

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

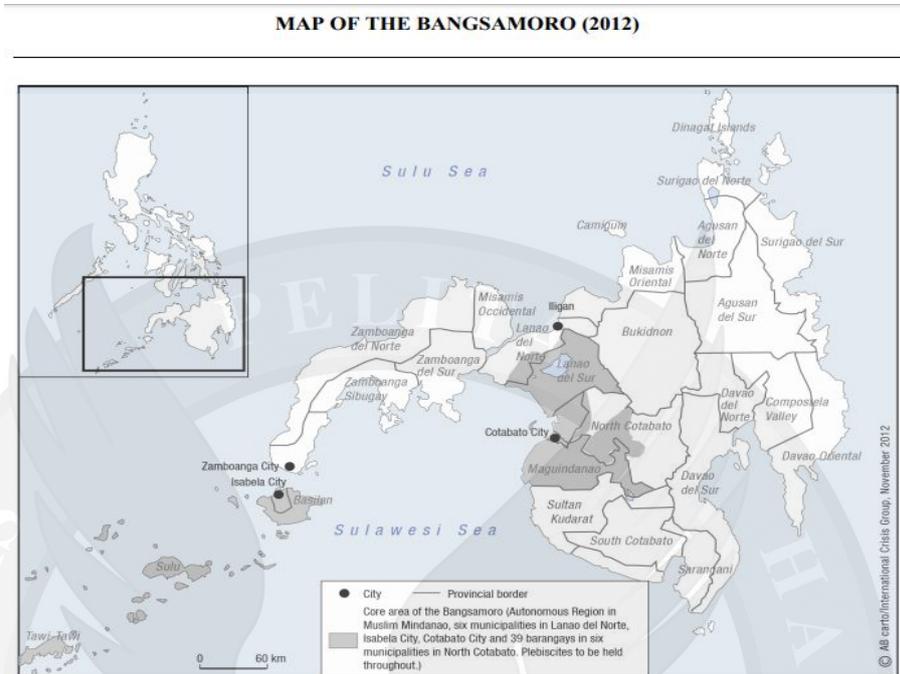
The Philippines as an archipelagic state is composed of more than seven thousand islands and is also home for ninety million inhabitants. Three main islands in the Philippines have their own uniqueness and richness by their own commodities. Mindanao is one of the three main islands and is the most different from the other two main islands because not only is it located in the southernmost part of the Philippines, but also it is considered as the source of much of the country's needs.¹ Over the last thirty years, the population of Mindanao has been commonly categorized into three major groupings – *Lumad*,² *Moros* or Muslims³ and Christians (also called Migrants or Settlers). Among all regions in the Philippines, Mindanao is the only region that has faced the longest and most intense political conflicts—comprising of ethnic and religious unrest, with Bangsamoro as its highlight.

¹ Cristina J. Montiel, Rudy B. Rodil, Judith M. de Guzman, *Running Head: The Moro Struggle in Southern Philippines*, Centre for Dialogue La Trobe University, pg 3 – 42.

² *Lumad* is a Cebuano Bisayan term which means “indigenous”.

³ *Bangsamoros* is the term originally used by Spaniards for Muslims who occupied the Iberian Peninsula. However, when they found Muslims in the Philippines, they started to call them *Moros*.

Figure 1.1. Map of The Bangsamoro (2012)⁴



Historically, Muslim in Mindanao came from Arab missionaries – traders who subsequently married into the local population. A grave marker with Arabic scripts found in 1380 indicates the sign of earliest Islamic presence in Mindanao. However, most of the time, people believe that Muslim was in its throne during 16th century and it even helped the conversion to Island of the inhabitants and rise of Muslim Sultanates (in Maguindanao and Sulu). During Spain occupation in the

⁴ This map was developed by the International Crisis Group (ICG) that has monitored the situation in Mindanao. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Philippines%20Map%20of%20the%20Bangsamoro%20282008%20and%202012%29%20as%20of%205%20Dec%202012.pdf>. May 13, 2019.

Philippines, they were able to converse the indigenous people in Luzon and Visayas to Catholicism but not Mindanao—Moro people.⁵

The Spaniards started to attack the Sultanates during its first fifty years in occupying the Philippines. The wars with the Muslims or Moros brought by the Spaniards left the mistrust between the Muslims and Christians even until today, because the Muslims still think that Christians are all Spaniards who tried to subjugate them.⁶ However, even though the Spaniards were not able to colonize the Mindanao region, but they have gained other important things. First, the colonization of the other two main islands of the Philippines and the conversation of indigenous people to Christianity have developed the identity of this country to be Christian. Second, the emotional leftover which are hatred, and mistrust between Christians and Muslims rise the tension in the region. Lastly, even though the Spaniards did not able to take control over Mindanao, they have able to weaken the region in terms of military and economy.⁷

The real struggle for self – determination of Muslims in Mindanao started when the Philippines was in the colony of the United States of America. After the USA won the Spanish – American War, they configured the Philippines political system and structure of governance in line with the ideals of democracy and liberalism. This is not in line with the Muslim of Mindanao, because they feel and think that this configured system brought by America cannot be put into practice

⁵ Salvatore Schiavo – Campo, Mary Judd, *The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peaced Dividend*, Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction, Social Development Department, The World Bank, 2005, Paper no. 24 pg 1 – 9.

⁶ Guzman, *op. cit.* pg 8 – 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pg 9.

under a Christian government. Here, the Muslims of Mindanao is so eager to live as a separate people from the Christian majority.⁸

The Muslims of Mindanao face their Moro struggle even more after 1960s, especially after the infamous incident of *Corregidor⁹ Jabidah¹⁰* massacre happened on March 18th, 1968. This incident took place when about 28 out of less than 200 Muslim military trainees who were joining the anti – communist exercise to destabilize Sabah and facilitate its appropriation were summarily executed and how the government seemed to ignore this incident.¹¹ This ignite the start of Moro separatist movement from the Philippines and this conflict can be seen as “clash between two imagined nations”.¹²

After *Corregidor Jabidah* incident, the Moro conflict escalated more when President Ferdinand Marcos declared to use martial law and start of sectarian violence in Mindanao at early 1970s. Many of sectarian violence occurred during this period and consist of attacks by armed Christian to Muslim gangs who are unarmed; vice versa. On November 20, 1971 the Mindanao Cross that from January to October 1971, 269 Christians and 305 Muslims were killed and approximately 500 homes set ablaze.¹³ In terms of Martial Law, it is true that one of the main

⁸ Rizal G. Buendia, *Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Ethno – Religious War or Economic Conflict*, ResearchGate, 2006, pg 1 – 2.

⁹ *Corregidor* is a tadpole – shaped island guarding the mouth of Manila Bay. It is part of Cavite Province, in south of Manila.

¹⁰ *Jabidah* is a name of a beautiful woman in Muslim folklore. Here it was used as the codename of the military training that took place in Corregidor island.

¹¹ Buendia, *op. cit.* pg 3.

¹² Soliman M. Santors, Jr., *War and Peace on the Moro Front: The Standard Bearers, Three Forms of Struggles, Three Tracks (Overview, Prime and Purposeful: Armed Groups and Human Security Efforts in the Philippines*, 2010, pg 59.

¹³ Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Ruler and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, pg 149.

reasons behind this proclamation is the urgent to solve the violent armed conflicts between Muslims and Christians in the Mindanao region. At the time Marcos imposed Martial Law, Mindanao had been stable for a while and there is a decrease in number of violence. However, still, Marcos' Martial Law saw strong resistance from the Moros in Mindanao. They opposed Marcos because he kept the disregarding Moro's plight. After the tension grew stronger, the student activists with a view to put an end to the marginalization of the More and fight against the continued injustices imposed upon them created the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).¹⁴ With their three roots of group's philosophy¹⁵, the MNLF are aiming for territorial and independence from the Philippines. However, after 1996 the MNLF is becoming more softer in pursuing their interest towards the national government. It results to the establishment of Moro Islamic Front (MILF), a group of Bangsamoro that have a rotted Islam ideology.¹⁶

Contrast with MNLF that tried to achieve autonomy through political discourse, the MILF had more of a religion's orientation and agenda from MNLF. They demand for the independent, sovereign Islamic state—yet, they preferred warfare to sitting at a negotiating table.¹⁷

Until this day, the Moro struggle is still there and the conflict between two imagined states still heated. There are several solutions being brought for both

¹⁴ *Moro National Liberation Front* was founded by Misuari.

¹⁵ MNLF Roots Philosophy are in Tausug tongue: Bangsa (nation), Hulah (homeland), and Agama (religion).

¹⁶ MNLF has a secular – nationalist leanings ideology.

¹⁷ Salamat Hashim, *The Bangsamoro People's Struggle against Oppression and Colonialism*, Agency for Youth Affairs, 2001, pg 83 – 87.

parties and they were not able to agree to the solutions. The Moro Conflict is already the longest conflict faced by one country in the world, and they have not found any solutions yet. Historically, Bangsamoro and other Muslims in the Philippines have faced such a life, where they are being mistreated, ignored, being discriminated, and experience a Muslim Massacre. The Philippines' government have reacted for this conflict since long ago, since decades ago. They have proposed several ideas, such as inviting the MNLF and MILF leaders to the discussion table.¹⁸ However, it appears that in order to solve this issue, the Philippines government should not work alone, because as we see there is only a very slow progress in solving the conflict. They should work with the international community to solve this issue. The international community is needed to help brought this issue to its end. There needs to be cooperation and coordination between the Philippines and other international community. One of the international communities that has helped solving this issue is OIC.¹⁹ As the biggest Muslim NGO in the world, the OIC has been involving in the conflict for thirty – five years, and their involvement in the Moro Conflict has been in many different forms. One of it was by becoming the mediator for the two parties.²⁰

¹⁸ The PH Government and MNLF Leaders have been in the discussion table for several times until finally they reached the Final Peace Agreement on 1996 and agree about autonomy. However, the MILF is not accepting that and start from 2001, the PH Government and MILF start the negotiation.

¹⁹ OIC or Organisation of Islamic Conference has one mandate of encouraging dialogue among civilizations and religions, by reaffirming its support for the rights of people as stipulated in the UN Charter and International Law.

²⁰ Alpaslan Ozerdem, *The Contribution of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to the Peace Process in Mindanao*, Civil Wars, 2012, pg 394 – 398.

Aside from the involvement of OIC to help solving this issue, there are other actors who also getting their hand in this conflict. Their involvement (international community) is really needed for the Philippine's government. Given to the explanation above, this research will see the history of Bangsamoro struggle and establishment of Armed Separatist Group in the Philippines that leads into the international community responds to the issue. Furthermore, this research will elaborate and show how the possible solutions to the issue with the involvement of international community.

Based on the elaboration above, I propose the title of the research as follows:
“Bangsamoro Conflict and International Community Participation in Bringing Peace to Mindanao”

1.2. Research Question

This research will have time limitation in providing the analysis. I will limit the time scope of the international community participation from 1976 to 2018. Based on the preliminary findings, I have formulated these following research questions:

1. What actors in international community that have been participating in bringing peace to Bangsamoro Conflict?
2. What impact did these actors bring to the Bangsamoro Conflict?
3. How did these actors help to solve the Bangsamoro Conflict?

1.3. Research Objectives

The research is conducted with objectives as follows:

1. To identify the actors of the international community and the strategies conducted by the international community to bring peace in Mindanao Region.
2. To understand the impact brought by the international community in bringing peace to Mindanao by participating in solving Bangsamoro Conflict.
3. To describe the process of solving Bangsamoro Conflict through the participation of the international community.

1.4 Research Significance

This research provides a brief explanation on the history of Bangsamoro Struggle and the griefs of Philippines's Muslim society and how it affects to today—contemporary Moro conflict. Along with the historical aspect of the conflict, this research will also show the international community that has been participating in helping both, Bangsamoro and Philippines government to have an end in their long – lasting conflict. The urgency is because there is so many misinterpretations of the history of this conflict and how its development has resulted into a very different action taken. This research will be served to raise the awareness of the Philippines citizen that they still have problem to solve; and in fact, they need the help of international community.

In addition, I hope that this research can be a beneficiary for other students or researcher for supporting data or reference in order to find another alternate solution for bringing peace to Mindanao region and stop the armed conflict and separatist movement there. This research will also contribute to map the actors who contribute in the peacemaking process and how they provide their contribution. Lastly, the research also will figure out the best way the international community can involve in the peacemaking process in Mindanao region.

1.5. Research Outlines

The first chapter of this research provides the overview of the topic and describe the purposes of this research. The background provides the context of the brief historical explanation of the Bangsamoro conflict, its development and introduce the participation of the international community. This section also explains the importance and the urgency of this research to be conducted along with providing coherent research questions that served as guidelines of this research. Lastly, this section provides the research significance and the structure of the writing of this research.

The second chapter provides the fundamental basis of research which constructed through the making of literature review from scholarly writings. In this research, the literature review is divided into three lines of research. The main theory used is the peace study theory that emphasizes on the conflict resolution

strategy. The peace study theory also examines in deep on the third - party intervention strategy which is very useful for peacemaking in one conflicted area.

The third chapter explains the process in conducting this research. This section provides information on the research approach that is being used which is through qualitative approach. Research methods that being used is historical method that helps to analyze the dynamics and processes in the past in order to contextualize human action. Later on, this chapter explains the data collection techniques that comes from the secondary data and data analysis that has producing framework of analysis to chapter four.

The fourth chapter is the central of this research. In this section, I will discuss and analyze the research questions used in this research. This section will be divided into three big discussions, as follows: The cause and effect of Bangsamoro Conflict, the Bangsamoro Conflict as a threat to international security, and lastly the participation of international community to resolve the Bangsamoro Conflict. In chapter four, I discuss and elaborate the cause and effect of Bangsamoro Conflict to the Moros and the development of the conflict to be labelled as a threat to international security. Furthermore, I identify the international community that participate in resolving the Bangsamoro Conflict throughout identification framework, and the further strategy needed for bringing peace to Mindanao.

The fifth chapter consists of two sub – sections which are conclusion and recommendations. The conclusion of this research discusses the answer of the research questions coherently. As in recommendations' section, I will provide two

types of recommendations: substance recommendations and academic recommendation.

