

EXPLORING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF MUSLIM MINDANAO

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The Asia Foundation conceptualized and funded a study that looked into the cleavages, roots of conflict and possible mechanisms of conflict management in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao or ARMM. In partnership with the Office of the President and TNS-TRENDS, a probability survey of households in ARMM and adjacent areas was undertaken. The findings indicate a high level of pride for one's ethnicity and religion, high church attendance and high regard for religious leaders in ARMM. The study also revealed that Muslim ethnic groups are more divided than they would care to admit. Inter-family and clan conflicts tend to be more prevalent than "military-rebel" wars or "Muslim-Christian" feuds. On conflict resolution, majority says that appealing to higher authorities would be the most effective means. When asked what would be best for ARMM, most would prefer that Islamic laws be implemented in ARMM rather than support moves to secede from the Philippines. The study findings give much insight on how to further explore new and efficient ways of managing conflicts in ARMM.

INTRODUCTION

The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, better known as the ARMM, is a region located in the southern portion of Mindanao. It includes the mainland provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and the traditional island centers of Muslim economic, political and cultural activities: Sulu and Tawi-Tawi in the Sulu archipelago. In the ARMM plebiscite of 1996, Marawi City and Basilan voted to be included into the region. ARMM covers about four percent of the country's total land area and has a population of more than two million predominantly Muslim inhabitants.¹ It is considered the 15th region of the Philippines.

The ARMM does not occupy a contiguous geographical area. Adjacent to ARMM are three significant areas – Zamboanga City, Cotabato City and the province of Lanao del Norte. These adjacent areas have historically been focal points of dissent and conflict. Zamboanga City is closest to the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi where the notorious rebel group Abu Sayyaf has its strongholds. Cotabato City is near Maguindanao where the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – a breakaway rebel group from the Moro-National Democratic Front (MNLF) -- dominates. Lanao del Norte is where Marawi City geographically is a part of. It is also adjacent to the province of Lanao del Sur.

¹Official Philippine and ARMM websites, Documents prepared by the GRP Peace Panel Ad Hoc Technical Working Groups (www.mindanao.org)

With the creation of ARMM came hopes for improved peace and order conditions in the region. But peace had seemed elusive. In 1991, the Abu Sayyaf was formed which pushed for an Islamic state through extremist means. In 1995, the bloody raid on the municipality of Ipil in the Zamboanga peninsula by contingent forces of the Abu Sayyaf, ex-MNLF returnees based in Zamboanga and members of the notorious Baleleng group (Vitug and Gloria, 2000) took place. There were also the renewed military wars between the MILF and government as shown by the rise and fall of Camp Abubakar and the Buliok complex where the MILF laid their dominions. Peace talks with the MILF had been stalled. The Abu Sayyaf, although in more diminished terms, continues to sow terror with their kidnapping activities. Every so often, one hears of news of bloody clan wars and feuds among families in ARMM. Although government has made gains in bringing peace in the area by reversing the previous administration's "all-out-war" policy, there is still much to do. With the continued growing threat of terrorism worldwide and the perceptions that Muslim Mindanao has become one of its breeding place, it is paramount to reassess the situation in ARMM.

It is in this context that it becomes timely to get a fresh perspective of the conflict situation in Muslim Mindanao and explore innovative means of managing it. Do the usual perceptions that "Muslim versus Christian" discords dominate still hold true? Is poverty and poor quality of life what drives people to engage in violence? Do our brothers in Muslim Mindanao see secession as the best alternative to promoting their welfare? What would make citizens in ARMM and its adjacent areas susceptible to espousing violent means of resolving conflicts? These are questions which the paper seeks to find answers to.

DATA SOURCE

Source of Data

The data source of this paper is a survey covering the four provinces (Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-tawi) and one city (Marawi City) of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and three nearby areas – Zamboanga City, Cotabato City and Lanao del Norte. Basilan province was supposed to be included in ARMM but was pre-excluded because of security reasons. At the time of the survey, only some municipalities in Lamitan, Basilan were safe to visit. The three nearby areas outside of ARMM were chosen based on proximity to the ARMM areas. Historically these areas are also the ones most affected by any happenings in the ARMM.

The survey project was initiated and conceptualized by The Asia Foundation (TAF) for its conflict management and democratic governance program and was funded by the Hewlett Foundation. TNS-TRENDS indigenized and implemented the survey². The project team coordinated and worked in partnership with the Office of the President.

Key informant interviews in Metro Manila were conducted prior to drafting the questionnaire. In-depth interviews were also carried out in Zamboanga City, Cotabato City and Iligan City to test study concepts. Instead of focus-group discussions, in-depth interviews were

² The author served as a consultant of both TAF and TNS-TRENDS in the implementation of the project. Neither foundation bears any responsibility for the views offered herein, which are those of the author.

utilized because Filipino Muslim social norms are quite prohibitive on speaking out ones opinions in a group.

Letters containing the study objectives and methodology were issued to barangay chairmen as part of the courtesy calls. Sultans, datos or religious leaders were also visited in some areas prior to the conduct of the survey in order to inform them of the study.

For each province, 20 sample spots were distributed proportional to the number of households per municipality of each province. For the cities included in the study (Marawi City, Cotabato City and Zamboanga City), 20 spots were distributed proportional to the number of households per electoral district. In every sample spot, 5 households were selected systematically.

Respondents were household heads defined as the decision-maker of the household. Results of key informant interviews reiterate the need to talk with those in authority in Muslim households. The strong patriarchal society of the Muslims in the Philippines makes the household head a valid respondent than voting-age adults.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted. Most were interviewed inside their houses (73%) or within the perimeter of their homes (21%). A few were held in the workplace (6%).

A series of pre-tests were conducted in order to ensure that the concepts of the questionnaire items were fully understood by respondents.

The original wording of the questionnaire was in Tagalog. These were later translated into pertinent languages³ in Muslim areas such as Tausug, Maranao and Maguindanaon. Back translations were conducted in order to make sure that the Tagalog wordings were properly translated in the local language. Since most of those in the areas of study commonly use Tagalog as a second language, the Tagalog language wording was always available in the survey instrument together with the local language prevalent in the area.

Paraphernalia such as ratings boards, shuffle cards and show cards were used to facilitate the interviews. The show cards and rating boards had visuals or pictographs on them. This technique addressed the tendency of Muslims to be visually oriented. Pre-test results showed that having pictographs increases respondent cooperation and understanding of the items being asked.

The total sample size of 800 (500 in ARMM and 300 in adjacent areas) translates into a +/- 3.5% error margin at the 95% confidence level. The survey was conducted from October 23 to November 13, 2002 or a few months prior to the March 2003 US war in Iraq. The following documentation shows fieldwork dates by province:

ARMM:

- § MAGUINDANAO – October 23 to November 5, 2002
- § LANA DEL SUR – October 28 to November 13, 2002
- § MARAWI CITY – October 28 to November 10, 2002
- § TAWI-TAWI – October 29 to November 9, 2002
- § SULU – October 31 to November 15, 2002

³ Often, language and dialect can be used interchangeably. For this study, language refers to the common means of communication in an area. In contrast, dialect pertains to more specific forms of language of a specific group of people in a specific area. [Example Ilonggo is the language and Karay'a is the Ilonggo dialect]

NON-ARMM:

- § COTABATO CITY – October 23 to November 5, 2002
- § ZAMBOANGA CITY – October 26 to November 11, 2002
- § LANA DEL NORTE – October 26 to November 13, 2002

Profiling the Respondents

Most of the areas covered are rural areas (74%). Marawi City and Cotabato City are generally categorized as urban while Zamboanga City still has areas which are considered rural.

A little over half of those in ARMM belong to the destitute class (Class E). This is most pronounced in Maguindanao and Sulu. In contrast, most in the non-ARMM areas are classified as belonging to the lower class (Class D).

Given that the respondents were household heads, the tendency is to get male respondents for the survey. Only a number of the respondents can be categorized as very young (18-24). About one in five is a young adult (25-34). About a fifth to a third are middle-aged (35-44) and most are relatively older (45 and above). Average ages of respondents range from 40 to 47 years old. Being married is the norm and arranged marriages are evident in ARMM and among Muslims.

As expected, having attended a madrassah or religious school is most evident in ARMM areas. Significantly more in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur and Cotabato City have attained at least a college education.

Disparity in religious affiliation is apparent between ARMM and non-ARMM areas. Islam pervades as the dominant religion in ARMM while Christian-Catholics dominate non-ARMM areas included in the study. In both areas, the number of converts is few. Reasons for conversion center on influence made by others in non-ARMM areas but marriage is the main reason for those in ARMM.

There tends to be a predominant ethnic group in each province/city. Maranaos are dominant in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City; Maguindanaoans in Maguindanao; Tausugs in Sulu; Samals in Tawi-Tawi and non-Muslim ethnic groups in Zamboanga City, Cotabato City and Lanao del Norte.

**NATURE AND DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT AND PUBLIC DISORDER
IN ARMM AND ADJACENT AREAS**

Historically, conflicts in Muslim Mindanao had been described as “Muslim-Christian wars” (Marohomsalic, 1995). These further escalated into military-rebel battles with the rise of Muslim separatist groups like the MNLF and the MILF. But the recent data suggests that these types of conflicts are not as prevalent as the conflicts between inter-family and clans. At least a third mention conflicts between two families while one in ten cite conflicts among different clans. Military-rebel confrontations are isolated in specific provinces. Skirmishes between the military and the MNLF tend to happen in Maguindanao and Cotabato City while encounters between the MILF and the military are mostly in Maguindanao and clashes with the Abu Sayyaf are evident only in Sulu. Farmer-landowner tensions are slightly more in Lanao del Norte than in other areas. Labor disputes are found to be relatively more in Cotabato City. Although discord among

Muslims and Christians still occur, these tend to happen more in Maguindanao, Cotabato City and Lanao del Norte.

Table 1. INCIDENCE OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH RESULTED INTO VIOLENCE (In %)									
	TOTAL	Marawi City	Lanao del Sur	Maguindanao	Sulu	Tawi-tawi	Zambo City	Cotabato City	Lanao del N
Between two families	27	34	34	30	16	12	16	27	42
Among Muslims & Christians	12	5	2	19	5	2	9	22	19
Among MILF & military	12	4	2	32	3	1	2	16	17
Among farmers & landowners	11	5	10	8	10	4	7	13	23
Among different clans	10	11	8	12	11	4	7	14	14
Among MNLF & military	9	5	1	18	11	2	10	16	3
Among different tribes	6	2	1	9	9	6	5	15	5
Among Abu Sayyaf & mil	5	0	0	1	20	0	6	13	2
Among laborers & employers	4	1	1	3	2	1	5	14	7

When asked whether these violent conflicts continue to happen today, about a fifth in some areas to an overwhelming majority in other areas say it is indeed still ongoing. Current conflicts tend to be location centered and may prevail in one area but not at all be happening in other areas.

Table 2. WHETHER MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH RESULTED INTO VIOLENCE STILL ONGOING [Base: those with misunderstandings] (In %)									
	TOTAL	Marawi City	Lanao del Sur	Maguindanao	Sulu	Tawi-tawi	Zambo City	Cotabato City	Lanao del N
Between two families	44	65	59	43	38	25	31	63	38
Among Muslims & Christians	47	60	50	53	40	50	22	64	47
Among MILF & military	67	50	50	78	100	100	50	81	41
Among different clans	47	64	50	58	36	75	29	21	50
Among MNLF & military	60	40	100	72	73	50	10	81	27
Among different tribes	47	50	100	44	33	67	60	47	40
Among Abu Sayyaf & mil	92	0	0	100	100	0	67	85	100

Causes of violence between families, clans and tribes often center on faction fights, family disputes or personal reasons. The second common reason was related to environmental, resources, or agricultural issues. Muslim-Christian conflicts also take place because of personal disputes but discrimination and inequality are also mentioned. Among the MNLF and the military, encounters are said to occur because of personal reasons, instances of discrimination but some also mention autonomy or secession. Among the MILF and the military, it is clear that the fights are because of the MILF's call for autonomy or secession. Among the Abu Sayyaf and the military, violence against them and repression plus personal fights are the basis of continued hostility.

Related to conflicts are crime incidences. The incidences vary with Maguindanao having the highest incidence of properties being stolen, followed by Cotabato City.

	TOTAL	Marawi City	Lanao del Sur	Maguindanao	Sulu	Tawi-tawi	Zambo City	Cotabato City	Lanao del N
Stealing of property	19	10	9	40	11	6	15	31	19
Homicide/Murder	7	2	5	10	11	7	7	10	3
Hold-up	3	2	1	3	2	3	5	7	2
Kidnapping	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	2	0
Rape	0.04	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Most cannot pinpoint who committed the crimes. Among those who do know, those who have experienced personal properties being stolen, they mention a different clan/family/ tribe, Muslim/Christians, or even the military as the culprits. A different family is said to be most liable for homicides or murders that have occurred. For hold-ups and kidnappings, the military is most often accused of being the offenders. The only incidence of rape reported was in Cotabato City and a Muslim is blamed for it.

There is a big tendency for people not to report the crime to authorities. Among those who do report the crime on stolen property, the barangay captain is often approached. Those who have reported hold-ups and kidnappings went to the police. Those who reported murders or homicides went either to the barangay captain, the police or their clan leader. It is evident that in ARMM areas murders/homicides are reported either to the barangay captain or their clan leader but not to the police. In non-ARMM areas, the reverse is true – murders/homicides are reported to the police rather than to the barangay captain or a clan leader. The only rape case documented was reported to the police.

For the very few who did report the crime, satisfaction with the resolution leaves much to be desired. Most often than not, dissatisfaction prevails.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN ARMM AND ADJACENT AREAS

Trust in local authorities and law enforcers are an essential ingredient to conflict resolution. The study reveals that the barangay captain and the mayor do not enjoy the trust of the majority across all the areas. Only a plurality trust the police, military, and Shariah courts while only a third trust lawyers, prosecutors/fiscals and local secular courts. Stark differences in levels of trust among the areas covered in the study reveal a poor view of law enforcement.

	TOTAL	Marawi City	Lanao del Sur	Maguindanao	Sulu	Tawi-tawi	Zambo City	Cotabato City	Lanao del N
Barangay captain	60	35	54	78	62	71	58	50	50
Mayor	59	48	35	75	57	69	69	48	53
Local police	42	14	18	58	47	63	35	37	43
Military	38	13	11	42	45	70	42	33	36
Shariah courts	36	39	38	46	51	48	18	34	24
Lawyers	30	15	9	47	37	45	24	35	23
Judges	28	12	6	45	41	43	17	37	22
Prosecutor/Fiscal	28	13	4	46	38	47	19	30	20
Local secular courts	27	12	5	41	39	39	17	24	24

Asked directly as to what would be the most effective means to protect oneself, one's tribe or one's religion, a plurality would prefer to appeal to higher authorities such as congressmen, senators and the Office of the President. Only one in four would go to the police or the military. One in ten would rather use violent means.

Table 5. WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO PROTECT ONESELF/ONE'S TRIBE/ONE'S RELIGION? (In %)					
	TOTAL	ARMM	ADJACENT AREAS	MUSLIMS	NON-MUSLIMS
APPEAL TO HIGH OFFICIALS, CONGRESSMEN/SENATORS, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT	40	43	37	43	36
GO TO THE POLICE/ MILITARY	24	22	27	20	30
USE VIOLENCE/FIGHT/ STRIKE BACK VIOLENT RETALIATION/ SABOTAGE/ GUERRILLA RESISTANCE	11	11	10	11	9
CIVIC ACTION/PEACEFUL MEANS	4	4	3	4	3
PRAY/DO GODD/SPIRITUAL MEANS	4	6	1	6	1
LAWSUITS/ APPEAL TO COURTS	2	2	1	2	1
EVACUATE	9	5	14	5	20
PETITION, SEND LETTERS TO NEWSPAPERS, APPEAL TO THE MEDIA, ETC.	0.14	0.23	0	0.23	0

Of those few who do not prefer peaceful means, most complain that peaceful protests takes too much time. Some even feel that government won't pay attention to them anyway.

Table 6. WHY ARE PEACEFUL MEANS NOT THE MOST LIKELY CHOICE TO PROTECT ONESELF/TRIBE/RELIGION? [Base: Those who chose violent means=11%] (In %)					
	TOTAL	ARMM	ADJACENT AREAS	MUSLIMS	NON-MUSLIMS
PEACEFUL MEANS TAKES TOO LONG/PEOPLE ARE NOT ORGANIZED	51	48	53	49	53
GOVT WON'T PAY ATTENTION	11	12	7	11	9
PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS ARE NOT PERMITTED HERE	4	3	4	4	3
WANTS TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEFUL PROTESTS	4	2	6	2	6
VIOLENCE IS THE ONLY MEANS	3	4	2	3	3
HELPLESSNESS PUSHES ONE TO OPT FOR VIOLENCE	3	3	1	3	2
OUR RELIGION DOES NOT PERMIT MAKING PROTESTS	1	1	0	1	1
PROTESTS ARE NOT HELPFUL	1	0.1	2	0.1	2
DON'T KNOW	9	9	8	10	6

Of those who do not prefer to go to the police or military, some cite their being inaccessible, their incompetence to do the job, or their preference for other means to resolve conflicts.

Table 7. WHY IS GOING TO THE POLICE OR MILITARY NOT YOUR MOST LIKELY CHOICE? [Base: Those who did not chose to go to the police/military=76%] (In %)					
	TOTAL	ARMM	ADJACENT AREAS	MUSLIMS	NON-MUSLIMS
IT'S NOT EASY TO CONTACT THEM	31	32	31	30	33
THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING ANYWAY	20	22	17	23	16
OTHER NON-VIOLENT MEANS ARE BETTER	20	20	20	21	18
IT TAKES THEM TOO LONG TO SOLVE PROBLEMS	8	5	11	6	11
WE HAVE GREATER TRUST IN OTHER AUTHORITIES LIKE THE BRGY CAPTAIN OR MAYOR	8	6	10	5	12
VIOLENCE IS THE ONLY MEANS	1	1	1	1	1
PRAYING/SPIRITUAL MEANS ARE BETTER	1	1	1	2	0
APATHY IS BETTER	1	1	1	1	1

FEEL HELPLESS TO GO TO THEM	1	1	2	1	2
CITIZEN ACTION IS BETTER	1	1	0	1	0
DON'T KNOW	6	7	6	8	5

Of those who do not prefer to go to an elected official, they cite the same reasons as those who opt not to go to the police or the military.

Table 8. WHY IS CONTACTING AN ELECTED OFFICIAL NOT YOUR MOST LIKELY CHOICE? [Base: Those who did not chose to go contact an official=39%] (In %)					
	TOTAL	ARMM	ADJACENT AREAS	MUSLIMS	NON- MUSLIMS
IT'S NOT EASY TO CONTACT THEM	22	20	24	19	26
THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING ANYWAY	26	28	24	29	23
OTHER NON-VIOLENT MEANS ARE BETTER	15	14	17	14	17
IT TAKES THEM TOO LONG TO SOLVE PROBLEMS	10	10	10	10	11
WE HAVE GREATER TRUST IN OTHER AUTHORITIES LIKE THE POLICE OR THE MILITARY	4	5	2	5	2
PRAYING/SPIRITUAL MEANS ARE BETTER	4	5	1	6	0
APATHY IS BETTER	3	2	5	2	5
VIOLENCE IS THE ONLY MEANS	1	1	0.2	1	1
FEEL HELPLESS TO GO TO THEM	1	1	1	2	0
DON'T KNOW	12	11	14	12	12

The low trust ratings garnered by law enforcement officials and the reasons cited above resonates the lack of confidence in law enforcement both in ARMM and areas adjacent to it.

WHAT IS DEEMED BEST FOR ARMM?

The continuing debate on how to address the issue of autonomy and make it work in ARMM was looked into by asking respondents what they think would be best for ARMM. In the in-depth interviews, many suggestions have been placed and when aggregated boiled down to the response set for this question item: Continue current ARMM system; Autonomous provinces under ARMM; Implement Islamic laws; Revert to the system without autonomy; Secede from the Philippines

Secession is not a very popular response. It is actually in a non-ARMM province – Lanao del Norte -- where support for it is highest at 26%. Allowing Islamic laws to be implemented in ARMM is supported by a plurality of those in ARMM. This is the choice of the majority in Marawi City and Lanao del Sur. Comparatively fewer in ARMM are for secession.

Muslims would advocate for the implementation of Islamic laws while non-Muslims would espouse returning to the old system without autonomy. By ethnicity, Maranaos overwhelmingly support the implementation of Islamic laws while Cebuanos would prefer the old system. It can be noted though that almost a third of Cebuanos are for secession.

Table 9. WHICH WOULD BE BEST FOR ARMM? (In %)					
	Islamic laws be implemented in ARMM	Revert to system w/o autonomy	Secede from the Phils	Continue current ARMM system	Autonomous provinces under ARMM
TOTAL	30	29	18	8	7
ARMM	41	23	16	9	6
Marawi City	66	1	12	5	11
Lanao del Sur	57	4	18	12	2
Maguindanao	32	28	13	11	12
Sulu	43	25	19	4	2
Tawi-tawi	20	47	15	9	1
Non-ARMM	15	37	20	6	10
Zamboanga City	1	56	15	6	9
Cotabato City	20	27	13	18	16
Lanao del Norte	25	24	26	4	9
<i>By religion</i>					
Muslims	47	21	14	8	5
Non-Muslims	4	40	23	8	11
<i>By ethnicity</i>					
Maranao	68	3	13	8	4
Tausug	37	29	18	6	2
Maguindanaon	39	27	10	11	11
Cebuano	6	43	28	5	10
Others	12	38	17	9	9

EXPLORING MEANS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS IN ARMM

Study Indices and Variables

The study tested numerous concepts and variables. In order to pursue a deeper analysis of the survey findings in relation to conflict management in ARMM, several indices (Annex A) had to be created. Factor analysis was utilized to determine which items would comprise each index. Reliability tests were undertaken to test whether the components of each index are correlated with each other (De Vellis 1991). The Alpha (Chronbach) statistic was the measure used to determine whether the index passes the reliability test.

Determining factors which affect susceptibility to espousing violence as a recourse to conflict management is one of the crucial goals of the paper. The index of predisposition towards violent methods ($\alpha = .5487$) is composed of those who:

- say they would use violence to protect oneself/ones family/tribe or religion
- prefer to set up armed patrols to protect ones community
- prefer to set up armed patrols to help government
- agree that firearms are important to protect one's family
- agree that it is right to avenge a family member who is hurt or murdered

A tabulation of support for secession or support for implementation of Islamic laws against the index of predisposition towards violence shows a correlation but it is area-specific. In ARMM, support for implementation of Islamic laws is moderately associated with high scores in the index of predisposition towards violence. On the other hand, in adjacent areas, there is moderate association between support for secession and inclination towards violence.

Table 10. DEGREE OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS VIOLENCE AND SUPPORT FOR SECESSION OR SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC LAWS			
	Total	ARMM	Adjacent areas
Support for implementation of Islamic Laws			
Gamma	.136	.338***	-.034
Somers' d: Support for Violence dependent	.058	.137***	-.016
Support for Secession			
Gamma ⁴	.199*	-.265	.542***
Somers' d ⁵ : Predisposition towards violence dependent	.089*	-.093	.290***
Note: For the computation of the gamma and somers' d coefficients, a Binary Index (Hi-Low) of Predisposition towards Violence was created and tabulated against support for Secession and Support for Implementation of Islamic Laws.			
*p > .05 ** p > .01 *** p > .001			

Poverty has always been mentioned as a motivation to espouse violent means of addressing conflicts. An index of quality of life ($\alpha = .4206$) was therefore included. It consisted of questions assessing one's past and future quality of life.

Pride in one's ethnicity or religion over one's nationality can also have an affect on support for violence. An index of pride in identity ($\alpha = .7526$) looked levels of pride in one's ethnicity, religion and nationality.

Identity and affiliation also plays an essential role in the desire to hold fast to one's own group which may elucidate violent behaviour. The best way by which identity and affiliation could be assessed in the Philippine setting was to test for levels of trust for specific interethnic groups. An index of trust in interethnic groups ($\alpha = .5571$) therefore explored whether high levels of trust across interethnic groups exist or whether selective trust actually persists.

There has been literature on the correlation between interethnic associations and interethnic rioting (Varshney, 2001). An index of inter-group associations ($\alpha = .5621$) placed together items testing for interethnic interaction whether in school, in the workplace, in the family or in the place of worship. A related index of strengthening networks ($\alpha = .7758$) focused on attitudes which strengthen interethnic ties by agreeing to mixed schooling, mixed membership in organizations, divergence in ethnicities in the workplace, intermarriages, and even blood transfusions from other ethnic groups.

⁴ Gamma coefficients were computed to measure degree of association between the variables. The coefficients range from -1.00 to +1.00, with values +1.00 and -1.00 expressing perfect positive and negative association between two variables. Coefficients of 0.00 in turn, indicate the absence of association. (Loether and MacTavish 1980)

⁵ Somers' d is a measure of association between two ordinal variables that ranges from -1 to 1. Values close to an absolute value of 1 indicate a strong relationship between the two variables, and values close to 0 indicate little or no relationship between the variables. Somers' d is an asymmetric extension of gamma that differs only in the inclusion of the number of pairs not tied on the independent variable. The coefficients presented here had Index of Potential Violence as the dependent variable.

Discrimination is also a vital possible reason for violence to erupt. An index of Muslim discrimination ($\alpha = .7674$) came from items which asked whether Muslims in their area had experienced a series of discrimination acts such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, police/ military harassment, destruction of property, prejudices at work, in school, in public vehicles or even boycott of their businesses. An index of personal discrimination ($\alpha = .5487$) tested for whether one had personally experienced these acts of discrimination.

The Philippines, being located in Asia, is geographically near countries which are dominated by Muslim populations. It is crucial to know the level of affiliation of the residents of ARMM and its adjacent areas to Muslim nations. The index of trust in Muslim nationalities ($\alpha = .9013$) consist of degree of trust in Malaysians, Indonesians and Arabs. These nationalities are also those who commonly reside or interact with those in ARMM and its adjacent areas.

A government indifferent to the needs of its people invites dissent and with dissent, conflict may follow. The index of governance ($\alpha = .8062$) sought levels of satisfaction with specific services which government is expected to deliver. These basic services refer to primary education, road maintenance, medical services, water supply, fighting crime, fighting illegal drug syndicates, improving inter-ethnic relations, increasing jobs and fighting corruption.

Related to governance is political efficacy which points to how responsive people may feel their government is to their situation. The index of political efficacy ($\alpha = .7536$) measures levels of agreement to the following test statements:

- “The nation is run by a powerful few and I can’t do anything about this”
- “The national government does not care much about people like me”
- “The provincial government does not care much about people like me”
- “Those governing the barangay do not care much about people like me”

In developing countries the issue of graft and corruption has become a growing concern not only as a hindrance to improved economies but to the rise of conflicts as well. In the in-depth interview conducted prior to the survey implementation, corruption is a recurring concern and often mentioned as a reason why people would opt for violent means of resolving conflicts. The index of graft and corruption ($\alpha = .8155$) delves into perceived extent of corruption in the different levels of government as well as opinions on the necessity of bribing civil servants whenever transacting with government.

Leadership is a key factor in violence promoting or violence preventing (Miller, Collins, and Brief, 1995). In the study, the concept of leadership was divided into several indices. The index of trust in institutions and institutional leaders ($\alpha = .7560$) looked into levels of trust in the national, provincial and ARMM government as well as in the mayor, the barangay captain, religious leaders, one’s datu and sultan. The index of trust in government leaders ($\alpha = .6983$) refer to trust in Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, ARMM Governor Parouk Hussin and ARMM Vice Governor Mutilan. The index of trust in prominent Muslim leaders ($\alpha = .8252$) relegated to trust in former ARMM Governor Nur Misuari, MILF leader Hashim Salamat and former mayor Ibrahim Paglas. The index of trust in prominent foreign leaders ($\alpha = .8145$) is levels of trust in Osama Bin Laden, Iraq Pres. Saddam Hussein and US Pres. George W. Bush.

Public order is best embodied by law enforcement. Past studies have determined that effective law enforcement is likely to prevent violence. To look into this, an index of trust in law enforcers ($\alpha = .8062$) determined levels of trust in the barangay captain, the mayor, the local police, the military, Shariah courts, lawyers, judges, prosecutors, and local courts as law enforcers.

Included in the realm of public order is the incidence of conflicts in their respective areas. A higher incidence of conflicts in one's area may result in greater adherence to violent means. The index of conflict incidence ($\alpha = .6575$) enquires into the different possible conflict scenarios namely: between families, between clans, between Christians and Muslims, between the military and rebel groups, interethnic skirmishes, farmer-landowner disputes, and labourer-employer disputes.

Another aspect of public order is crime incidence. To be a victim of crime may encourage one to espouse violent means of resolving disputes. The index of crime victimization ($\alpha = .4706$) finds out the extent of personal experience of families as victims of theft, homicide/murder, kidnapping and hold-ups.

The dominance of some rebel groups in specific areas of ARMM makes it imperative to include an index of trust in rebel groups ($\alpha = .8256$). In this index, trust ratings of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf are included.

An index of trust in other groups ($\alpha = .7641$) which includes media, foreign investors and the United States was created to signify the levels of trust in groups which may be considered "foreign" to the locals of ARMM.

Arguably, increased democratic breathing space lessens dissent and advocacy to violence. The more that people are afforded opportunities to freely speak their minds, the greater the tendency to shun violent means of resolving issues. The index of democratic space ($\alpha = .6393$) included test statements on the following:

- "I can vote for the candidate I prefer without any fear"
- "We can assemble to discuss any issues without any fear"
- "I can say anything I want against the government without any fear"
- "Majorities should rule, a region where Muslims are the majority should be led by a Muslim"
- "Political leadership positions should be mostly for men and women need not be as active as men"
- "Women should follow the decisions of their husbands or parents as to who to vote for"

These various indices were included in a multiple regression model to see which would have the most impact on predicting three important concepts related to conflict resolution in ARMM. The first aspect has to do with predicting factors of predisposition towards violence. What are the major factors which can predict support for violent means of resolving conflicts?

The second explores the significant determinants of support for implementation of Islamic laws in ARMM. Given that there is a significant correlation between predisposition towards violence and support for Islamic law implementation especially in ARMM, it would be worth digging into predictors of support for such a stance.

The third looks into the major explanatory variables of support for secession in areas adjacent to ARMM. Since support for secession is associated with a leaning towards violence, it becomes imperative to find out more about what makes people support secessionist views.

Knowing the pertinent buttons which affect these three viewpoints may help us formulate better strategies in conflict resolution in ARMM. Finding out what greatly has an impact on support for violent means may assist in concentrating energies on efforts which will enhance (if they turn out to be positive indicators) or eliminate (if they happen to be negative indicators) these factors. Having a better grasp of why some would opt for secession for ARMM and why most in ARMM want Islamic laws implemented in their place may give us fresh perspectives into the psyche of our Filipino brothers and sisters in ARMM.

Predictors of Predisposition towards Violence

The results of the regression equation predicting predisposition towards violence are shown in Annex B. The outcome shows that distrust for law enforcers is highly related to the likelihood of espousing violence. Distrust in institutions and institutional leaders as well as perceptions of extensive corruption in government are also associated with leanings towards violent means of resolving conflicts. There is also preponderance for such sentiments among those who feel they are not given enough democratic space and are in rural areas.

In ARMM areas, it is trust in prominent Muslim leaders such as Misuari and Salamat as well as distrust in institutions and institutional leaders which drives the index of predisposition towards violence. Greater trust in prominent Muslim leaders coupled with low levels of trust in government institutions and its leaders can be lethal resulting in a preference for violent means to put an end to conflicts in ARMM

In adjacent non-ARMM areas, lack of democratic space is strongly correlated with support for violent methods. Perceptions of graft in government, distrust in media, foreign investors and the US, distrust in law enforcers and poor quality of life specifically those in rural areas tend to advocate violent modes of resolving conflicts.

Predictors of Support for Implementation of Islamic Laws in ARMM

The same variables are used to predict support for implementation of Islamic laws in ARMM. Increased distrust in law enforcers, dissatisfaction with how government addresses their needs, greater trust in Muslim nationalities leads to a predilection for the implementation of Islamic laws in ARMM. Others which affect tendencies to support Islamic law implementation in ARMM are opinions of lack of democratic space, higher trust in interethnic groups and lower trust in media, foreign investors and the US. Those who are liable to support this viewpoint tend to have higher levels of education. Understandably, being a Muslim is a significant predictor for such a stance.

Table 11. PREDICTORS OF SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC LAWS IN ARMM		ARMM only	
	B	Std. Error	
INDEX OF QUALITY OF LIFE	0.004	0.016	
INDEX OF PRIDE IN IDENTITY	0.004	0.017	
INDEX OF TRUST IN INTERETHNIC GROUPS	0.024	0.010	*
INDEX OF INTER-GROUP ASSOCIATION	-0.007	0.015	
INDEX OF STRENGTHENING NETWORKS	-0.003	0.007	
INDEX OF MUSLIM DISCRIMINATION	-0.009	0.019	
INDEX OF PERSONAL DISCRIMINATION	-0.009	0.027	
INDEX OF TRUST IN MUSLIM NATIONALITIES	0.021	0.008	**
INDEX OF GOVERNANCE	-0.010	0.004	**
INDEX OF POLITICAL EFFICACY	-0.004	0.007	
INDEX OF GRAFT AND CORRUPTION	0.003	0.005	
INDEX OF TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS	-0.006	0.009	
INDEX OF TRUST IN GOVERNMENT LEADERS	0.006	0.011	
INDEX OF TRUST IN PROMINENT MUSLIM LEADERS	0.004	0.011	
INDEX OF TRUST IN PROMINENT FOREIGN LEADERS	0.011	0.011	
INDEX OF CONFLICT INCIDENCE	0.031	0.022	
INDEX OF TRUST IN LAW ENFORCERS	-0.012	0.005	**
INDEX ON CRIME VICTIMIZATION	-0.031	0.041	
INDEX OF TRUST IN REBEL GROUPS	0.010	0.012	
INDEX OF TRUST IN OTHER GROUPS	-0.025	0.010	*
INDEX OF DEMOCRATIC SPACE	-0.015	0.007	*
LOCALE: URBAN	-0.062	0.058	
RELIGION: ISLAM	0.398	0.074	***
CLASS E	0.010	0.046	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: WELL-EDUCATED	0.021	0.009	*
ACTUAL AGE	-0.002	0.002	
SEX: MALE	0.052	0.064	
(Constant)	0.332	0.309	
R ²	0.21		
n	500		

Dependent Variable: Support for Implementation of Islamic Laws in ARMM

* $p > .05$ ** $p > .01$ *** $p > .001$

Predictors of Support for Secession in Areas Adjacent to ARMM

Since support for secession is correlated with support for violence only in non-ARMM areas, the table below only reflects the results in said areas. Negative attitudes towards strengthening inter-group networks and low levels of trust in law enforcers come out as related to a secessionist stance. The greater the opposition to strengthening networks among ethno-religious groups the more they opt for secession. The lower the level of trust in law enforcers, the greater tendency to believe secession is best for ARMM. Non-Muslims, rather than Muslims are more liable to espouse secession. Interestingly, female household heads, more than male household heads have these inclinations.

Table 12. PREDICTORS OF SUPPORT FOR SECESSION		Adjacent areas only	
	B	Std. Error	
INDEX OF QUALITY OF LIFE	0.007	0.018	
INDEX OF PRIDE IN IDENTITY	0.013	0.015	
INDEX OF TRUST IN INTERETHNIC GROUPS	-0.010	0.010	
INDEX OF INTER-GROUP ASSOCIATION	0.012	0.017	
INDEX OF STRENGTHENING NETWORKS	-0.021	0.007	**
INDEX OF MUSLIM DISCRIMINATION	0.010	0.018	
INDEX OF PERSONAL DISCRIMINATION	-0.005	0.023	
INDEX OF TRUST IN MUSLIM NATIONALITIES	0.012	0.009	
INDEX OF GOVERNANCE	0.004	0.005	
INDEX OF POLITICAL EFFICACY	0.014	0.007	
INDEX OF GRAFT AND CORRUPTION	0.008	0.006	
INDEX OF TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS	-0.002	0.007	
INDEX OF TRUST IN GOVERNMENT LEADERS	-0.009	0.011	
INDEX OF TRUST IN PROMINENT MUSLIM LEADERS	0.015	0.015	
INDEX OF TRUST IN PROMINENT FOREIGN LEADERS	-0.005	0.013	
INDEX OF CONFLICT INCIDENCE	-0.011	0.019	
INDEX OF TRUST IN LAW ENFORCERS	-0.010	0.005	*
INDEX ON CRIME VICTIMIZATION	0.023	0.041	
INDEX OF TRUST IN REBEL GROUPS	-0.012	0.019	
INDEX OF TRUST IN OTHER GROUPS	-0.012	0.011	
INDEX OF DEMOCRATIC SPACE	-0.012	0.008	
LOCALE: URBAN	0.019	0.051	
RELIGION: ISLAM	-0.146	0.066	*
CLASS E	0.103	0.051	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: WELL-EDUCATED	-0.006	0.011	
ACTUAL AGE	0.000	0.002	
SEX: MALE	-0.121	0.056	*
(Constant)	0.811	0.315	
R ²	0.17		
N	300		

Dependent Variable: Support for Secession

* $p > .05$ ** $p > .01$ *** $p > .001$

CONCLUSIONS

The nature and dynamics of conflict in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao show shifts from Muslim-Christian clashes to military-rebel wars to feuding families and clans. The recent moves of the ARMM government to amicably settle decades-old fights between clans and setting in motion reconciliation among feuding families is a significant step towards an enhanced peace situation in ARMM.

Empirical evidence also point out that there is a need to bring back confidence in institutions and leaders with special emphasis on law enforcers. Low levels of trust in law enforcers contribute to a predisposition towards violence as well as support for solutions such as secession or strict implementation of Islamic laws. Even open-ended responses to questions as to why there is hesitation to consult law enforcers to help resolve conflicts reiterate the lack of faith in their abilities and intentions.

Data also demonstrate that good governance is a vital ingredient in pursuing peace efforts in ARMM. Focus on the delivery of basic services and moves to curb corruption come out as essential in maintaining peace in ARMM. Hand-in-hand with effective governance is greater democratic space that the people in ARMM who have lost hope in peaceful means somewhat long for.

Of the significant predictor variables, one which needs to be further looked into is the hesitation to strengthen inter-ethnic networks among those prone to support secession. Also of importance is the tendency of non-Muslims rather than Muslims to support the secessionist view. These findings pose a challenge to those involved in conflict management in ARMM.

Although poor quality of life still continues to be a predictor of predilection for violence, it should now be assessed in the light of other aspects such as law enforcement and governance. It does not seem to be the end all and be all of predisposition towards violence. Poverty and marginalization has to be addressed together with efforts to gain the people's confidence through credible, competent leadership and consistent enforcement of laws.

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