

THE DYNAMICS OF CIVIL SOCIETY FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE PHILIPPINE PEACE MOVEMENT: THE BANGSAMORO STRUGGLE FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE¹

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Civil society is recognised as comprising complex and multifaceted entities, resilient to and yet responsive to both the state apparatus and global market processes. Civil society in the Philippines, long regarded as one of the most vibrant, diverse and innovative in Asia, has emerged as a significant actor in the field of conflict resolution and peace-building during the past decade. Drawing on contemporary debates on the significance of key constructs in development and democratic discourses such as social capital, this paper interrogates the entanglements between civil society, the state and combatant groups and how such relationships have transformed the Philippine peace movement. In thinking about the work of peace, the effectiveness of civil society groups in mobilising societal awareness concerning the Bangsamoro struggle for a 'just and lasting peace' is examined. Questions pertaining to the effectiveness of such interventions in strengthening conflict prevention and peace-building are situated within contemporary debates concerning civil society's role in development and democratisation processes.

SITUATING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The efficiency of civil society groups in societal change and transformation has long been the subject of debate and controversy. Over the past decade, a more nuanced understanding of the formative processes that shape institutional relationships within and between groups has emerged through the deployment of constructs such as social capital, social cohesion, and social movements. Intrinsic to these debates has been a sustained engagement with long-held beliefs about voluntary associational practices and collective agency as well as political discourses on participatory processes vis-à-vis the state. These debates are also applicable in the Philippine context, perhaps more so,

given the advocacy and mobilisation of civil society for socio-political transformation in the 1980s and 1990s.

The popularity of civil society in contemporary social and political discourses in some ways accounts for the diverse and sometimes incommensurate ways in which the concept has been deployed.² Jean and John Comaroff's (1999:1-43) caution on the inherent ambiguities associated with attempts to define civil society raises important questions as to the appropriateness of its deployment as an analytic concept. Instead, they suggest, civil society belongs to poetic ideology, as an idea imbued with a reformist spirit, rather than the rigor

of sociological analysis. Other theorists, particularly sociologists, have focused considerable effort on the means through which consensus on the definition, measurement and operationalisation of civil society may be reached. Many would support the Comaroffs' opinion that the concept itself remains elusive and somewhat difficult to categorise. Some political writers argue that the challenge in defining and analysing civil society formations and processes, in part, lies with the fluidity and dynamism of the relations within and between specific groupings linked with certain kinds of voluntary associational practices. While debates on civil society have been shaped by influential theorists writing from very different political viewpoints, it is perhaps not surprising that the concept, while instructive in interrogating how political discourses have impinged on the idea of civil society, is beset by ambiguities inherent in its conceptualisation.

Similar challenges have been encountered by economists and sociologists in their endeavours to define and examine the workings of social capital. While consensus exists on a general description of social capital as 'the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit' (Woolcock 1998:155), considerable differences exist in how contemporary theorists interpret and interrogate its deployment. Most definitions are drawn from the writings of a small number of key theorists: Robert Putman, James Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu. Putnam (1993) defines social capital as those features of social organisation such as networks of individuals or households, and the associational norms and values that create externalities for the community as a

whole (Grootaert and Bastelar 2002:2). Such externalities invariably relate to the cohesiveness and strength of a society (degree of trust, rules of civic behaviour practiced, and level of association). Coleman's (1988:98) conceptualisation of social capital encompasses "a variety of different entities [which] all consist of some aspect of social structure and [which] facilitate certain actions of actors—whether personal or corporate actors—within the structure." For Bourdieu, "social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of collectivity-owned capital" (1986:249; Edwards and Foley 2001:9).

Drawing from the writings of Putman and Coleman, development analysts such as North (1990) and Olson (1982) have sought to incorporate formalised institutional relationships and structures into their studies (cited by Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2002:3).³ Other theorists such as Knack (2001:42) argue that it is important to differentiate between civil social capital and government social capital (i.e., institutions that influence people's ability to cooperate for mutual benefit such as the enforceability of contracts, the rule of law, and the extent of civil liberties). Uphoff (2000:218-221) has argued that social capital can be analysed on the basis of two components: structural social capital (information sharing, collective action and decision-making through established roles and social networks supplemented by rules, procedures and precedents); and

cognitive social capital (shared norms, values, trust, attitudes, and beliefs) (Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2002:3). World Bank analysts have identified proxy indicators for measuring these two types of social capital: structural capital is assessed on criteria such as membership in networks, the number and type of interactions in a group, prevalence of social networks, participation in decision-making, associational levels etc.; while cognitive social capital relates to measures of trust, norms of reciprocity and sharing. I argue that the contextualisation of social capital within groups and networks necessitates an examination of the processes of historical change within societies and the effectiveness of these networks. By tracing the entanglements of these durable networks of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition through which formalised entities crystallise, dialogue and cooperate to work for peace, the paper attempts to highlight the dynamics of civil society formation within the Philippine peace movement.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PHILIPPINES

The relationship between the Philippine state and civil society was recognised and legitimised in the Philippine Constitution created by means of a Constitutional Commission and ratified by plebiscite on 2 February 1987. The 1987 Philippine Constitution affirms that the state shall encourage non-governmental, community-based or sectoral organisations that promote the welfare of the nation and that independent people's organisations'

pursuit of their legitimate and collective interests within the democratic framework is respected (1987 Philippine Constitution Section 23 Article II; Section 15 Article III). Today, civil society has grown to encompass self-help groups, community associations, religious and spiritual societies, professional associations, business foundations, local philanthropies, private voluntary organisations, non-government organisations (NGOs) and people's organisations (POs) from the various sectors (workers, farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous people, urban poor, elderly citizens, disabled people and youth).⁴ The corporate sector has incorporated components that are in alignment with civil society interests such as the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), an influential NGO funded by business donations. The relationship between the media and the state is also more robust than in many other countries in the region. Qualification should also be made with regard to party-list groups as many are aligned with sectoral groups actively involved in civil society concerns.

Civil society's contribution to Philippine social life has been the subject of considerable debate and analyses by researchers, many of whom have been active participants in shaping civil society processes and practices. Mindful of the historical formulations of civil society in political discourses, Filipino writers and activists conceptualise the entity of civil society as an actualisation emerging through (often conflicting) interrelations with the state and the market. Writing on contemporary configurations within Philippine civil society, Karina Constantino-David (1997:22) categorises

“all organisations that intersect with the domain of the state but are not part of the state apparatus as civil society entities.”⁵ While this definition includes sectors such as the media and the market and would be considered by most analysts as too wide-ranging, Constantino-David does qualify her definition by limiting her analysis of civil society organisations (CSOs) to those active in societal critique and transformation. Her definition of civil society is useful in that she positions such entities within cultural, political and economic structures that in many instances contest and critique the state. This raises a very important issue within CSOs pertaining to the multiple dimensions through which conflict and armed violence have shaped civil society’s engagement with the state apparatus and the effectiveness of conflict or the possibility of violence in implementing structural reforms to effect societal change. Cognisant of these issues, this paper focuses on the conceptualisation of peace by civil society groups and the implementation of practices by civil society groups that have contributed to bringing a peaceful resolution to armed conflict between specific Muslim groups and the Philippine government.

Invariably, transformations in Philippine associational life and the formation and growth of civil society groups have been linked to changes in religious and political structures and institutions particularly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is important to acknowledge that Philippine societies had a rich and complex associational life before the imposition of colonial rule, and such associational practices continue to inform how groups

interface with institutional structures, particularly within Muslim and indigenous communities. In addition, organised groupings sponsored by benefactors of the state or operating outside of, and indeed in opposition to the state, have a long history in the Philippines. Nationalist and communist ideologies promoted a critical engagement with colonial and postcolonial rule. The *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas*, the *Hukbalahap* or *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (People’s Army Against the Japanese) later renamed *Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan* (the Liberation Army of the People) and the Communist People’s Party of the Philippines fostered community awareness about organised resistance groups. As the subtleties of local associational practices in producing and reproducing identity and belongingness were obscured by the state’s privileging of modernisation policies, so too were the practices, largely promoted by the Church, that facilitated the transition of ‘congregations’ to ‘constituencies.’ Intrinsic to this transition were government and/or church sponsored programmes during the 1940s and 1950s that sought to offset communist ideologies among the peasantry and working classes through the promotion of cooperatives often in conjunction with literacy programs (e.g., the Free Farmers Federation, Federation of Free Workers and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement). This process of obscuration is understandable given that discourses on civil society have inevitably tied the emergence of activist-oriented NGOs with the crystallisation of organised resistance to the state during the martial law era. Thus, CSOs in the decades

preceding martial law are described by many civil society activists as 'proto' organisations.

These alliances and allegiances began to unravel in the 1960s as the possibility of social change captured the imagination of the people. The edifice of Catholicism was shaken by new ideas such as liberation theology that critically engaged with theological precepts, particularly the privileging of the poor, and encouraged a form of political activism that was recognisable in Philippine colonial history, and yet was markedly different as it was influenced by the views espoused by the Second Vatican Council and the World Council of Churches. Energised by international social movements and mobilised by the perceived efficacy of social activism on behalf of the poor, groups with very different ideological backgrounds and interests were formed across the political spectrum. Coalescing around specific interests and causes, these emergent social movements were identified with student activism, feminism, labor and peasant issues. Influential organisations were established during this era such as the Philippine Ecumenical Council for Community Organising, the National Secretariat for Social Action and the Philippine Business for Social Progress. The declaration of martial law forced CSOs to interrogate their ways of operating, highlighting the vulnerability of certain forms of community organising and activism. Faced with a highly punitive state apparatus, sectoral leaders and activists who were not imprisoned effectively removed themselves through political exile or joined the growing underground movement. In such a climate, organisations previously vocal in

societal critique were circumspect in their activities and opinions, while others supported President Marcos's policies (initially at least) or were co-opted by the state. During this period, groups (often sheltering under the institutional structures of the Church and the academy), strategized to countervail state modernisation policies enforced through militarism by supporting specific cause issues – human rights, indigenous people's rights, environmentalism, Muslim-Christian dialogue, etc. Astute in recognising the vulnerabilities of this activism, non-government groups mobilised to form networks to represent their interests and strengthen their position such as the National Association of Training Centers of Cooperatives (NATCCO) and the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PHILDRRA) (Constantino-David 1997:27-29). The assassination of Benigno Aquino in 1983 mobilised mass action that precipitated civil disobedience campaigns that ultimately led to 'People Power' or the EDSA revolution. In the years following EDSA, activists and members of civil society explored possibilities for coalition-building to advance national platforms. In the words of Constantino-David (1997:31) national NGO networks "... learned to build a unity that was based on a recognition of differences, and consciously developed personal bonds of friendship, exorcising the ghosts of the past."

Networks were initially built through the amalgamation of interest-based groups that through a consultative processes, came together to form more formalised structures. The setting-up of civil society consortiums and national

networks during the 1990s was in part a consequence of the real-politick of Philippine politics. Such entities founded on participatory processes directed to consensus-building with member-ratified principles, missions and goals, were more likely through their public advocacy stance to dialogue with government departments, donor countries and multilateral agencies. For example, the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) established in 1991 by ten NGO networks, today numbers seven national networks and four regional networks, representing more than 2,500 organisations. Member networks of CODE-NGO include PHILDRRA, a network of 72 NGOs and the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs (MINCODE) established in 1991, a coalition of ten networks of NGOs and POs based in Mindanao.⁶

Over the past two decades civil society in the Philippines has undergone a process of internal institutional strengthening, expansion, and maturation. This process has been assisted by supportive donor countries and foreign-based CSOs interested in poverty alleviation and social concerns. The ineffectiveness of political institutions in implementing interventions to strengthen governance and increase economic growth continues to concern policy-makers. There is considerable speculation on whether political reform will address economic inequality, promote peace, and enhance social justice. The issue is complicated by the current initiative to amend the constitution (the infamous 'Cha-Cha' or charter change debate) in order to create a parliamentary system of governance that supposedly will significantly contribute to the prosperity

of Mindanao. Recent developments within civil society institutional structures suggest the formation of highly strategic alliances that in some instances have quite strong overtones of interventionism into domestic political and economic decision-making; and the establishment of networks and coalitions across the Asia-Pacific region working on (but not restricted to) development, human rights, environment, women and children and peace-related issues.

THE BANGSAMORO PEACE PROCESS

Peace emerged as a crucial idea during the post-EDSA era embodying the desire for social justice. People's sense of political destabilisation was heightened in the late 1980s following numerous *coup d'état* attempts, in the process, strengthening their awareness to critically engage with peace (Garcia 1988:263-4). NGOs and POs concerned with civil liberties and peace, strategized to form enduring cross-society coalitions, often coalescing around social justice and societal reform. Linked to national networks, these groups established important peace-oriented coalitions.⁷ As Coronel-Ferrer (1997:5) noted, groups and individuals engaged in societal reform realised that military responses to the different insurgencies (Communist People's Party [CPP], Moro National Liberation Front [MNLF] and Moro Islamic Liberation Front [MILF], the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa-Soldiers of the Filipino People -Young Officers' Union [RAM-SFP-YOU] and Cordillera People's Liberation Army [CPLA]) would not be effective and that alternative solutions were needed. The

Philippine peace movement is aware of the need to resolve insurgencies through formalised engagements with armed insurgency groups. Quintos-Deles (1995) has defined the Philippine peace movement as a “social movement which has focused on the specific issues of the peace process and which pursues the objective of a negotiated political settlement of the internal armed conflicts dividing the country” (cited by Coronel-Ferrer 1997:7). This process of engagement evolved into multifaceted negotiations between the government and different groups that resulted in peace talks with the CPP under the auspices of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) (protracted, currently stalled), military elements (1995), the MNLF (1996), the *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Mindanao* (Revolutionary Worker’s Party-Mindanao) [on-going⁸], and the MILF (ongoing).

The Bangsamoro struggle for self-determination has been described as a struggle that has spanned the centuries of Spanish, United States, Japanese and Filipino colonialism. The word, Bangsamoro, is itself an evocation of a colonial past. Moro, a derivative of ‘Moor’ was commonly used by Spanish missionaries and government officials to refer to all Muslims. The association of *bangsa* or country with the (derogatory) identity marker, Moro, imbued Bangsamoro with nationalist aspirations through identity with place or homeland, and conveyed the possibility of a return to some form of political autonomy or independence through the struggle for self-determination. An organised armed resistance group led by a cadre of young men educated in Islamic political thought,

emerged during the 1970s resulting in the formation of the MNLF. The subsequent fragmentation of the MNLF led to the establishment of two additional groups, the MNLF-Reform group and the MILF. Following protracted negotiations between the Philippine government and the MNLF, a number of important agreements were reached including the Tripoli Agreement in 1976, with peace talks culminating in the 1996 Peace Agreement. The current status of this agreement is under review, at least by a number of factions within the MNLF who have expressed dissatisfaction with its implementation.⁹ This dissatisfaction has been compounded by high levels of poverty in provinces under the regional government of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the detention of MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari since January 2002 on rebellion charges, and at some level, emerging issues in the MILF peace negotiations that may impact on the 1996 Peace Agreement. Discussions between the MNLF and MILF leadership are suggestive of new understandings being forged between these groups but the resolution of outstanding issues remains uncertain.¹⁰

The commitment of time and resources in peace talks is often unrecognised by those not actively involved in them. Complex layers of negotiations have included: (1) high-level exploratory and formal negotiations between the two peace panels, (2) middle-level discussions with the government and MILF ceasefire committees, and (3) lower-level consultations with local monitoring teams and joint ceasefire monitoring posts. I have opted to provide a detailed summary of the MILF peace process in order to

reveal the protracted nature of these lengthy negotiations. It is also important to list these agreements as the rupturing of certain agreements such as ceasefire violations, which often activated CSOs intervention in the peace process.¹¹

Shortly after the signing of the 1996 GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, the MILF declared its departure from the Agreement and reaffirmed its commitment to independence. The period 1997 to 2003 was a time of conflict and violence escalating into major military offences between March-July 2000 and February-July 2003. Formative in the trajectory of peace negotiations were a number of important treaties and agreements reached between the disputing parties including:

18 July 1997	Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities
27 August 1997	General Framework of Agreement of Intent between the GRP and the MILF
12 September 1997	Implementing Administrative Guidelines on their Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities
14 November 1998	Implementing Operational Guidelines of their Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities
10 February 1999	Joint GRP-MILF Acknowledgment, and an Agreement to Reaffirm the Pursuit of Peace

17 February 1999	Joint Statement on the Cessation of Hostilities
18 May 1999	Rules and Procedures in the Determination and Verification of the Coverage of the Cessation of Hostilities
2 September 1999	'September 1999 Agreement' to pursue a just, equitable and lasting peace
6 October 1999	'Second Joint GRP-MILF Acknowledgment' strengthening the authority and substance on the 'Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities.'

The opening of the first formal talks was held on 25 October 1999. However, President Estrada's announcement in January 2000 that a final peace settlement with the MILF must be reached by 30 June 2000 placed additional stress on the negotiations. Incidents involving government forces and the MILF resulted in armed conflicts in late 1999. The situation deteriorated into an 'all out war' during the first five months of 2000 following military assaults on MILF camps. These assaults were launched while the first round of the formal talks were taking place on 17-20 January 2000. Following months of armed conflict, the government and MILF peace panels agreed on 'Safety and Security Guarantees' on 9 March 2000 and in a meeting on 27 April 2000 studied proposals to 'normalise' the situation. Military attacks during 2000 led to a further deterioration in relations between the parties and on 21 August 2000 the MILF disbanded its peace panel, effectively cancelling pending peace

talks. The MILF stated its case in its 'Position Papers of Technical Working Groups on Six (6) Clustered Agenda Items' of 14 June 2000. Both the government and the MILF employed a range of strategies during this period of highly politicised talks, with pressure placed on the MILF leadership to reformulate their stance away from secession to autonomy. In a climate of mistrust, the MILF subsequently insisted that peace talks be held under the auspices of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference or a member of the conference.

Possibilities for peace improved following the adoption of the 'Six Paths to Peace' by President Macapagal-Arroyo. This policy drew on the earlier policies developed under the Ramos administration. Peace negotiations recommenced in 2001 with the active involvement of the Malaysian government. The 'General Framework for the Resumption of Peace Talks between the GRP and the MILF' was signed in Malaysia on 24 March 2001, contributing to the signing of the crucial 'Agreement of Peace between the GRP and the MILF' on 22 June 2001 at Tripoli, Libya. The agreement listed three major agenda items: security, rehabilitation and ancestral domain. Subsequent agreements on security were signed including the 'Joint Communiqué between the GRP-MILF' on 6 May 2002, and 'Implementing Guidelines on the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Aspects of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001' on 7 May 2002. It was this agreement that facilitated the 'Implementing Guidelines on the Security Aspect of the GRP-MILF

Tripoli Agreement of Peace of 2001' signed on 7 August 2001.

While negotiations lead to the signing of important agreements concerning security and peace-building initiatives during this period, the situation on the ground rapidly worsen following the military campaign launched allegedly against the Pentagon gang on 11 February 2003. The campaign resulted in the death of many MILF combatants and the evacuations of civilians from the towns of Pagalungan and Pikit in Maguindanao province. This was followed by the bombing of Davao International Airport in Davao City on 4 March 2003 and the Sasa wharf bombings on 2 April 2003 that killed 38 people and injured many others. These incidents disrupted the peace negotiations and created considerable ill-will towards the MILF. While the MILF refuted responsibility for the bombings, the government stated that the bombings were the work of the MILF and charged senior members of the MILF with multiple murder and frustrated multiple murder.¹² Yet, despite these difficulties informal talks were held in Malaysia in March 2003. Presidential Macapagal-Arroyo's order in May 2003 for 'extraordinary punitive force' against 'embedded terrorist cells' in Mindanao was perceived by many to include the MILF groups as the government has previously claimed that the MILF had links with terrorists groups. In response the MILF issued a statement rejecting terrorism and terrorist links in June 2003.¹³ On 19 July 2003, the government and the MILF signed a bilateral cease-fire as part of confidence building measures for the resumption of formal talks.

During these hostilities, talks continued with a Joint Statement signed on 28 March 2003, reiterating both parties willingness to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement and to undertake appropriate steps for the resumption of formal negotiations. Informal talks resumed on 4 August 2003. Although formal talks had stalled during October 2001, backdoor negotiations and exploratory talks continued during 2002 to 2004 resulting in a series of GRP-MILF exploratory talks held in Kuala Lumpur. These exploratory talks continued during 2005 and 2006 although the period was also marked by serious violations to the ceasefire agreement.¹⁴ The focus of the exploratory talks was the issue of ancestral domain (concept, territory, resources, and governance), in particular, the determination and delimitation of areas to be placed under the prospective Bangsamoro Judicial Entity. Charting the progress of the talks, the MILF spokesperson, Jun Mantawil in late January 2007 described discussions on this issue over the past year as already having encountered three impasses. The progress of the proposals and counter-proposals submitted through the Malaysian Secretariat has been widely reported in the national media, particularly the concept and meaning of the 'right to self-determination' put forward by the Government's panel. The announcement by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Esperon Jr., that a final peace agreement would be signed in March or April 2007 was dismissed by the MILF spokesperson, Jun Mantawil, who stated that no agreement had yet been reached. While the talks have not resumed officially, it is

anticipated that the next scheduled talks, known as the 14th exploratory talks, will be held during the latter months of 2007. Also uncertain is the impact, if any, of the recent re-organisation of the GRP Peace Panel.

THE ENTRY OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE GRP-MILF PEACE PROCESS

It is important to realise that CSOs engagement with the ongoing GRP-MILF peace process has been shaped by the GRP-MNLF 1996 Peace Agreement and political and economic developments that have impacted on its implementation.¹⁵ While CSOs had been active in the region during the 1980s and 1990s, many groups stated that they were not consulted during the talks and that the GRP-MNLF 1996 Peace Agreement was presented as a *fait accompli*. Opportunities for CSOs to participate more actively in peace and development emerged with the channelling of financial assistance to the regional government of ARMM, local government units (that report to the national government) and eligible agencies working in the area. Multilateral and bilateral funding facilitated this process, particularly the United Nations Multi-Donor Umbrella Programme (Phases 1-3) tasked to provide funding assistance to post-conflict communities within the Special Zones of Peace and Development (SZOPAD) including but not restricted to ARMM.

National and regional CSOs strategised to established linkages with local and provincial governments, including the regional government of ARMM, and sought to create new linkages with communities and ex-combatant and combatant groups. In turn,

national, provincial and local governments were supportive of peace-building interventions by NGOs to POs and other grassroots organisations. To avail of funding opportunities, Manila-based NGOs set up regional offices or formed linkages with regional CSOs based in Davao City or the smaller regional cities. Retaining their national face, they became important conduits for project development design and funding in SZOPAD. Local NGOs increasingly directed their activities towards conflict interventions and peace building, upgrading the skills of their staff through training courses and workshops often run by Catholic Relief Services and the Mennonite Central Committee or peace institutes affiliated with local or national universities. Local NGOs in conjunction with national NGOs successfully sourced for international and national funds for peace-building and development, further strengthening individual NGOs and POs and the networks between them. Civil society groups with large Muslim memberships or NGOs and POs set up by local Muslim or Indigenous groups although few in number, were favourably positioned to avail of funding opportunities.

The 'all out war' during early 2000 following the military offensive on MILF camps in Central Mindanao precipitated the evacuation of at least 934,340 persons, the destruction/damage of 9,068 homes and the death of at least 517 civilians, of whom many died in evacuation centers (DSWD cited by World Bank 2005:20). The military assault on MILF camps in 2003 in Central Mindanao displaced at least 411,004 persons (many had been displaced by the war of 2000), the destruction/damage of

6,908 homes and the deaths of at least 238 civilians (DWSW-TFDP cited by World Bank 2005:20). Media coverage of the evacuations revealed the hardship experienced by communities forced to flee their homes and lands. National CSOs mobilised to provide humanitarian and welfare-related assistance to internally displaced families and communities. Working with the Islamic Development Bank, the Department of Social Welfare and Development with the assistance of local government officials, NGOs and religious institutions and in consultation with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, set up evacuation centres for internally displaced families. In many instances, the communities affected by or displaced by violence had limited POs or NGOs participation and thus lacked the expertise to avail of humanitarian assistance. Compounding these organisational challenges were linguistic, religious, social and cultural differences as many NGO personnel had little, if any previous contact with the local communities. In these circumstances it is not unexpected that many of the underlying precepts concerning the work of peace are more aligned with Christian worldviews.

International civil society organisations (ICSOs) working in the region has grown, with a sharp increase in the number establishing offices or expanding their activities following the GRP-MNLF 1996 Peace Agreement. The mass displacements of persons in Central Mindanao following the 2000 and 2003 military offensives precipitated the entry of humanitarian ICSOs such as the International Red Cross. In effect, new spaces were created through which civil society groups could enter and a new

constituency identified as the potential recipients of services and training. ICSOs funded by religious institutions including the Dutch-based Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid, the Catholic Relief Services, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and the Mennonite Central Committee have been active in Mindanao for many decades. More recently, ICSOs such as Save the Children-US and Save the Children-UK, Accion Contra el Hambre, Oxfam-Great Britain implemented projects in the region. Accompanying this transition were newly formed alliances and networks between national CSOs, ICSOs, government and donor countries, with the Department of Social Welfare and Development playing a pivotal role in the fields of emergency and humanitarian assistance. Multilateral assistance by the World Bank and the Asian Development, as well as donor programs funded by Japan, the United States, Canada, the European Community and Australia categorised as overseas development assistance, impacted on the expansion of civil society in important ways. While increasingly aligned with security and governance concerns, funds were also directed to public administration and institutional capacity building particularly for local government, judicial reform, social expenditure, community upliftment, and peace and development programs. Substantial funds released by multilateral agencies in the form of grants and loans have been channelled through 'partners' (often specific government agencies and national/regional NGOs that met the rigorous criteria set down by the banks) and disbursed to eligible clients (NGOs, POs and other groups). Local CSOs

encounter many challenges in their efforts to source counterpart funds, while savvy and well-connected groups linked to networks within and across different sectors are more favourably positioned to bid for lucrative service delivery programs. Today, CSOs in Mindanao operate within an environment conducive to the building of alliances and networks that straddle the region.¹⁶

THE ROLE OF CSOS IN CONFLICT INTERVENTION AND PEACE-BUILDING

CSOs working on peace in the Philippines have incorporated a diversity of sources and resources in the implementation of conflict intervention strategies and peace-building. In addition, ICSOs and donor countries have incorporated into their various programmes, ideas on peace-building developed by theorists working in peace studies such as John Galtung, John Paul Lederach and Toh Swee Hin. Filipino writers and peace practitioners have drawn on their own personal experiences as activists during the martial law era and post-EDSA period and on their ongoing engagement with peace in all its multiplicities. Thus, the field of peace studies in the Philippines has historical depth, cultural richness and practical applicability, and encompasses a broad spectrum of individuals and communities from all sectors of Philippine society.

Peace-building, in the most general sense, covers all dimensions of the peace process. Peace-building can be thought of as a creative approach directed to intensifying efforts to establish lasting peace and to resolve conflicts peacefully, focusing on the political and socio-

economic context of the conflict rather than on the military or humanitarian aspects (CIDA 2002). Galtung (1996:103) writing on ways to prevent conflict and resolve conflict peacefully, suggested three interventions: peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building. At the risk of simplification, categorising peace-work on the basis of these three intervention types is helpful for contextualising the different strategies and activities implemented by CSOs. The three types are regarded as interrelated and intervention strategies are applied concurrently in order to promote goodwill and community support in order to lessen the possibility of conflict re-occurring in the future.

Galtung (1996:103) defines *peace-keeping* as an intervention that entails controlling the actors so that they at least stop destroying things, others, and themselves. Peacekeeping strategies focus on conflict prevention strategies in the following areas: 1) the implementation of bilateral ceasefire agreements, 2) the establishment of military and/or civil monitoring missions to investigate ceasefire violations, 3) demilitarisation including the setting up of zones of peace respected by the government and the combatant groups, and 4) codification of warfare acts in accordance with international law and custom leading to formalisation of procedures with regard to the care of the dead and treatment of the injured, accountability regarding damage to property, particularly mosques, and human rights violations. CSOs have been extremely important in all areas of peace-keeping and have contributed to the reduction in the level and effect of actual and direct violence. Peace-keeping indicators include the

number and types of incidents that have occurred within a specified period including the number of persons killed and injured; the extent of damage to property, livestock etc.; and the number of persons displaced. NGOs working in this area have developed a range of indicators including involuntary disappearances, sexual violence, human rights violations and restrictions on civil liberties to monitor acts of war, armed conflict and harassments.

Civil society groups working in conjunction with Church groups or through consortiums and supra-networks such as Peace Weavers¹⁷ were instrumental in stopping military attacks on MILF camps and in pressuring the government and the MILF to agree to ceasefire agreements during 2000 and 2003.¹⁸ With regard to the establishment of monitoring missions, civil society groups built on issues raised in peace talks concerning the creation of monitoring committees, namely the Joint Committee on the Ceasefire of Hostilities (JCCH). An independent monitoring committee known as the Independent Fact Finding Committee composed of representatives from Notre Dame University, the Maguindanaon Professional and Employees Association, the Protestant Lawyers League and Cotabato City Media Multi-Purpose Cooperative was established and worked with the Quick Response Team to investigate ceasefire violations. Significant progress was made following the introduction of Local Monitoring Teams at the provincial level during 2003 with assistance provided by the JCCH and the local community. The formation of Bantay Ceasefire, a Mindanao-based NGO, raised awareness of the role of the monitoring teams when

it assumed responsibility for undertaking independent fact-finding missions. Finally, the implementation of the International Monitoring Team during October 2004 was regarded by all parties and the local community as an important step in ensuring the observation of the ceasefire agreement. Since then, other NGOs have also assumed monitoring roles. Demilitarisation strategies have been partially effective, particularly with regard to the formation of peace zones during 2000-2004 (Santos 2005). In some instances, peace zones were established by communities at the barangay level, often with the support of the Church in an attempt to eliminate armed conflict within specific localities. In other cases, influential NGOs such as Tabang Mindanao (Help Mindanao) have been instrumental in establishing many such zones.¹⁹ With regard to codification issues, attention was directed to the rules of war (including compensation to the injured and the families of the dead), the setting up of procedures to peacefully resolve human rights violations and abuses. In addition to the above, emergency, humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance was provided by ICSSOs and nationally-based NGOs such as Tabang Mindanao, Balay and Community and Family Services International. The Mindanao Emergency Response Network established during this period facilitated over 20 organisations' disaster response activities and emergency assistance.

Peace-making, according to Galtung (1996:103), embeds actors in a new formulation in order to reach some form of resolution on the perceived conflicts between the parties and may entail transformation of attitudes and

assumptions of the parties. These resolutions are facilitated through dialogue, informal and formal negotiations and mediation. Peace theorists refer to the role of third party mediation by civil society groups but recognise that in some instances they will be excluded from talks, particularly informal, high-level discussions. When formal peace talks were established between the MNLF and the government and in subsequent years, between the MILF and the government, many local people including a number of civic society groups and Indigenous People's organisations, expressed their misgivings on their exclusion. Unable to scrutinise or comment on specific aspects of the talks, interested stakeholders expressed their concerns on the lack of transparency and accountability.

The establishment of officially recognised peace panels helped formalise procedures during formal talks. While talks had in the past been held under conditions of distrust, the strategy of calibrated reciprocity or confidence building interventions by both parties, via specific 'deliverables' within a designated time-limit helped foster trust. Peace panels not only helped systematise negotiations resulting in greater transparency between the parties, the process provided more meaningful avenues for civil society to observe and participate (in a limited and indirect sense) in the formal peace talks.²⁰ Civil society's engagement with the peace panels has at times been quite critical and at other times, supportive. For example, civil society groups expressed concerns on the representatives of the government peace panel, specifically referring to the exclusion of representatives from

Indigenous People and women's organisations from the negotiations. Both issues have been subsequently addressed in terms of the current members of the peace panel.

Concerns have also been raised with regard to delays in the holding of formal talks and the possibility that 'deals' would be settled informally rather than through formalised procedures. Raising such concerns does highlight the sensitivity between CSOs and the official parties engaged in peace talks, particularly given the claims by CSOs that they act on behalf of a wider constituency, when they themselves are relatively recent stakeholders in the peace process. Interestingly, the number of NGOs who have sought accreditation with the peace panels to attend the opening ceremonies of the formal peace talks has increased to at least ten groups during 2004-2005. Some observers have attributed this increase in accreditation requests as a strategy to claim legitimacy as active participants in the peace talks. However, civil society groups that have sought accreditation have in nearly all instances been involved in peace-building activities and may have submitted submission papers on issues under consideration by the peace panels.²¹

In addition to the formal peace talks, CSOs have engaged with the possibilities of peace-making in a more general sense by examining causes of conflict within the wider community and the ways through which armed groups may be drawn into grievances and feuds at the local level. Interesting interventions have been instigated to address feuding through alternative grievance procedures. Multilateral agencies such as the UNDP

have also liaised with the MILF and the wider community to formalise conflict resolution procedures in those cases where the MILF had been drawn into conflict between non-combatant parties. In the past, these incidences had a tendency to escalate into more deadly violence and/or feuding. As well, local NGOs and local universities working with the Asia Foundation, a recipient of USAID funding, have undertaken research on the impact of feuding among local communities.

During the past few years, numerous conferences, workshops, seminars and other activities have been held by foreign-based foundations such as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Asia Foundation etc., as well as national and local universities working on peace and conflict studies in conjunction with provincial governments and local CSOs. Both the government and the MILF have been invited to participate in these forums. They have been extremely important in communicating ideas on the peace process to different groups and to the various coalitions working for peace. However, as many of these activities are held in English or Filipino, the level of local people's involvement in such debates, particularly those who have not been able to avail of educational opportunities or who may lack competency in English and/or Filipino, would be limited. Strategies to deal with these constraints have been implemented through availing of broadcast opportunities, particularly those provided by local radio. Today, there are many programmes devoted to peace themes and human rights issues designed by local radio commentators and broadcasted in local Muslim and Indigenous languages.

The third component, *peace-building*, aims to overcome the contradictory aspects inherent within conflict formation and the destructive practices associated with conflict (Galtung 1996:103). While socio-economic reconstruction and development are considered to be one of the most appropriate ways of achieving societal reform, attention has also focused on cultural transformation. The interface between economics and sociology during the past 20 years has generated considerable interest in both these components and had lead to the formulation of new ways of thinking about the deployment and enhancement of capital. Human/cultural capital and social capital have emerged as important concepts that if operationalised, it is argued, will promote both knowledge-production and organisational capacities within and between CSOs, with positive economic benefits flowing to the state and the market. Thus, multilateral agencies such as the World Bank are supportive of measures to strengthen social capital at the national level, as it is associated with improvements in the economic welfare of societies as measured by growth, investment, and poverty indicators (Knack 2001:42, 45).

An implicit assumption of World Bank analysts is that interventions that strengthen social capital will also enhance social cohesion (associational activities that cross societal and cultural differences) and minimise the probability of conflict re-occurring.²² As social capital facilitates certain flows of knowledge and information sharing through associational organisational forms, the specific mechanisms through which economic development and growth can be

encouraged often focus on the types of relationships (and power dynamics) between NGOs and their beneficiaries/clients. Strengthening the processes inherent in networking in order to enhance institutional structures and the sustainability of development programmes oriented to peace are also prioritised.²³ It is to be expected that CSOs and multilateral agencies may differ in the ways they conceptualise social capital. A consequence of this ambiguity is that the positionality of civil society groups when they are perceived to be the agents of and the embodiment of instruments such as social capital. In conjunction with these practices is a strong emphasis placed on strengthening social capital through development projects.

Indicators of social capital have assumed a pivotal role in determining the directionality and forms of financial grants and loans provided by multilateral agencies and donor countries.

The World Bank-administered multi-donor Mindanao Trust Fund²⁴ will be the conduit funding post-conflict reconstruction and development in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. Supported by the World Bank and the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, and Swedish governments with funding totalling US\$2.7 million, Phase 1 was launched on 27 March 2006, with funds directed to capacity-building. Phase 2 of around US\$50 million or more will be activated following the signing of a formal peace agreement between the MILF and Philippine government. It is anticipated that the program, in the words of the World Bank Philippines Country Director, Joachim von Amsberg, "...

unleash the even greater social and economic benefits that Mindanao can experience through lasting peace.”

The Philippine government has espoused the view that development should be undertaken in conjunction with the peace process. It has institutionalised this relationship through enhancing the role played by the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) and more recently, the reactivation of the Southern Philippines Development Authority. This stance is consistent with the government’s Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (2001-2004), with Mindanao identified as the exporter of high value agriculture and fishery products. Invariably, proponents of Mindanao’s development including international financial institutions and donor countries are supportive of neo-liberal policies that facilitate trade liberalisation, foreign direct investment and export-oriented agricultural and mining industries. Multilateral agencies and donor countries have adopted a range of interventions to strengthen economic development in post-conflict communities. USAID’s approach to development in Mindanao embodies many of these strategies, particularly the idea of ‘growth with equity.’ Only limited information is currently available on the effectiveness (or not) of overseas development aid in addressing poverty alleviation, promoting investment and increasing economic growth, however, the considerable level of funds directed to provincial and local governments within SZOPAD, and the continual very high levels of poverty as measured by basic needs indicators, must be of concern to multilateral agencies. While the MILF’s economic policies have not

yet been clearly stated, agreement was reached between the MILF and the Philippine government to set up the Bangsamoro Development Agency in 2002 with the task to manage the rehabilitation and development projects in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao.

The second component of peace-building relates to cultural transformation which encompasses many of the entities associated with cognitive social capital. Cultural transformation essentially relates to value transformation by means of enhancing trust and civic cooperation through changing negative and/or stereotypical perceptions of the parties in conflict. Interventions focus on education in the broadest sense and are implicitly supportive of the transferral of the idea of peace to advocacy and socio-economic reform (in an abstract sense). Women have emerged as active participants in peace-building, managing many of the influential CSOs and coordinating national and international networks. In addition, women have been active in establishing NGOs and POs that specifically meet the needs of women (and their families), organising agencies such as the Mindanao Commission on Women and in forming networks such as the Mothers for Peace.

Teachers and educators have also framed civil society’s engagement in peace education and peace training in the Philippines through fostering collaborative arrangements between educational institutes across the country. The attention devoted to education and capacity training on peace and conflict resolution by CSOs has been remarkable. In addition, specific individuals such as Fr. Jun Mercado, formerly of Notre Dame

University and Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra, of the Silsilah Dialogue Movement, and organisations such as Peace Advocates Zamboanga as well as religious institutes, centers of learning and spiritual/ interfaith groups have proven to be remarkably influential in transforming perceptions towards promoting peace-work through the publication of training manuals, the promotion of value education and the holding of intensive training courses such as that run by the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute in 2005. Ideas embodied within the 'Culture of Peace' paradigm as designed by Toh Swee Hin (2001, 2002) has been widely integrated into the curriculum of many schools as well as training manuals on value transformation through capacity building on local governance, human rights, women and development and peace-building. Of particular significance are activities that promote peace as a value (and increasingly as a right) such as civic functions like Peace Week, held annually during the month of December, and the government sponsored National Peace Consciousness Month. The UNDP programme has also funded research as a strategy to promote a greater understanding of local histories and the valuation of different Islamised and Indigenous cultures in the region. It is difficult to measure how effective the philosophies espoused by peace education has been in peace-building but in terms of development practitioners' understandings of local community politics and empowerment ideals, it has been effective (with some qualification) in resolving conflict, minimising the occurrence of violence and strengthening social cohesion within communities.

One of the most important stakeholders in the Bangsamoro struggle for self-determination is the Church. At the risk of condensing the diversity of opinions expressed by the different churches in the Philippines and by different church officials as members of these congregations, a least one influential church official has publicly stated that a conscious effort was made to *not* make the 'all-out-war' of 2000 a religious and ethnic war. The church through its pastoral letters, membership on various committees and councils, relations with church affiliated or funded NGOs and POs, ownership of print media and radio stations and administration of various education institutions has assumed an active role in advocating for peace. The 'moral' voice in the Philippine public sphere, it has publicly recognised the Bangsamoro right to self-determinations and has supported processes conducive to a just and lasting peace. The mainstreaming of these ideas by Church groups, the academe and to some extent, the media, has significantly increased the level of awareness with respect to the peace process. There are indications that the *ulama* will become increasingly important in terms of presenting community views on peace, religion and education to the wider public and in some instances, may liaise with CSOs when appropriate. NGOs such as the Philippine Center on Islam and Democracy (a recipient of funds from the Asia Foundation) have also been active in promoting discussions on Islam and civil society.

With reservations relating to socio-economic and political reform, CSOs involvement in developing and

implementing peace-building interventions focusing on cultural transformation has been very successful in building societal awareness on peace and social justice. Locally-based peace-oriented CSOs joined wider coalitions and consortiums such as the Mindanao Peace Solidarity Group, MINCODE, Mindanao Peace Educator's Network, Mindanao People's Caucus, Mindanao Peoples Peace Movement, and Peace Weavers. As well, networks and consortiums were set up to advocate on behalf of their members and wider community interests, such as the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society and the PANAGTAGBO-Mindanao Indigenous People's Consultative Assembly. These consortiums have been effective in mobilising support on a range of issues pertaining to conflict prevention, peace-building, local governance and development. However the linkages between the various CSOs within these respective networks may, under different circumstances, be quite fragile.

The density of vertical and horizontal networks within CSOs and across CSOs through the formation of consortiums and alliances has ensured that civil society has the capacity to exert considerable political pressure on national and provincial governments, the military, the respective peace panels, the combatant parties as well as non-combatants directly or indirectly affected by armed conflict and insurgency. The dissemination of information pertaining to peace talks and peace-building in general through information communication technology has significantly increased community understanding of the MILF peace process. Such forms of information-sharing have ensured that peace-oriented coalitions are

highly conversant of the various strategies, interventions and emerging issues relevant to peace-building. Networking has also fostered conditions conducive to the strengthening of the Philippine peace movement by forging new alliances within the regional and international arena.

CIVIL SOCIETY AS 'PARTNERS' IN PEACE?

While CSOs in Mindanao have manifested their willingness and commitment to work for peace, the relationship between the government and civil society has been complicated by the differing stances adopted by the government during the protracted peace negotiations. CSOs speak of 'partnerships' with government when referring to the peace process, however, government officials working under the auspices of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process would like civil society to 'accompany the peace process.' These linguistic differences are indicative of differing conceptualisations of agency in terms of civil society's relationship to the government's peace agenda. Accompaniment, in some sense, implies a willingness to go with established or formulated procedures or structures and is suggestive of a prevailing view in some circles of the importance to institutionalise the peace process.

The institutionalisation of the peace process within a 'peace and development' agenda was strongly advocated by UNDP officials. Institutional transformation and development, it was argued, would require policy coherence and continuity as well as recognised and sustainable

'citizen's peace constituency' (Oquist 2002:8). Such a process, it was suggested, would build on the (already existing) implicit peace movement grounded in civil society structures, and would require financial security in terms of project implementation and the involvement of multiple actors (Congress, public administrators, international financial institutions and other donors). This type of relationship raises the issue of institutional complementarity and dependency, and increases the possibilities for the privatisation and commercialisation of CSOs as their future sustainability is tied to the servicing the needs of their constituencies. While civil society groups, particularly NGOs are commonly positioned as autonomous entities in tension with the State, this may be open to contestation as many NGOs have entered into collaborative relations with government agencies, particularly with regard to service delivery. Also, the willingness of CSOs to participate in such an institutionalisation process, the forms of cooption entailed, and their capacity to design and implement development projects as independent agents, was not interrogated. It is apparent from a perusal of the government's six point comprehensive peace process agenda released in September 2004 and known as the 'Peace Plan to Achieve a Just End to the Peace Process', that a high level of cooperation with CSOs is assumed, however, the future involvement of civil society in peace-work is dependent on the government's recognition of its future role in security and peace-building.

As the involvement of CSOs in the GRP-MNLF and GRP-MILF peace processes has been relatively recent (with the exception of interfaith organisations

affiliated with religious institutions and locally-based professional organisations), relationships with the government, particularly the military, and the MILF Central Committee had to be established. The setting up of formalised peace-keeping procedures with CSOs assuming an active role in monitoring ceasefire agreements necessitated communication channels with the combatant groups. CSOs also forged closer contacts with MILF leaders during 2000 and 2003 when peace-oriented coalitions lobbied both the government and the MILF for the imposition of ceasefire agreements.

Civil society's support for peace-work offers real possibilities for genuine collaboration for peace-building at the community level through consultation with local government officials and through dialogue with traditional and/or community elders and the local *ulama* although there has been a tendency by multilateral agencies and some NGOs to formalise these 'informal' groupings for the purposes of aid delivery. The Local Government Code of 1991 provides for the establishment of local development councils (with not less than one-fourth membership of CSO representatives) at all levels of local government – provincial, municipal/city and barangay. Complementing the code are training and capacity building programmes held for local government administrators and other personnel designed by bilateral aid agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency under its Local Government Support Program. While the code facilitates civil society's entry into participatory decision-making processes and encourages local government to work jointly with NGOs and POs as partners in development, in

actually the effectiveness of CSOs engagement with LGUs in conflict-affected areas has not been promising. Interested observers have noted that not all CSOs are conversant with the code; that cooption of CSOs by government officials may undermine the effectiveness of CSOs input into local government decision-making, and that in cases where CSOs are placed in adversarial positions with government officials and local politicians, personal and family safety concerns may arise.

While this paper traces the involvement of CSOs in peace-work, it would be naive not to recognise that CSOs are vulnerable to ethnic and class factionalism or internal manipulation for ideological purposes. CSOs may be coopted by the state, local political and economic elites or by donor countries aggressively pursuing their national interests. While many donor countries continue to prioritise poverty alleviation, some governments have embarked on funding or indirectly supporting counter-terrorism programs. These programs may include components that incorporate training local police and military, implementation of anti-money laundering guidelines, cross-border surveillance of peoples and commodities and practices for good governance. While these funds have been directed to specific government departments for project implementation, the mainstreaming of counter-terrorism into development aid channelled through civil society organisations into specific civic-humanitarian projects will undoubtedly undermine the trust inherent within social capital that is so important for peace-building.

CONCLUSION

While CSOs involvement in peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building has contributed significantly to the peace process, we need to reflect on the appropriateness and effectiveness of peace-building interventions in strengthening structural and institutional processes, and whether such processes have positively contributed to the Bansamoro struggle for a 'just and lasting peace.' The increased militarisation in the region accompanied by CAFGU/CVO recruitment campaigns and the deteriorating human rights situation in the Philippines, challenges CSOs capacity to meaningfully address the structural causes of conflict and war. How effective can such interventions be in stopping violence when militarisation is fostered by government policies under their 'war on terror' campaign? Given the high levels of poverty and inequality within the region, and the very real human security concerns, the contemporary challenge facing CSOs relates to the efficacy of interventions that foster peace and development in the short-term as well as democratisation and social justice processes in the longer-term. Despite the considerable success that CSOs have achieved in strengthening peace-building in all its complexities, if CSOs interventions are not accompanied by mechanisms to protect human rights, meaningful social justice policies and political reform, then it is likely that their constituencies will become increasingly disillusioned with the promises inherent in the struggle for peace.

NOTES

- 1 A draft of this paper was presented at the International Conference on Peace Justice and Reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific Region, University of Queensland, 1st - 3rd April 2005.
- 2 John Keane considers civil society to be an ideal-typical category that both describes and envisages a complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected non-government institutions that tend to be non-violent, self-organising, self-reflexive and permanently in tension with each other and with the state institutions that frame, construct and enable their activities (Cited by Edwards 2004:20). Recognising that civil society encompasses a diversity of associational forms, many theorists have focused on the commonalities rather than differences between groups. For example Edwards (2004) suggests that civil society groups share a number of common features: membership is consensual rather than legal, exit is possible without loss of status or public rights or benefits and voluntaristic mechanisms are used to achieve objectives, and dialogue, bargaining or persuasion are used instead of enforced compliance by governments or market incentives by firms.
- 3 It can be argued that in spite of the considerable attention devoted to social capital remarkably little attention has been given to the transformative elements within civic social capital and government social capital and between civil social capital and economic capital.
- 4 While cooperatives are considered to part of the economic sphere of society, many of the values embraced by cooperative members emanate from POs and members of cooperatives may be active in alliances and other networks that straddle civil society and the market.
- 5 Civil society activists and academics working in civil society have sought to untangle some of strands that interlink NGO activity in the Philippines. According to Korten (1990, cited by Coronel-Ferrer 1997:19) NGOs are categorised as 1) public service contractors that are regarded as market-oriented non-profit businesses servicing donors and public services, 2) voluntary organisations, 3) people's organisations and 4) government/non-government organisations which are private entities created by government and/or non-government organisations to serve as instruments of government policies POs share many similarities with NGOs but there are important differences in terms of typology. POs are first-party organisations in that they act as a 'mutual benefit association in that the purpose of their existence is to advance the interests of members.' NGOs are private non-profit organisations with a third party orientation i.e. social legitimacy on the basis they exist to serve the need of third parties/ persons who are not themselves members of the organisation' (Coronel-Ferrer 1997:19-20).
- 6 MINCODE is comprised of ten participating networks representing various sectors, namely, cooperatives, social agencies, intermediary organisations and sectoral groups: Agri-Aqua Development Coalition, Association of Foundations, Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, Council of Organised Social Services Agencies in

Mindanao, Kahugpong sa Mindanaw, Mindanao Alliance of Self-Help Societies, Southern Philippines Educational Cooperative Center, Mindanao Congress of Development, Philippine Business for Social Progress, Partnership of Philippine Support Services Agencies, and the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas.

- 7 Coalitions included the Coalition for Peace, the Multi-Sectorial Peace Advocates, the Philippine Independence Peace Advocates, the Philippine Independence Peace Advocates, the Philippine Peace Consortium and the National Peace Conference.
- 8 On 19 December 2006, the Philippine government and the *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Mindanao* signed the 'Guidelines and Ground Rules for the Implementation and Monitoring of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities' and a 'Joint Resolution to Further Advance the Gains of the GRP-RPM-M Peace Process.'
- 9 Media reports identify the factions as the MNLF headed by Misuari, the MNLF-Committee of 15, the MNLF under Isnaji Alvarez, and MNLF-Islamic Command Council.
- 10 Chairman Nur Misuari's registration as a voter for the forthcoming May 2007 election heightened speculation concerning his political intentions when his lawyer, Arthur Lim, remarked that '... [his] detention pending trial should not bar him from exercising his right to vote or even to run for public office.' Quismundo, Tarra 'Misuari gets 1-day pass to register as voter' 24 November 2006 *Inquirer Express* [http://services.inquirer.net/express/06/11/25/html_output/xmlhtml/20061124-34594-xml.html][<http://www.luwaran.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=129>].
- 11 The overview of the MILF peace process has been compiled from many sources however Oquist's (2002) summary has been particularly helpful.
- 12 Military officers involved in the Oakwood Mutiny accused former National Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and former ISAFP chief Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus of masterminding the Davao and Sasa wharf bombings. Reyes denied the accusation and refused to resign. Corpus tendered his resignation, which President Arroyo accepted.
- 13 During 2004, the government continued to allege that the MILF provided shelter to foreign members of the Jemaah Islamiyah terror network blamed for the October 2002 Bali bombings. Pressure has been placed on the MILF to 'turn-over' persons identified by the Philippine government as Jemaah Islamiyah supporters. The MILF has refuted any official ties with the Jemaah Islamiyah.
- 14 Armed clashes left more than a dozen people dead in Shariff Aguak during February 2006. An attempted assassination attempt in Shariff Aguak on 23 June 2006 left five persons killed and 14 persons injured. This precipitated a serious of armed incidents in Mamasapano and Koloy in Shariff Aguak during late June 2006 that continued into the early weeks of July 2006. Unverified reports listed over 50

persons killed with significant losses incurred by government militias; four MILF members were killed and ten wounded, and at least 30,000 civilians directly affected by the ongoing conflict. Armed skirmishes between the 105th Base Command of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Force of the MILF and the 4th Infantry Battalion Bravo Company during October and November 2006 in the barangays of Kuloy and Tapikan, Shariff Aguak affected more than 50,000 civilians, with significant loss of livelihood and property damage/destruction recorded. Armed clashes between the military and MILF forces were reported in Midsayap, Cotabato province during 25-27 January 2007 with three militiamen and two soldiers killed, and more than 6000 persons displaced. Bombing incidents were also reported during 2006. On 10 October 2006, a bomb exploded in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat province injuring four persons and later that day, six persons were killed, and 32 wounded in a bombing in Makilala North Cotabato. The MILF refuted the government's allegation of MILF involvement, and protested the filing of a case in December 2006 of multiple murders and multiple frustrated murders against 23 MILF members as accomplices to the Makilala bombing. Also, bombings in early January 2007 in the cities of General Santos, Kidapawan and Cotabato left six people dead and 30 persons wounded. The MILF denied involvement.

- 15 Provisions concerning the implementation of the 1996 Peace Agreement will be reviewed during a tripartite meeting between the MNLF, the government, and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on 6-8 February 2007.
- 16 Any attempt to set up an inventory of CSOs working on peace or peace-related issues immediately encounters difficulties. This is attributed to: 1) the openness and fluidity in civil society formation and fragmentation, 2) the realisation that CSOs are not required to register with SEC (although the specifications and regulations pertaining to finance effectively ensures NGOs and many POs have done so), 3) the diverse range of services and assistance that CSOs may provide, and the areas covered, 4) the effectiveness of CSOs in fulfilling their objectives.
- 17 The Mindanao Peace Weavers is comprised of seven peace groups: Agong Peace Network, the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, the Mindanao Peace Advocates Conference, the Mindanao Peoples Caucus, the Mindanao Peoples Peace Movement, the Mindanao Solidarity Network, and Peace Advocates of Zamboanga.
- 18 Peace Weavers was conceived in recognition of the need for a joint-coordinated peace advocacy stance, initially calling for a Bilateral Ceasefire between the GRP and MILF. The supra-network was conceived during the 'Peace in MindaNOW Conference' held in May 2003. [<http://www.mindanaopeaceweavers.org>].
- 19 There are also interesting cases where communities have dealt with the violence resulting from local feuding by declaring their locality a zone of peace.
- 20 With some qualification, the process can be described as conforming to Habermas' idea of communicative action through which attempts to reach a mutual

understanding about a practical situation confronting disputing parties can be achieved through the elimination of constraints. This process of reaching mutual understanding is achieved through long-term, cooperative process that seeks to expand the possibilities for parties to determine, and live according to their own claims, or in the language of the Bangsamoro struggle, a just and lasting peace.

- 21 While CSOs have increasingly adopted the stance of the third party mediator, such an approach may result in contradictory stances. For example, a CSO may have achieved 'legitimacy' in terms of representation on behalf of their constituencies through advocacy, mediation and facilitation in conflict resolution and service provision, yet their perceived involvement as an active stakeholder in the peace process may undermine their 'neutrality' as third-party mediators.
- 22 The displacement and dispersion of previously cohesive communities also contribute to the loss of social capital, although it is important to note that certain types of social capital can be conducive to the building and reproduction of war-oriented and/or criminal economies. Associational life in many respects has contributed to conflict. For example, documentation on associational life in Rwanda has revealed discriminatory membership practices on the basis of ethnicity, contributing to community tensions (Colletta & Cullen 2002:297-299).
- 23 These types of programmes include the provision of financial assistance to war-affected communities and/or to ex-combatants in the form of small-scale livelihood projects, microlending programmes and health services including trauma healing.
- 24 The Office of the President for Peace Process and the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) will be the key government counterparts for MTF-RDP. The local counterparts are the BDA and the ARMM Regional Government.

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