts can provide multiple entry points into conflict situations. This study reveals that the multidimensional peacebuilding orientations of local actors are powerful assets within conflict contexts.

Recommendations

How do articulations of theory and best practices emerge? “To build a useful theory, it is, however, vital for peacebuilders to pay close attention to what they do know, to their assumptions about peacebuilding, conflict, and social change, and to things that are often taken for granted” (Lederach et al. 2007, 4). This study has focused on the reflections of thirty-six passionate peacebuilder in the Philippines. The intention has been, at their request, to give voice

to their ideas and practices towards a sustainable peace in the Philippines and in Mindanao in particular. Lederach et al. (2007) wrote a toolkit on reflective peacebuilding to encourage peacebuilders to “build their capacity to learn about the change processes they promote” (2). They acknowledge that for busy peacebuilders it is difficult to find time to develop theory out of the experiences emerging from their practice (2). This is the case in this region.

Theory is not something that should be abstract but rather grounded in the everyday experiences and gleaned from daily interactions. Deliberate attention to one’s practice is to sharpen “capacities that are too often left unattended” (Lederach et al. 2007, 4). The interviewees in this study are everyday peacebuilding theorists and, as such, this section will indicate thirteen recommendations that emerged directly from the participants interviewed and lodged within their attention to practice and experiences in the field.

Watch and listen for wisdom and peaceful actions in others

Many of the participants in this study commented on the mentoring that they have received from other seasoned peace practitioners. Rexall Kaalim started his peace work as a volunteer with IID. He realized that, as a young person, he had much to learn from those who had already spent much time in conflict impacted communities. He says:

I started my [peace] volunteer work with IID [and] my exposure also to some individuals like Father Bert Layson when I stayed in Pikit. Although I’m a Muslim, I stayed in the convent in Pikit, listening to this person’s wisdom and actions, I joined him in his visits in the community. That also gave me more to think about my perspective in human rights—the assertion of human rights has responsibilities, the promotion of peace and being able to contribute to that and to listen.

This context changed Rexall’s life and he is now a seasoned practitioner himself, with many years of experience in a number of organizations. He acknowledges that his openness to observe wisdom in a Catholic priest has enabled him to do bridging work in conflicted communities.

Be pragmatic and committed

This combination of words appeared in many conversations. There is a need to be realistic about what can be accomplished but not overly so that one becomes discouraged. Life will have its setbacks and peacemakers must find ways to carry on. Musso urges that:

as a peacemaker you should not be discouraged. You have to start building it again. It has to be your passion and your commitment to do it, to continue doing what you have to do. So, you don't be easily discouraged, you also somehow [have to] be realistic, be pragmatic of the situation. But, at the end of the day, when you have done everything, you hope and pray that things would happen.

Keep moving forward. Ging Deles has worked many years within government structures and knows the reality of the challenges for getting things accomplished. She stresses that:

if you don't invest in getting someone that is closest to your ideal. . .you're going to be an outsider. So that's the other. That's an arena that I think needs more work. And I think it's particularly true for the peace work because peace is so political, that's what I keep on telling them. You call it a negotiated political settlement. It cannot be not political. So how can you say none of them? Well, those are your choices. If you're not going to make a choice, don't expect that you will have any influence on the next president, if you're going to make a choice.

The reality of the challenges must not discourage you. And at the same time, you must remain realistic and pragmatic about your options and the structures within which you work and arenas in which you seek change.

Stay on [the peace and non-violence] track

There are many experiences that can leave a peacebuilder feeling discouraged or can sway one's principles. Many of those interviewed acknowledged those darker times within the work. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer knows that it can be a constant struggle to stay "on track," but that it is essential that one does:

So, definitely in terms of contribution, one is on the general peace track. It is essential that we find the peaceful resolution as against the counter voices that would easily revert to calls for return to arm, violence or distrust of the process every time you have violent

incidence. Civil society, both of the local and maybe those who have more regional or more national character, would be the steady voices that would say stay on track.

There are many voices that can be listened to when times are challenging. Miriam wanted to speak firmly, and encouragingly, to peacebuilders of the importance to remain resolute in one's convictions.

Put energy into the technical expertise

Peace processes embody complex machinations. The diversity of viewpoints, peoples, and issues require multiple knowledges. Ging Deles has observed this first hand and encourages those from the civil society sector to enhance capacity for the "technical stuff." Over the past years, "I think civil society almost didn't know anymore what to do except to accompany the process, which is good, which is fine, which is necessary. But could they have been part of [other things]?" She wonders whether moving into different roles could have enhanced their participation and contribution.

Here are other voices that have spoken into this recommendation for local peacebuilders and organizations to push themselves into new areas of knowledge as a way to strengthen their voice and options within peace processes and conflict situations:

[BENNY:] But the problem with civil society in getting involved with Track One is capacity. Number one is lack of capacity in issues of governance, issues of political systems. Of course, the problem is they almost need to be lawyers also which is again problematic so they feel that are not competent to speak out, not competent enough to be involved in this [talk] of governance. . . . You cannot move forward unless you understand this. So, I think one is lack of capacity.

[MIKE:] But I would say what has been effective is for civil society to actually plant their people with capacity in support of the panels and we saw that with the MILF panel to Raissa [Jajurie's] entry; and I think she was very effective there.

[MIRIAM:] We need more think tanks. People who can give, who have the technical expertise. . . . The CSOs that are there, maybe they need people in their ranks who are actually capable of providing the more technical components of policy issues, so that they contribute actually to the range of options that are being considered. Of course, you get

experts and they still would have their own biases, but if they would want their perspectives to be well articulated in a reasoned and in a manner that really will be supported by data. So that's a gap. Policy options. [The need to have] well-studied policy options, not ideologically predisposed policy positioning.

But you know when you're trying to find solution, you really need good answers, not just general answers. So that's why I always—I think I have been focussed on—I always give that answer. “We need your experts. Where are your experts? We need your solutions, not just the general positions that you are espousing also along the way.” Okay. This is the problem.

The sophistication of processes and complexity of issues demands that local participants invest in themselves towards an expertise that can insert them into the processes that impact their lives and those of their communities.

Be clear about the methods used and their purposes

The lines can easily be blurred in contexts where there are many different sectors at work and when the stakes are high. Many of the participants saw that one of the areas for improvement was in clarity of goals and methods. This requires careful monitoring and evaluation to ensure activities useful towards sustainable peace. Benny Bacani has been part of many peace negotiations and has become concerned about the influence that is being exerted on the civil society organizations:

I saw how [many organizations were] using the CSOs as advocates [for their particular cause rather] than as channels for communities to express their sentiments on the agreement and on the law. So, whether CSOs are there, they are as channels, as bearers of the sentiments of the community or they are there as extensions of the parties in the process to convince people on the ground that this is where we should go and this is the way to go. What is really the goal of a CSO under this? . . . And one of the things I see, I observe that they were killing the true role of the CSOs. If you [simply] make them extensions of parties, if you make them advocates of this peace agreement, that the only way they are relevant only in so far as they champion this peace agreement or peace process.

Community participants in peace efforts require clear thinking regarding the ways in which they will intersect with the existent processes.

Ensure that media is part of the peacemaking and that information is disseminated

Media has a large role in shaping people's perceptions and providing key information on the many issues and dynamics involved in the building of peace in a conflict situation. Bishop Tondero is passionate that each person has responsibility for the peace that gets created. In that mix, he highlights the role of the media in peacebuilding:

Many people talk about their rights, many people talk about what they can expect. But in terms of the duty, what is our duty? So, for example for the media, they just say whatever they want to say. They need to have the due diligence that before they say things they need to make sure that they understand fully the story that they want to say, so that what sells is the good news not the bad news. So that is part of our problem. So even with the BBL, the media feeds on the prejudice of the people and the media does not try to help to bridge understanding.

The way in which the story is told is a crucial aspect of peacebuilding work. Bishop Tondero seeks to ensure that multiple sectors understand their role in peace making.

Karen Tañada also acknowledges that information—the lack of it or the quality of it—is paramount within a peace process. There have been many occasions, at crucial junctures, that people did not have adequate information on the issues:

[Everyone] could have communicated better—about the BBL. The information dissemination. . .because as civil society, it's hard for us to reach big groups, the big public. But, we could have focused on making the messages and ask OPAPP just to fund it, or things like that.

Part of the challenge is to recognize the possibilities and potential supporters in efforts to put out vital information. It requires organizations to think through what needs to be communicated and to seek out partners in those efforts.

The negotiation parties need strong engagement with civil society

Relationship building works in multiple directions. It is clear that civil society needs to cultivate its expertise and exert its opportunities for enhancing options and strategies. Yet, there

also needs to be encouragement directed at negotiation parties to engage with civil society throughout the processes. In order to ensure that negotiations are not limited to elite levels, or Track One, processes need to be designed with local participation in mind. Bong Montesa has, at times, been discouraged by the lack of involvement and the lack of diversity within that involvement:

Yeah, they [the negotiation parties] are not interested. They are only interested in civil society that helps them, who is there. They are not interested in civil society per say. Who are the civil society that are engaged with them? Only those who are in favour with them.

He yearns for involvement that transcends beyond simple agreements for involvement and that captures creative thinking for the immense challenges that face the country.

Strive for transparency and accountability

Relevant to the issue of engagement with civil society is the concern for transparency and accountability. Benny Bacani's work immerses him in complex processes of negotiation and he has seen contexts in which the lack of transparency diluted the quality of the agreement reached:

[We need] transparency and accountability because if we don't do that, this peace process becomes a peace process of entitlement rather than accountability. . .you must make those parties accountable to the people.

One of the things I noticed, and I have been publicly saying this, I'm worried, and I'm concerned that the role of CSO is hurt by when they become extensions of the parties than the process itself. Why do I say that? Because my institute is more a policy think tank, you know, it's more on, we don't go to the grassroots. We are more on the dealing with the leaders, etcetera because we are on the policy. And I always say that the institute is not loyal to parties but to the process. I think one of the important roles we have to play is to make parties accountable.

So, you go back to track two and make track one accountable. The track two is supposed to be the voice of the community. Okay. So rather than persuading the entitlements the parties think they have under this peace process, you must make those parties accountable to the people.

Leaders must be encouraged to be accountable to the people for whom they are negotiating. Open processes hold the best prospect for reaching an agreement that holds the possibility of being sustainable.

Reveal the role and presence of funders

For civil society to be able to exert itself constructively into the spaces in which it is most impacted it must have the freedom to do so. Of concern to some of the interviewees was that many times efforts are influenced by those who are funding the projects. Bong Montesa asserts that when civil society has the full ability to address the issues that are most concerning it will acquire strength:

Civil society is weak in the Philippines. So . . . a lot of civil society organizations are really dependent on funding, either government funding or international funds. So, it's funding driven. But the donors basically follow the state political anthem. So, both of them [government and funders] do not see the value of an independent civil society.

Transparency must be present to reveal the role of funders to ensure that civil society actors are shaping the strategies towards the directions needed by the community stakeholders.

Remember the big picture

The number of issues present in a conflict situation can be immense. Many peace actors naturally focus on the issues most pressing for them. Creating areas of expertise is important. Yet, it is important to not lose sight of the larger goals in the situation. Mohagher Iqbal, given his experience at negotiation table, knows how easily it can happen that people become micro focused on details and lose their view of the larger scope of issues:

I would rather call it something problematic because some civil society organizations are very particular about one or two issues. They forget about the forest. They are more concentrated on an individual tree. So, in search for peace, you do really need to emphasize the general aspect or the general agenda rather than [simply the] individual agenda.

This can become a delicate back-and-forth between attention to the micro details and the larger picture, both being important in building the frame for enhanced relationships. In contexts of long negotiations it is imperative that the big picture does not become obscured.

Stake your ground

Miriam Coronel-Ferrer and Ging Deles have had interesting vistas to the interaction between government, negotiation parties, and civil society given their roles under the Aquino presidency. As they contemplated the challenges for civil society both of them acknowledged that, at times, local peacebuilders needed to more strongly stake their ground.

[MIRIAM:] Sometimes some civil society groups do not want to—they always want to be in the middle of government and the MILF. You have to make a [stake] on certain issues. You have to position yourself.

[MIRIAM:] But, of course, it's a harmonious relationship that you want to build. But, at some point in time, they have to make very clear positions on certain issues. They cannot muddle through trying to be in good terms with both the government and the MILF, one hundred percent all of the time. . . . When we need to find solutions, sometimes we needed a more definitive positioning that means somewhere not in the middle. . . . [I believe that we need a] local presence to be able to really resolve local conflicts.

Miriam purports that the value in the civil society sector is the opportunity to speak outside of the “party lines” and peg the discussion to issues often missed within the official negotiations. This is immensely valuable.

In addition to thinking through what matters and asserting one's convictions, there is also the need to understand how the government process works so as to best position oneself in the process of decision-making. Ging asserts that:

If you want development outcomes, first you have to be able to connect that to governance. [But]. . . we're Filipinos and Filipino CSOs and Filipinos in general are very good in coming out with the agenda as everything smooth. We have a good, perfect, beautiful agenda. But unless you're able to connect that to [something solid, to] good governance, that's not going to happen. Only good governance develops outcomes. . . .

But good governance always relies on the politics. If you don't get engaged in the politics, then you have no hand on deciding who will actually govern.

Peacebuilding, in this context, requires numerous skills and networks. Ging believes that it is vital for civil society organizations to develop a strong understanding of the ways in which government works. This will garner opportunities for inserting the needs of civil society.

Listen to the youth

Regina Mondez is a deeply passionate young activist—deeply passionate about her country and about working towards solutions peacefully. Yet, she encounters participation barriers because of her age, wondering what it will take for the voices of youth to be recognized. She says:

There is still a divide between generations. . . There's this. . .the feeling that we're not allowed at the adult table; and the younger people, we just have to find our own ways to deal with our own issues. But then there's no bridge that connects the past and the future. There's this a wall that divides that. There was one person I talked to once and she said like, "revolution starts from experience, from struggle." And I kind of felt like maybe that's how the older generation see it, that they've all been through experiences that are horrible and that's where they come from. So, they don't see the younger generation, like our generation never had any struggles that are as hard as they had, so they probably think that we don't have any experience that would make us qualified to be as passionate as they are in what they're doing. So, it's a challenge.

She works hard at networking and seeking out venues for engaging in conversations about the issues facing the country.

My conversation with Abdullah emphasized this, as well. After many years of activism, and being a grandparent, he realizes that more light needs to be shone on the efforts of the youth in order to keep peace processes moving forward constructively:

[ABDULLAH:] Yeah! Maybe thinking of twenty years from now, we should invest more on the youth. The old people are not listening anymore. It's hard to bend old bamboo trees, they just break. So, invest on the young people today; that's where maybe that's where there is flexibility.

[WENDY:] Wow! Maybe that should be the title of my dissertation—how to bend bamboo.

It is important to open the peace spaces to as many voices as possible. The challenges are many. If expertise is one of the areas for improvement, youthful voices will enhance possibilities, equally valuable for peacebuilding efforts.

Be faithful

Perhaps there are many more recommendations that were intertwined within the many stories and reflections of the thirty-six participants of this study. One point, though, that every interviewee mentioned was the importance of their faith in their work and relationship building. I would be remiss to not highlight this as a recommendation for enhanced peacebuilding in this context. It is that which has sustained each one of them through very challenging times. Lederach et al. (2007) indicate that one of the greatest challenges “for practitioners concerns building disciplines that foster reflection” (2). Participants spoke of their practices for keeping centred on that which sustained them and their commitment to respecting the diversity of faith expression in the context.

RockRock Antequiso is clear that one’s faith is a significant factor in the peace work of Mindanao: “the element of faith is. . .essential to be. . .given some kind of special consideration in peacebuilding in Mindanao.” This must be an acknowledged dynamic of peacebuilding.

Mohagher Iqbal speaks of his faith as that which determines the direction of his peacebuilding efforts: “And, of course, as believers in the great one we also believe in prayers. We also believe in prayers. So, three things: perseverance, patience and prayers in order for us to reach this far.” To stand strong in difficult contexts, faith comes to the forefront.

Deng Giguiento frames it this way: “understanding that we share a common value of being faith-based, that’s what it’s about working in Mindanao.” For her, one of the key peacebuilding assets available:

is our faith. . . . We still believe in calling on our God or interventions. We still believe, whether you’re an IP or a Christian, more on the IP side I think, is, but also for me as a Catholic, I still believe in the power of prayer, in the power of intervention, divine intervention. It doesn’t mean that you don’t do anything. But you know you try your very best. I’m saying, you know I can’t do this anymore, you have to do something up there and stuff like that. People are still rooted in their prayers and it becomes a source of strength when all else fails. When all else fails, it becomes a source of strength.

Father Bert, as well, has placed his peacebuilding work firmly in the area of inter-faith efforts:

My approach is always founded on my spiritual foundation. I always believe there’s basic goodness in the heart of every person, whether you are a rebel or a soldier, there’s basic goodness in you. The challenge for us is how to harness that. Because that was my experience in Jolo when I became a priest. I hated all military, but then I became a priest there. I say a mass in there. . . and they go to confession and counselling and you hear their stories, you know that they are just another human being. And also dealing with the MILF is the same because I would go to their camps before and talk to them—talk to the commander. Because before that, I was chosen to head the rehabilitation by the government—that’s when I started to have relationship with Muslims because I had to consult them—“Do you accept this project of the government?”

And that’s how I started to have relationship with them, and communication is very important. So, I found out that they are just any human being. No one has the monopoly of goodness in this world. . . . But, we, we related with them. We have communication and we mediate because I always believe that that’s the role of Jesus—mediate between God and men. We need mediators. We need more negotiators, but we also need mediators. The role of mediators is very important. So, that’s it. It’s always founded on our spiritual values—universal, and then basic goodness with everyone. It’s a very tough job because we will be really misunderstood sometimes.

Froilyn Mendoza does struggle at times to maintain her hope that change is possible. It is her faith in the spirits that encourages and supports her in the quest for peace:

My last remedy would be I have to pray for the spirits. You have to guide me. I have to call their names, “You have to guide me in this.” We are doing this for the good of the people. So, I am hopeful and the last thing I would do is my faith, my belief, and my spirituality. That is why in our activity we usually do before we start, for example, we

have rituals. . .to ask for the guidance from the creator of our race so usually that's how we start. That's our last because if the state won't respond anymore and then we have to call the spirits. And in our personal experience, miracles are happening. . . . For example, I am praying for that in the area that there will be no more war, the friction will not happen. For example, the IP also have their guns and the other side also, so we just have to pray for it that there would be no fire that will take place. Sometimes my prayers are answered. The miracle is working. Of course, many would not believe; but in my personal experience, it does. Or before I speak in the plenary, I really have to pray and it works. Although sometimes many will disregard but, for me, I think it works. So that would be my secret. [Laughter].

When asking Jasmin Nario-Galace about what motivates her peace work, she responded by saying:

There's one kind of motivation, I don't know if I got this right. It's an ethical point of view. It's a call of my faith. A very strong teaching of my faith would be peace, non-violence, respect for diversity, solidarity, justice. Since a little girl, I was always actually a very peaceful person. . .it's a call of faith.

Ging Deles echoes this as she considers what supports her peace work:

What other things? My faith. My faith is that good will [come], good will [come]. And it's not for me to be the one to give up. Because if you give up, then, yeah, it's as if saying, "Now it's impossible, aren't you giving up?" No. No, you don't give up. When you give up when it's down, then you put the nail on the coffin, and you don't do that. And for peace, I've always tell people, it's our work so don't let the bad moments get you. You're the one who says no. Even in the darkest times, you have to be the one to say, no, there is hope. There is peace. Because otherwise then, yes, there's none. Why would you have fought so long and then just give up in the end?

Each person credits their staying power for peace on the inner power of their faith and the belief that faith is a strong connecting point for all Mindanaoans. Ustadz Abubakar frames it as a responsibility: "As Muslims, it's our responsibility to pray that there will be peace in Mindanao, the peace which is applicable and acceptable to all people of Mindanao." This is a key uniting factor in Mindanao.

These thirteen recommendations emerge directly from the participant interviews. Some are concrete and direct and others require long term shifts in thinking. The hope is that these

conversations can add new depth and insight into the peacebuilding work that is ongoing and thereby constructively build on the present efforts.

Future Directions

This analysis has provided some insights towards current peacebuilding practices. Yet, what does it indicate for the future? Reflective practice is a significant aspect of peacebuilder sustainability. The peacebuilding field can be enhanced by the creation of theory out of the rich contexts where peacebuilders are active in vital peace work. Lederach et al. (2007) assert that

Peacebuilding practice is enhanced by regular reflection and learning. Learning is an individual as well as a group or organizational activity—the people and systems surrounding peacebuilders can help or hinder their ability to reflect on, analyze, react to, and apply information and lessons about peacebuilding (7).

Networking is already a large component of Philippine peacebuilding work and these networks provide them with a sense of connection and camaraderie in their work.

Lyndee and Myla comment on the significant role that PeaceWeavers has had on them and their organizations.

[LYNDEE:] In my present location in this institution, we do a lot of, we are into coalition-building. We work with networks. So right now, I'm the focal person for the Mindanao PeaceWeavers. We are the lead secretariat of this network of peace networks based, here, in Mindanao. We have solidarity organization based in Manila and Visayas. You can say it has a national semblance. And a second network that is also very active now, but we don't recognize it as a formal coalition, but we call it as campaign plot, which is called All-Out-Peace.

[MYLA:] Actually, it's like you deal with the national more than the macro-conflict. But, at the same time, you have the capacity, the presence to deal with the local issues so that it will not escalate into another big conflict. So that's the challenge. The challenge is for us to always think about how we can strategically play our role in that dynamic. And so, basically, for CRS we have a lot of support and engagements through Mindanao PeaceWeavers on the legislation [issues].

PeaceWeavers is a network of multiple organizations. They meet regularly to coordinate activities and plan campaigns. It has become the peacebuilding “family” in Mindanao.

These networking groups, already in existence, could foster deliberate conversations toward peacebuilding theories emerging out of their practices. Lederach et al. (2007) propose that deliberate learning communities can create fruitful environments for the creation of peace theory as they “strengthen a learning approach by encouraging practitioners to carve out time, space, and resources for regular learning, and by enriching the learning itself” (8). It is apparent that peacebuilding in Mindanao is enhanced by deliberate sharing of experiences, thereby providing regular support. Yet, although existent, to emphasize this learning from life in ways that could overtly connect with the development of theory from the rich knowledge existent in the group *would* grow the existent foundation of peacebuilding in the region. And, this deliberateness could possibly provide content for other contexts and situations.

Although grounded in a particular context, this research devoted to understanding the efforts of peacemakers in their own context and suggested directions for building the strength and resources of the local context has opened space for significant peacemaking voices, voices that deserve to be heard more broadly—both to exalt the work done and for the reason that they can inspire and assist others. This consolidation of on the ground theory building can have implications for national policy building and the strengthening of relationships to overcome regional divides.

I reflect back on the afternoon when I entered the Coffee for Peace coffee shop in October 2015 and encountered the group of Davao peace activists in the corner. It brings a smile to my face as I recall their flip chart pages up on the walls and the sounds of their passionate voices brainstorming ideas for the next campaign. One of them had said to me, “Wendy, if the government can engage in all-out-war, then we can engage in all-out-peace.”

Yes, of course, all-out-peace! That creative turn of phrase indicates the instinctive theories existent in this context. The bamboo continues to beat in this context and it has much to offer those affected by conflict and yearning for transformation.

About the Participants

This section includes short biographies of each person interviewed for this study. They are itemized alphabetically by their nickname—the preferred reference in the Philippine context—and is the reference used in the body of this thesis. The biographies were submitted by the participants and received only small edits. It is a group of committed and determined people and it has been an honour to work with them and receive their stories.

Abdullah (pseudonym) is a Bangsamoro leader, a community organiser and, most prominently, an advocate for peace, good governance and human rights.

Professor Abhoud Syed M. Lingga is the Executive Director for the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies in Cotabato City, Philippines. He holds Masters Degrees in both Islamic Studies and Education. He has participated in a number of trainings in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding conducted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, human rights and people's diplomacy by the Diplomacy Training Program of the University of New South Wales, and on local government and civil society by Friedrich Naumann Stiftung in Germany. As well, he participated in sessions of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, Switzerland.

In addition to management capacities in various public and private sector organizations, he has been Associate Professor at the Mindanao State University in Maguindanao and lecturer at Cotabato City State Polytechnic College, Sultan Kudarat Islamic Academy Foundation College, and Mindanao State University Buug College. His research interests are on Bangsamoro self-determination, conflict management, human rights, sustainable development, and Islamic

education. An accomplished author and writer, he has published numerous articles in local and international journals and book chapters. The Notre Dame University, Cotabato City, conferred on him the honorary degree Doctor of Humanities in Peace and Development (honoris causa) on March 25, 2017.

In recognition of his peacebuilding efforts, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) offered him, in 2010, the position of member of the MILF Peace Panel negotiating with the Government of the Philippines. This was renamed the Peace Implementing Panel at the beginning of 2017.

Amina (pseudonym) is a Bangsamoro leader and has been an active member of the political processes connected to the negotiations between the government of the Republic of the Philippines and the MILF. She is also involved in various Bangsamoro women's organizations focusing on issues and justice and women's empowerment.

Attorney Arnold Abejaron is the Executive Secretary of the University Community Engagement and Advocacy Council at Ateneo de Davao University in Davao City, Philippines. In addition to this work he is active as a lawyer and is the Deputy Executive Officer of the Transformative Justice Institute, an Assistant Professor in the Social Science and Education Division at Ateneo de Davao University, and the President the organization Men Opposed to Violence against women, children and men Everywhere (MOVE-Davao).

Attorney Benedicto “Benny” R. Bacani is the Founding Executive Director of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) based at Notre Dame University, Cotabato City, Philippines.

He is the former Vice President for Research and Extension and Dean of the College of Law of Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, Philippines.

LAG is a research, training and policy center that specializes in the study of autonomy, development and good governance as a solution to violent conflicts. He directs the program “Recognition of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for their Empowerment and Sustainable Development” (IPDEV), a European Union-supported project that works for the development of IP communities in the ARMM. With the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, the European Union and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), he provided technical assistance in crafting the basic and organic laws and regional legislations in the ARMM.

Benny has authored books and monographs on Mindanao development, autonomy and indigenous rights, among which is the 2004 book “Beyond Paper Autonomy: the Challenge in Southern Philippines” that examined the causes of the failures and successes of Muslim Mindanao autonomy.

He has broad international experience in examining political solutions to conflicts and promoting the rights of minorities. Benny has been a Senior Fellow of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington D.C. (2005) and a Hubert Humphrey Fellow at the University of Minnesota (2001), where he specialized in federalism and conflict management.

Bishop Efraim “Bishop Ef” M. Tendero is the Secretary General and CEO of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). WEA was founded in 1846 and is now a global ministry that is present in one hundred twenty-nine countries and serving six hundred million constituents.

For twenty-two years prior to this he served as National Director of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), which he helped to expand from seven thousand to over thirty thousand evangelical churches. He was also the President of the Philippine Relief and Development Services that provided immediate relief, rehabilitation, and development interventions to numerous disaster survivors in the country.

He has had personal interactions with five past successive Presidents of the Republic of the Philippines. As one of the spiritual advisers of former President Fidel V. Ramos, he served for several years as Chairman of the National Ecumenical Consultative Committee. Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appointed him as member of the Presidential Council for Values Formation and also awarded him with the Presidential Gold Medal of Merit for his role in studying and advocating amendments to the Philippine Constitution. Recently, the current Duterte administration recognized him as Honorary Goodwill Ambassador for the Philippines in his capacity as Secretary General of the WEA.

Bishop Ef has actively represented the Philippines in International Interfaith Dialogues in New Zealand, Australia, Netherlands, Spain, China, Cambodia, and in the United Nations Dialogue of the General Assembly on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace.

Other religious groups have recognized him as a peace advocate. He was invited by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) as a speaker at the CBCP Bishops Recollection, and was welcomed by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to their Central Command Camp for his peace mission. He received the Hero Award from Gawad Kalinga for fostering partnership between the Evangelicals and this Roman Catholic humanitarian

development organization. He was also given the Outstanding Justice Advocate Award by the Public Attorney's Office of the Philippines.

Bishop Ef and his wife Dr. Sierry Soriano-Tendero are blessed with four children: Elizabeth Esther, Efraim Elijah, Ezra Emmanuel, and Elah Eunice, and a grandson named Datu and granddaughter named Tala.

Camilo “Bong” Miguel Montesa is the Policy Specialist for Fragility, Conflict, and Peacebuilding at UNDP-Philippines. Formerly, he was the Senior Programme Manager at Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD). Bong has over eighteen years of deep experience in working in the areas of fragility, armed conflict and violence. He specializes in conflict analysis, peacebuilding, mediation, and political dialogue. With more than eighteen years of on-the-ground experience in Mindanao dealing with non-state armed groups covering peace negotiations, cessation of hostilities, peace agreement implementation and political transitions, Bong is a leader in the field.

Chairman Mohagher Iqbal joined the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in September 1972, first as a foot soldier, and later as chair of the Committee on Propaganda of the Kutawato Revolutionary Committee. When the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was organized in 1977, he was one of the founders and has served it in various capacities, notably as chair of the Committee on Information from 1979 to this day. Currently, aside from being chair of the Committee on Information, he has also been the chair of the MILF Peace Panel since July 29, 2003, and former chair and now appointed member of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) which crafted the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). He is also supervising at least seven

other agencies related to the GPH-MILF peace process including chairing the Consultative Committee of the UN-World Bank Facility for Advisory Support for Transition Capacities (FASTRAC).

Chairman Iqbal has a Master's degree in Political Science from the Manuel L. Quezon University in Manila, Philippines and his thesis is entitled: "The Muslim Secession Movement in the Philippines." He has written two books: *Bangsamoro: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny* and *The Long Road to Peace: Inside the GPH-MILF Peace Process*; and several articles on the Bangsamoro and the MILF-led struggle. His pen name is Salah Jubair.

He is a recipient of the Fr. William F Masterson SJ Award by Xavier University in recognition of his service to the mission of building a society of justice, peace and compassion during its Commencement Exercises on March 26, 2015. He received the Award together with Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, former chair of the Government Peace Panel. He is also a recipient of Peace Weaver Award, Mindanao Week of Peace 2012, presented in Zamboanga City

Maria Ida "Deng" L. Giguiento is the Training Coordinator for the Peace and Reconciliation Program of Catholic Relief Services Philippines (CRS). She was one of the two recipients of the 2015 Tanenbaum Peacemaker in Action Award from the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding for her courageous work in conflict areas in Mindanao. She is also a member of the Project Reference Group for a curriculum development project involving best practices of civil society working with security forces to improve human security. A grassroots peacebuilder from the Philippines, Deng has dedicated nearly two decades to using the conflict transformation paradigm in working with partners in Mindanao and in post-independent Timor-Leste. She has trained men and women ranging from Caritas International partners to local military officials.

Elvira “Elvie” C. Ang Sinco is educated as a social worker and is currently a member of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute Board of Trustees. She is an avid Zen practitioner and member of the MA Ashram Spirituality Center in Davao City.

Formerly, she was employed by the Civil Peace Service - Bread for the World and seconded to Southern Christian College in Midsayap, Philippines for nine years as the Dean of the College of Social Work. It was there that she was formed and active as a peacebuilder.

Father Roberto “Fr. Bert” C. Layson is a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), a missionary congregation working in Southern Philippines. He finished his AB Philosophy at Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, Philippines, and his AB Theology at Maryhill School of Theology in Quezon City. He was ordained on December 10, 1988 at Sarmiento, Parang, Maguindanao.

As a missionary priest, he spent five years in Jolo, four years Tawi-Tawi, eleven years in Pikit, Cotabato, four years in Sultan Kudarat Province, one year in Datu Piang Maguindanao, and is now back in Pikit, Cotabato as coordinator of the Interreligious Dialogue Ministry of the OMI and Archdiocese of Cotabato. In Pikit he witnessed the trauma of four wars in 1997, 2000, 2001, and 2003. Each of these locations has experienced significant conflict.

He has taken courses on Interreligious Dialogue at Silsilah Centre in Zamboanga City, Philippines, and Peacebuilding at the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia, USA. He is frequently invited to give lectures and provide workshops on Interreligious Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Timor-Leste, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia,

Thailand, Japan, Switzerland, the United States, and various parts of the Philippines, especially in Mindanao.

As a peace advocate, Fr. Bert is very involved in the lives of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and instrumental in establishing “Space for Peace” communities in Pikit, Cotabato. For his work in dialogue and peacebuilding, he has been awarded the Pax Christi International Peace Award in 2002, the Ninoy Aquino Fellowship Award on Public Service in 2004, a Finalist in the Ramon Aboitiz Triennial Awards in 2006, and honorary Doctor of Humanities by Ateneo University de Davao in 2015.

He has written and published several articles on internal displacement, peacebuilding, and interfaith dialogue. He has authored two books: *In War, the Real Enemy is War Itself* and *Fields of Hope: Stories of Peacebuilding and Interreligious Dialogue*.

Fred Lubang is a Mindanaon peace builder and is the National Coordinator of the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Regional Representative of Nonviolence International in Asia and at the United Nations. He is based in Cotabato City, Philippines and his work focusses on implementing a peace agreement between the MILF and the Philippine government that was signed in 2010 in Kuala Lumpur to clear the Bangsamoro areas of explosive remnants of war.

Fred is a peace education trainer and founded “Building Peace by Teaching Peace” in south Thailand and the Bangsamoro. He has taught in various universities in the region in the fields of peace and conflict studies, humanitarian disarmament, and international humanitarian law.

As well, Fred is an active member of various global humanitarian disarmament campaigns. He is a member of the board of the global Control Arms network, which successfully campaigned for the Arms Trade Treaty at the United Nations in 2013 and serves as the regional

lead in East Asia. He is an active member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and the Cluster Munitions Coalition.

Froilyn Timoyo Mendoza is a non-Moro Indigenous leader and the Executive Director of Teduray Lambangian Women's Organization. It is an umbrella organization of the thirty-five chapter members of the indigenous women in hinterlands of Maguindanao province. The main vision of the organization is the advancement of indigenous women in terms of economic, political, and socio-cultural life. They do awareness raising, advocacy, and development training. Froilyn has put her heart and energies into this organization.

Formerly, she was the representative member of the non-Moro Indigenous people in the Bangsamoro Transition Commission and part of the process of writing the Bangsamoro Basic Law. Her role was to advance and ensure that the rights of the indigenous people or the non-Moro indigenous people were respected within the terms of the Bangsamoro Basic Law.

Teresita “Ging” Quintos-Deles was the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process during the Aquino presidency. She has been part of every effort by civil society to build peace in the country since 1986. She was the Lead Convener (Cabinet rank) of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) from 2001-2003. Since 1981, Ging has maintained an active involvement in the women’s movement. She has also been the co-founder of the Coalition for Peace, the Philippines' first citizen's peace formation to emerge after the 1986 People Power uprising. It focused on seeking an end to the armed conflict.

In 1990, she helped convene the National Peace Conference that forged a broad-based consensus among seventeen basic sectors on a national vision and agenda for peace. From 1991

to 2001, she was executive director of the Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, created to provide a permanent support base for citizen peace initiatives. From 1990 to 1995, the Multi-Sectoral Peace Advocates and the Philippine Independent Peace Advocates pursued dialogues and liaisons for setting up formal peace talks between the government and the two main armed groups, the communists and the Muslim rebels. Ging was also a member of the Peace Consortium composed of ten peace institutes, centers and program desks that carried out research into and training for conflict resolution. In 2006, she was one of the founding members of the International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov). Ging has strong expertise in the areas of Peace Processes and Conflict Resolution, Women's Issues, Civil Society Issues and Processes, and Security Sector Reform.

Gus Micalat is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), an advocacy, conflict prevention, and solidarity organization based in the Philippines with campaigns and programs on peace-building and democracy in Southeast Asia particularly on Burma, Mindanao, South Thailand and Timor-Leste. He is also a former journalist, editor, university lecturer, theatre artist, and organizer. Gus was deeply involved in the broad anti-dictatorship and democratic front against the then Martial Law regime of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos from the mid-1970s up to the late 1980s, and organized the so-called "Middle Forces" and coalitions in Mindanao composed of professionals, lawyers, church people, teachers, journalists, artists, businesspeople, and politicians. He has been involved in people's diplomacy and international solidarity work since 1985. This urgency towards peacebuilding continues.

Gus was a humanities graduate at the Ateneo de Davao University, where he also taught journalism and theatre, among other topics. He is an editor and contributor to books, including: “From Boardroom to the Slums” (1990), “Out of the Valley of Dry Bones” (1990), “Beyond the Cold War” (1992), “Breaking the Silence” (1995), “East Timor for Beginners” (1997), “Primer on Globalization” (1997), and “Burma for Beginners” (1998).

Eileen “i-i” Ipulan-Bautista is the Coordinator of the Disaster Risk-Reduction, Resiliency-Building and Emergency Assistance Mission (DREAM) Program of Balay Mindanaw. She is a peace and development worker with almost eighteen years of experience with a non-government organization. She started with community-based work fighting for asset reform and building consensus among poor farmers in Mindanao, and developed her skills and knowledge on networking, coalition-building and advocacy, peacebuilding and conflict transformation, local governance and project management. She became the Coordinator of the Independent Secretariat of the peace process between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the RPM-M (Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Mindanao) or Revolutionary Worker’s Party of Mindanao. She is also an Interim Committee Member of the Global Alliance on Armed Violence (GAAV).

Irene M. Santiago is the lead convener of the global campaign on women, peace and security called “#WomenSeriously” and has been involved for almost forty years in the quest for a just peace for the Bangsamoro. Formerly Chair of the Philippine Government Panel Implementing the Bangsamoro Peace Accords, her range of involvement covers organizing in grassroots Moro communities; engaging in continuous advocacy for women’s participation in peace processes;

and being a member of the Philippine Government peace panel negotiating with the MILF from 2001-2004.

Irene is well-known internationally as the executive director of the historical NGO Forum on Women in China in 1995. With 30,000 participants, the NGO Forum on Women is considered the largest international conference on women in history. Prior to that, Irene was the chief of the Asia/Pacific section of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in New York.

Irene was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 as one of the one thousand outstanding women peacemakers and peacebuilders in the world.

Jasmin Nario-Galace is a peacebuilding leader and Executive Director of the Center for Peace Education and Professor at the College of International, Humanitarian, and Development Studies at Miriam College in Quezon City, Philippines. She did her MA in Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA and completed her PhD in Educational Psychology at the University of the Philippines. Jasmin has authored and co-authored various publications on peace education, conflict resolution, and women and peace and security.

Jasmin is involved in numerous peace organizations. She is President of Pax Christiana Pilipinas, a national network of Catholic peacebuilders and on the Steering Committee of the Philippine Council for Global and Peace Education, currently leading the Peace Education Network. As well, Jasmin is Chair of the Justice and Peace Education Committee of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP). She is Co-convener of the Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WEAct 1325), a national network of women in peace and human rights, helping to implement the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. She, and other members of WEAct 1325, worked with the Philippine government to

initiate the process of adopting the Philippine National Action Policy (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security.

Internationally, she is on the Board of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). In addition, she is the Co-Coordinator of the IANSA Women's Network. She is a member of the Asia-Pacific Alliance on Women, Peace and Security and Women Peacemakers' Program-Asia. She is also in the Experts Group at the Forum Arms Trade.

Jo Genna “Jude” M. Jover is a Teduray Indigenous leader and is the Executive Director of the Kutawato Council for Justice and Peace Inc. Inc. (KCJP). She became an activist during the Marcos regime when she saw so much abuse of power and experienced conflict and displacement in her village.

In November 2015, Jude was awarded the N-Peace Award in the category of “Untold Stories—Women Transforming their Communities.” She is committed to grassroots activism and supports many indigenous people who have long suffered from injustices. She is a resource in the areas of: Culture of Peace workshops, community organizing, disaster management, human rights, and gender awareness.

Karen N. Tañada is Executive Director of Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, a service-based and resource centre for peace and conflict resolution in the Philippines, supporting citizens' participation in peace processes, in particular. She has been involved in social movements since the 1970s, including the anti-dictatorship struggle, and in 1987 was one of the founding convenors of the Coalition for Peace.

As well, Karen is currently a member of the Third-Party Monitoring Team, an independent body tasked with monitoring the implementation of the GPH-MILF Peace Agreements on the Bangsamoro. From 2001-2004 she was also a member of the one of government Reciprocal Working Committees for negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. She is among the convenors of key Philippine civil society peace networks: Waging Peace Philippines, the Mindanao Peaceweavers and Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WEAct 1325). She is also Co-coordinator for Southeast Asia of Peace Women across the Globe, an officer of the feminist organization PILIPINA, and was a member of the Preparatory Committee that coordinated the drafting of the Philippine National Action Plan on UN SCR 1325/1820.

Melinda “Lyndee” Prieto is the Program Manager of the Philippine Program of the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), a regional advocacy institution promoting south to south solidarity and peacebuilding. As a peacebuilder for almost fifteen years, she is immersed in the various fields of peace practice specifically in the areas of policy advocacy, grassroots peacebuilding, peace networking, and capacity building. In the role of dialogue facilitator and trainer, Lyndee works with organizations and communities actively engaging the peace process, such as the United Nations Multi-Donor Programme, the Mindanao People’s Caucus (MPC), Mindanao Peace Weavers (MPW), and the All-Out-Peace (AOP) network. She was born and raised in Mindanao and “will forever be with the self-determining peoples of this beleaguered region.”

Dr. Mark Anthony J. Torres is the Officer-in-Charge of the Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao (IPDM) and a professor of biology at MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology. As head of IPDM, Mark is actively engaged in various peacebuilding initiatives aimed at increasing public acceptance and appreciation of the gains of the peace process between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. This involves organizing and facilitating forums, community dialogues and seminar-workshops funded, among others, by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Security Sector Reform Initiative, International Alert, Conciliation Resources, University of Hiroshima, University of Hawaii at Manoa, and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ).

In Mark's role as a professor of biology at the Department of Biological Sciences at the university he teaches human genetics, evolutionary biology, and environmental science. Along with teaching and research, he commits to extension work, particularly in the field of empowering women on environmental conservation and cultural sensitivity in development interventions.

In 2016, Mark was named one of Metrobank Foundation's Outstanding Teachers and was conferred a gold medallion by the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

Carmen "Memen" Lauzon-Gatmaytan is the Program Development Officer for Nonviolent Peaceforce in Cotabato City, Philippines. She started her career in social development work as a human rights activist. She helped co-organize a non-government organization called the Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities (ECDFC) that pioneered in providing relief and rehabilitation assistance to displaced population, most specifically the

women and children impacted by the militarization and armed conflict in the countryside. She is also a former Board member and interim acting Executive Director of ECDFC.

In the 1990s she joined the peace movement and served as Deputy Executive Director for External Relations of the Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, a peace resource center that provided secretariat work for different peace initiatives and movements, such as the Coalition for Peace, National Peace Conference, and the Multi-Sectoral Peace Advocates. She moved to Mindanao in 1997 to join an international solidarity organization, the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) as the Program Manager. She coordinated, co-facilitated, and managed various initiatives, projects, and activities for peace and human rights in Mindanao and other Southeast countries in the region.

Memen has been a consultant at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), the Capacity Building Officer of the Commission on Human Rights Program Management Office for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), and most recently a Facilitator of the Listening Process for the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission for the Bangsamoro Peace Process in Mindanao and documented issues of human rights violations and historical injustices, community-based peace and reconciliation processes among affected communities in Central Mindanao. She was a founding member of a national network of women and human rights organizations—Women Engaged in Action on UNSCR 1325 (WEAct 1325)—also serving as Project Manager in 2015-2016.

Michael “Mike” Frank A. Alar is an independent consultant in the areas of conflict transformation, dialogue, and peace processes. He has consulted for the World Bank in its project to support to the Mindanao Peace Process and has worked at the Centre for Humanitarian

Dialogue Philippine Office (HD) as the Project Manager where he provided capacity building and technical support to Mindanao Peace Process stakeholders. Prior to that, he worked for the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) of the Philippine Government designing and facilitating peace and conflict trainings for civil society organizations, local government units, the security sector, and the Bangsamoro Development Agency. He holds an MA in International Peace Studies from Japan, an Advanced Specialist Degree in Peace and Development Studies from Spain, and a diploma in Islamic Studies and Interfaith Relations from India.

Dr. Miriam Coronel Ferrer was the chair of the government panel that negotiated and signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front on March 27, 2014. As chair of the government panel, Miriam became the first woman in the world to sign a major peace agreement. In this capacity, she oversaw the CAB's implementation until June 2016. She is also a professor of politics at the University of the Philippines (UP) where she previously served as director of the Third World Studies Center and convener of UP's Program on Peace, Democratization, and Human Rights. She has served as visiting professor in several Asian universities.

Miriam has published several books and journal articles on Philippine democratization, civil society, human rights, and peace processes. She was founding co-chair of the Non-State Actors Working Group of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines from 1999-2004, and was one of twenty-seven Filipinas among the one thousand Women for the Nobel Peace Prize nominated in 2005. An active peace advocate in her country, she co-led the civil society-initiated

drafting of the National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The Philippine NAP was formally adopted by the government in March 2010.

Awards received by Miriam include the 2015 Hillary Rodham Clinton Award for Advancing Women in Peace and Security, the 2015 Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan Fr William F Masterson SJ Award, and the 2014 United Nations Development Program N-Peace Award for Campaigning for Action.

Datu Mussolini “Musso” Sinsuat Lidasan is the founder and the Executive Director of the Al Qalam Institute of Islamic Identities and Dialogue in Southeast Asia based at Ateneo de Davao University. In addition to this work, he is Commissioner of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC). The BTC is mandated by the Philippine Government to draft the law that will address the Bangsamoro Conflict in Mindanao. He has more than twenty years of experience as a facilitator in intra-faith and interfaith dialogue. Musso worked as a United Nations Volunteer (UNV) Community Development Specialist from 1998 - 2003. As a UNV, he organized former Moro National Liberation Front combatants and their families to be active partners in peace building.

He started the Salaam Movement—an interfaith youth peace movement—to counter radicalization in Mindanao. Since 2011, he has been working on a Model of Islamic Micro Finance to build resilient Moro communities in Mindanao. He studied law at Ateneo de Davao University and earned Units in Masters in Business Administration at Notre Dame University (1998-1999).

Myla Leguro serves as Program Director for Advancing Interreligious Peacebuilding Program for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) covering interreligious action projects in Mindanao, Egypt, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Niger, and Nigeria. She is a trained peacebuilding and development practitioner with 27 years of experience in Mindanao. Myla has been working as a program manager in peacebuilding since 1996 and has worked with international experts including John Paul Lederach and Mohammed Abu-Nimer. She has extensive experience in conflict assessment, Do No Harm, reconciliation, and local governance. As well, Myla is highly knowledgeable of the Mindanao civil society networks having worked as core team member in the Mindanao Peaceweavers and conducted peacebuilding trainings with over 60 local organizations of different faiths.

She completed her Masters in International Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame, Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies (USA) in 2010 where she served as apprentice to John Paul Lederach and collaborated on his work in grassroots peacebuilding efforts supporting the Nepal peace process. In 2005, she was nominated with twenty-seven other Filipino women for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her work in peacebuilding.

Regina “Nanette” Salvador-Antequisa is the Executive Director and Founder of Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (EcoWEB). She has about twenty-five years of experience in peace and development work, particularly, in Mindanao, Philippines and about fifteen years of experience on humanitarian and Disaster, Relief, and Development (DRR) work that includes response to earthquakes and Typhoons Yolanda and Ruby. Her work experiences range from community organizing, community development, NGO management, facilitating training and planning, conflict mediation, networking, advocacy, and consultancy.

Beyond her work as the founding Executive Director of EcoWEB, she has assisted in organizing a number of NGOs, networks of NGOs, and sectoral organizations. Currently, she serves as the National Sectoral Representative of the Victims of Disaster and Calamities sector to the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC-VDC).

Rudy “Ompong” Buhay Rodil is an active Mindanao historian and peace advocate. In 1988 he was a commissioner of the Regional Consultative Commission in Muslim Mindanao which helped Congress draft the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). As an acknowledged expert on the history of the Moro conflict, he was twice a member of the GRP peace negotiating panel in the talks with the Moro National Liberation Front, from 1993-96, and also vice chair of the GRP Panel in the talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, from December 2004 to September 2008. He was Visiting Professor at Hiroshima University in October to December 2011.

Having started his studies on Mindanao in the summer of 1973, focussing especially on the Moro and Lumad affairs, he has written four books, several monographs and one hundred twenty-seven articles. As an educator, he has taught in Sulu, Cotabato, Davao, Manila, and Iligan. Now retired, he was a professor of history for much of his professional life, at the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology. As a peace advocate, he has participated as resource person in more than seven hundred sixty-four forums, seminars, and conferences related to the creation of a culture of peace in Mindanao, in the Philippines, and abroad.

Regina “Reg” Lyn Mondez-Sumatra grew up in a Mennonite church, and is currently serving as National Coordinator with the Integrated Mennonite Churches, Inc. She also works as Peace Researcher with Sulong CARHRIHL network, advocating for the peace process between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). She is an active member of the Peace Church community since its early days, and seeks to explore biblical peacebuilding, justice, and reconciliation, in light of today’s chaotic societal realities. She and John Mel have just had their first child and have named him Shalom (Peace).

Rexall Kaalim is a Bangsamoro leader and serves as the Assistant Program Manager and Safety and Security Coordinator of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) in Cotabato City, Philippines. Before joining NP, he worked with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) as consultant for the MNLF-MILF dialogues (2013-2014). Rexall has also served as Humanitarian Protection Specialist of the Balay Rehabilitation Centre (2012-2013). He served as Coordinator of a community-based ceasefire monitoring group, Mindanao Peoples Caucus - Bantay Ceasefire (Ceasefire Watch) from 2007-2010, a group that supports the Government of the Philippines and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in monitoring the GPH-MILF ceasefire agreement. He has also worked as a Senior Program staff for the Initiatives for the Initiative (IID) which initiated and conceptualized the mobilization of Bantay Ceasefire.

Carino “Rockrock” V. Antequisa is a peace-building practitioner working for the improvement of the relationship between the three main groups of people in Mindanao—Bangsamoro, Christians, and the Lumads or Indigenous Peoples. He worked with the London-based Catholic

Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) for fourteen years and was assigned in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries. Currently, he works as a consultant to various agencies and organizations in Mindanao.

He has served as the Chairperson of the Board of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) and is currently serving as a consultant for MPI's Resource-Based Conflict Transformation Team in the development of training modules on conflict resolution within the four ancestral domains of the Subanons in the Zamboanga Peninsula and the two domains of the Higaunons of Misamis Oriental and Iligan City, and for the capacity-building of IP leaders on conflict resolution and natural resource management. As well, he works to facilitate the drafting of the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) for three ancestral domains of the Subanons in Zamboanga Provinces.

Fatima “Shalom” Allian is a Bangsamoro leader and the Program Manager of Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro (The Women for Justice in the Bangsamoro). The focus of the organization is to empower women vis-à-vis readings of Islamic texts and discussion of Islamic values. She manages different gender and peace programs in the areas of the Bangsamoro and outside of the core territories.

Shalom has a Masters in Religion and Public Life from Leeds University, United Kingdom and is an active consultant in the areas of transitional justice, reconciliation, needs of Bangsamoro women, and capacity-building regarding gender.

Sharon Obsioma Bulaclac is a faculty member and the former Chair of the History Department of the Mindanao State University-Marawi City. Courses she has been teaching are Philippine

History and Institutions, History of the Filipino Muslims and the Indigenous Peoples of MINSUPALA, Issues and Problems of Philippine Historiography, Social History of the Philippines, and the Life and Works of Rizal.

Aside from being a full-time faculty member she researched extensively about the peoples of Mindanao and has involved herself in volunteer work with different NGOs and institutions, such as the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute. Sharon has served as consultant to various projects regarding Mindanao History and culture. As a peace advocate academic she organizes lectures and conferences on history with a peace component.

Abdulkadir “Ustadz” M. Abubakar is the Executive Director of the Bangsamoro Development and Resource Center, Inc. and a Bangsamoro leader from the Maguindanaon tribe. He is married to Rubia G. Wahab. They are blessed with three children. He has a Master of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS) from the University of Southern Mindanao and is engaged in a PhD program in the field of Educational Administration. He has years of experience teaching in Arabic and Islamic Studies. As well, he is a partner in peace advocacy with PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.

Charmaine Mae “XX” Dagapioso bacongahuhuhu toolong is a mother, wife, sister, partner, and an accompanier who hails from Mindanao, Philippines. She has been working with Balay Mindanaw for 20 years as a peacebuilder and peace educator. XX began as a Sustainable Integrated Area Development Organizer (SIADO) in 1996, working in rural communities focusing on governance, agrarian reform, land rights, human rights and gender, and peacebuilding. Recently, she has been given the opportunity to lead trainings and manual development, and provide support to field activities. In 2003 she became a part of a formal

Mindanao peace process as a member of the Independent Secretariat supporting the Mediator.

She coordinates the Local Peace Consultations, together with other colleagues, as a parallel arm of the formal peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Revolutionary Workers Party in Mindanao, and facilitates discussions on community analysis and planning in relation to peace and development.

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