RIDO

CLAN FEUDING
AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
IN MINDANAO

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Editor

Expanded Edition

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Introduction

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This volume presents several studies on feuding or clan conflict, popularly known in Mindanao as rido. This effort is the result of a coordinated research conducted by Mindanao-based civil society organizations and academic institutions with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and The Asia Foundation. The studies variously mapped the incidence of clan conflicts in Mindanao and conducted in-depth investigations into the root causes of the conflicts, the parties involved, the conditions for their escalation and recurrence, the relationship to other forms of conflict, and the potential for conflict resolution. The studies investigated the dynamics of clan conflict with the intention of informing and helping design strategic intervention to address such conflicts.

The studies in this volume deal with a type of violent conflict variously referred to as feuding, revenge killing, blood revenge, vendetta, intertribal warfare, and clan conflict. Characterized by sporadic outbursts of retaliatory violence between families and kinship groups as well as between communities, this phenomenon frequently occurs in areas where government or a central authority is weak and in areas where there is a perceived lack of justice and security. Feuding and revenge killing are common to many societies throughout human history. Depending on the period in history, this phenomenon has been documented in places such as the Balkans, Sicily, Corsica, the Caucasus region, the Middle East, and, in the remoter past, Scotland and the Appalachian region of the United States,[1] as well as in some Southeast Asian cultures.[2] While there are studies that distinguish between the concepts of feuding and revenge, in this volume, revenge killing and feuding are considered parts of the same continuum.[3]

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[1] See "Honour" Killings and Blood Feuds in www.gendercide.org

[2] The subject of feuding has often been subsumed under more dominant themes like maritime trading, slave-raiding and head hunting. Some authors have specifically cited the prevalence of feuding and inter-*suku* warfare among indigenous communities in Borneo (see King 1993, 83; Singh 2000, 37–38, 53–54). Torres has encountered a history of inter-island feuding in Semporna and Sulu (2006, 282-283). In addition, much like the genealogies of Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates, the Sejara Melayu (Malay Annals) mentions feuding among royal families in the Malay peninsula (Bastin 1970, 169).

[3] Ginat (1997) and Boehm (1984), for instance, distinguish revenge from a feud. Revenge (or blood revenge) refers to a single killing to avenge a murder, whereas a feud involves a chain of reciprocal murders between rival groups.

In the Philippines, feuding between families and clans are also prevalent. The Cordilleras in northern Luzon is famous for inter-village warfare and "revenge raids" caused by land and boundary disputes and competing economic interests such as sources of water or firewood.[4] Feuding also occurs among lowland Filipinos, a famous example of which was in the Ilocos in the early 1970s between the Crisologo and the Singson clans. Depending on the ethnic group and region, feuding and revenge are known by various terms, such as *pangayaw*, *magahat*, or *pagdumot* among some Lumad or indigenous groups in Mindanao, and *pagbanta*, *pagbunuh*, *mamauli*, *kasaop*, *pagbaos*, and *lido, ridu, or rido*[5] among some Moro groups. For the purpose of this book, the conflict under focus is referred to as rido, feuding, or clan conflict. Rido refers to a state of recurring hostilities between families and kinship groups characterized by a series of retaliatory acts of violence carried out to avenge a perceived affront or injustice.

Rido has wider implications for conflict in Mindanao primarily because of the tendency for rido to interact in unfortunate ways with separatist conflict and other forms of armed violence. There have been many armed confrontations involving insurgent groups and the military that were actually triggered by a local rido. Examples of such cases are illustrated in detail in this volume such as the feuds that escalated in Dapiawan (2004) and Linantangan (2005) in Maguindanao that eventually drew in the involvement of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs), and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). A more recent case that demonstrates the interconnectedness of feuds and large-scale conflicts is the Shariff Aguak incident in June 2006 that sparked a major armed confrontation between paramilitary forces under a political clan and some elements of the MILF.[6] Such hostilities underscore the potential of local feuds and third party actors to frustrate the peace process between the government and the MILF. Meanwhile, a contrasting incident occurred in January 2006 in the efforts of the MILF to mobilize their troops to protect civilians from a raging rido between warring families in Tubaran, Lanao del Sur.[7] Without a nuanced understanding of local conflict dynamics, such a commendable effort could have easily been misconstrued as an offensive.

[4] See Barton 1949; Dozier 1972; Rosaldo 1980; June Prill-Brett 1987; Toh Goda 1999; Junker 2000.

[5] Rido or ridu is a term used by the Meranao, Iranun, and Maguindanao to refer to clan conflict or violent retaliation. It must be noted that rido and the phenomenon of feuding is of pre-Islamic provenance.

[6] On June 23, 2006, a bomb exploded in Shariff Aguak allegedly intended for the Maguindanao Governor, killing seven members of his convoy. This incident sparked a major armed conflict that displaced thousands of families and endangered the peace process between the Government and the MILF. This incident became a litmus test for the Joint CCCH-IMT mechanism and civil society groups. To contain the violence, a buffer zone was jointly established by the GRP and the MILF (Bantay Ceasefire Report 2006).

[7] "Lanao Clan War Kills 10," *Philippine Daily Inquirer,* January 6, 2006, page A2.

Rido is only one aspect in the complex web of violence in Mindanao that includes Muslim separatism, communist insurgency, banditry, and endemic clan conflict. The interaction of these different conflicts has explosive consequences to the long-running separatist war in Mindanao.[8] Given this context, a deeper understanding of specific conflicts is crucial in disentangling the blurred lines of conflict and enable communities and the government to effectively address the problem.

The Mindanao Rido Study

THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT

The coordinated study on clan conflicts had its origins in late 2002 when The Asia Foundation supported a household conflict survey in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and adjacent areas on the citizens' perceptions of conflict.[9] The survey results showed that while the Muslim-Christian conflict in Mindanao dominates the attention of international and local media, clan conflicts are actually more pertinent in the daily lives of the people. Citizens are more concerned about the prevalence of clan conflict and its negative impact on their communities than the conflict between the State and rebel groups in Mindanao. These findings, verified in a more recent survey by the Social Weather Stations in the ARMM,[10] illustrate the complexity of conflicts in Mindanao and encouraged the Foundation to help address the problem. With the assistance of USAID, The Foundation spearheaded a set of diagnostic activities to help design strategic interventions that enable communities and government agencies to prevent the escalation of conflicts.

The coordinated study was done by engaging Mindanao experts in a series of meetings and group discussions that involved reviewing the existing studies on rido, clarifying concepts, and setting directions for research in the area. The discussions revolved around the following questions:

- what constitutes clan conflict and what are the existing formal and informal mechanisms that people use to resolve these;
- when does clan conflict occur and what kind of issues escalate into clan conflicts;
- how are young people socialized into attitudes about it;
- what are the variations of clan conflicts among different ethnic groups;
- how does clan conflict overlap with government and separatist conflict;

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[8] See Rood 2005, 4.

[9] The survey was conducted by TNS-TRENDS in partnership with the Office of the President, with support from The Asia Foundation and Hewlett Foundation. See Dayag-Laylo 2004.

[10] Social Weather Stations (2005, 2), slide 9–11.

+ to what extent are clan conflicts mistaken by government to be separatist conflict;

+ what can government and peace activists do to isolate these different kinds of conflict so effective interventions can be put in place?

The studies in this volume are descriptive studies that employed qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The data collection techniques used include key-informant and in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions, participant observation, surveys, and secondary data gathering. During the research period, the participating institutions conducted regular meetings among themselves to critique methodologies, discuss findings, and address problems. Methodologies and research questions underwent several iterations based on new data encountered in the field. Community meetings were also held to validate the preliminary research findings.

The sensitive nature of the topic was a challenge for the researchers who found themselves under suspicion by some locals. It took some time for the researchers to lay the groundwork and earn the trust of key informants and families involved in rido. As the data started to come in and make sense, the researchers realized that there is a real danger for the issue of rido to be misunderstood or taken out of context. There is the danger that the data gathered could be used by unscrupulous groups to reinforce the already negative stereotype of Mindanao and Muslims, or even utilized to manipulate situations and affect the peace process.[11] Because of this, extra care was taken in dealing with sensitive data and ensuring the fair treatment of issues related to clan conflicts. Sensitive and ethical issues were taken into account and discussed thoroughly with researchers and the local people, and measures were agreed upon to ensure the issues were adequately addressed. At the heart of this entire effort is the integrity of the researchers—their sincere and transparent engagement with the local people.

DISSEMINATION OF STUDY FINDINGS, INSIGHTS, AND REFLECTIONS

The results of the coordinated study were presented by the researchers in several forums including two major conferences in Davao and in Manila. *Newsbreak* magazine complemented the studies through several investigative articles on rido which also helped increase general awareness about the phenomenon.

The rido conference in Davao was especially important because it enabled Mindanao stakeholders to validate the findings of the studies, and confirm the prevalence and urgency of the problem. Several insights were generated during

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[11] There were also initial fears that the issue of rido will distract the peace process. However it was later proven that awareness of rido and its dynamics complements the peace process as there is now more nuanced understanding of conflicts which can easily be misconstrued as separatist violence.

the forum such as the importance of culture in understanding and addressing rido, the crucial roles played by traditional leaders and processes in resolution, the important role of women mediators, the potential of harnessing existing local initiatives to manage conflicts, the need for more nuanced reporting of conflicts by media, and the danger that rido poses to the peace process and future peace agreements.

The discussions further highlighted several important personal experiences and reflections on rido. Datu "Toto" Paglas, whose family was involved in a rido, gave a very emotional sharing on how he lost loved ones in a rido and how he was able to transcend his hatred for his enemies, which ended the cycle of violence. He tearfully said that: "I also thought of the pain others would feel in losing their loved ones, as I and my family felt (when we lost ours). I felt the pain that the families of those whom we would have hit back at, their wives and children especially, would feel. I decided to accept the truth, that vengeance is God's alone, that everything should be up to His Will."[12] In a similar soul-searching testimonial, Fr. Roberto Layson expressed very emphatically and very gently his feeling of inadequacy as a spiritual leader amid this urgent problem: "I am also a priest. Where did we go wrong? We preach Christianity; it means love. We preach Islam; it means peace. And yet there is violence among our faithful. Sometimes the violence is committed in the name of God. What is the role of the religious leaders? Are we credible? This is a very strong challenge to Islam and Christianity and probably it should also challenge the Lumad religions and spirituality."

Recognizing the importance of these studies, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) endorsed special briefings on the rido studies to the members of the Joint Government-MILF Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) and to three groups of the International Monitoring Team (IMT).[13] A briefing was also given before members of the House of Representatives. These forums were attended by representatives from the government, media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the academe, women's sector, people's organizations, traditional and religious leaders, embassy officials, local monitoring teams, members of the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG),[14] and various Mindanao stakeholders.

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[12] In "Taking Rido Seriously: Top Level Participatory Analysis of Clan Conflicts and Community Conflicts in Mindanao" (Unpublished conference proceedings, May 31 to June 1, 2005).

[13] The Joint CCCH is composed of a team from the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Together with the International Monitoring Team (IMT) headed by Malaysia with members from Brunei, Libya, and Japan, the Joint CCCH is tasked to monitor the ceasefire between the government and the MILF.

[14] AHJAG is a ceasefire mechanism mandated to go after criminal elements. The AHJAG and the MILF have been conducting joint operations that have successfully pursued kidnappers and recovered kidnap victims in Mindanao (see *MindaNews*, November 6, 2005; *Business World*, May 15, 2006; *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 6, 2006; *Updates on the GRP-MILF Peace Talks*, January 12, 2007).

Overview of Findings

The coordinated studies on rido documented a total of 1,266 rido cases that occurred between the 1930s to 2005, killing over 5,500 people and displacing thousands. Out of the total number of rido cases documented, 64 percent remain unresolved. The top four provinces with the highest number of rido incidence are Lanao del Sur (377), Maguindanao (218), Lanao del Norte (164), and Sulu (145). The rido incidents in these four provinces account for 71% of the total cases documented. The findings also show a steady rise in rido conflicts in the 11 provinces surveyed from the 1980s to 2004. Fifty percent (637 cases) of the total rido incidents recorded by the studies occurred in the last five years (2000–2004), which is about 127 new cases per year.

The actors involved in a rido vary, as the conflict can occur within kinship groups[15] or involve members coming from different kinship groups and ethnic groups.

Rido has caused so much untold suffering. Its effects are often subsumed under the larger separatist conflicts. Aside from numerous casualties, rido-related armed confrontations have caused the destruction of properties, crippled the local economy, displaced communities, and caused fear.

The causes of rido are contextually varied and may be further complicated by a society's sense and concept of honor and shame. While the triggers of the conflicts can range from petty offenses like theft and jesting to more serious crimes like homicide, the studies show that land disputes and political rivalries are the most common causes of rido. Factors that aggravate a rido include the formation of alliances by the principals with other families and armed groups, or the interaction of rido with state-level conflicts (i.e., the conflict between the Moro liberation fronts and the State) and other armed conflicts (i.e., banditry). The proliferation of firearms, lack of law enforcers and credible mediators in conflict prone areas, and an inefficient justice system all contribute to rido.

Key Concepts on Feuding and Revenge

KINSHIP, SELF-HELP, AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Feuding and revenge killing documented in other parts of the world are surprisingly similar to the endemic clan conflicts experienced in the Philippines.[16] Revenge killings and feuds are typical in small-scale societies where family and kinship ties are the main sources of authority and where there is a lack of effective state control and authority. In such societies where the state is weak,

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[15] Composed of nuclear and extended families.
[16] See Barton 1949; Dozier 1966; Prill-Brett 1987; Kiefer 1972; Rosaldo 1980; Hasluck 1954; Ginat 1997.

decision-making and enforcement become more decentralized and the provision of security is based mainly on self-help.[17] This means that in the absence of a strong state or central authority, the responsibility and the means for coercion are more widespread, such that governance and social control usually rests in the local population. Under such circumstances, the distribution of responsibility and capacity for the provision of security are more likely to be organized along the lines of kinship.

Classic ethnographies dealing with revenge recognize that kinship forms an important basis for social relations and that the bond of kinship is a significant factor in the provision of security and revenge. In his study on violence and law in Tausug society, Thomas Kiefer observes that the sanctions of kinship justify a greater range of everyday behavior for the Tausug that may cover a variety of political, economic, and military obligations (1972, 28). Roy Barton's pioneering work among the Kalinga and Ifugao shows the primacy of preserving family and kinship unity, and its importance in carrying out responsibilities such as providing support during times of crisis and revenge-taking (1949, 69; 1969, 8). The importance accorded to kinship unity may also translate on a wider community level. This is especially true with regard to maintaining the integrity and autonomy of more self-sufficient villages. In the Cordilleras, June Prill-Brett (1987, 14) observes that there is a marked solidarity among autonomous Bontok villages (*ili*), wherein each village member cooperates for the total welfare of the community. Strong community ties are especially apparent during times of conflict. A harm done to a village member is considered a threat to the security and autonomy of the village itself. On such occasions, the village is expected to retaliate to assert its strength and defensive capacity, and not lose the respect of other villages (Prill-Brett 1987, 15).

Elsewhere, village life and blood feuds in the Albanian highlands, eloquently captured in the earlier work of Margaret Hasluck (1954), provide us with some important insights into the relationship of family and communal solidarity, and revenge:

> The community sense was fostered by every art the mountaineers knew. Each member of a household was encouraged to regard everything in it and everything its other members said and did as his own. The humblest man was encouraged to regard his village or group of villages as his personal property. If home, village or group of villages prospered, he rejoiced as if he had himself been advanced. If they were insulted or injured, he burned to avenge a personal affront. If they were disgraced by misconduct on the part of another member, he felt his own honour to be smirched. The patriotism so bred was narrow,

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[17] See Philip Carl Salzman in Ginat 1997, vii–viii; Kiefer 1972, 53.

perhaps, but its emphasis on the need to keep the community's honour untarnished, a good deterrent from crime. (1954, 11)

These communities consisted in the narrower sense of the family, and in the wider sense of the tribe. If a person was injured, the family in most cases, and the tribe in a few cases, by the law of self-government punished the wrongdoer. Since the individual was almost completely submerged in his family, an injury to him was an injury to the whole family and might be punished by any of its members. When the tribal community was involved, the injury might again be avenged by any of its members. When the injury took the form of murder, vengeance generally took the Mosaic form of a life for a life, but sometimes was achieved by the exaction of blood money or the imposition of exile. (1954, 219)

This vivid description underscores the obligations of closely-knit groups in providing mutual self-help that covers various aspects of everyday living including revenge, which in the end, may be necessary for the survival of a community.

Joseph Ginat (1997), in a more refined explanation of mutual self-help as a collective cultural response, used the notion of "collective responsibility".[18] In his study of blood revenge among Bedouins and Arabs in Israel, Ginat explains that in a system of collective responsibility, "any act or omission by one individual reflects on the group as a whole in the sense that the group is responsible for, and must accept, the consequences of that act or omission" (1997, 2). This means that each member of a group may be held responsible for the actions of any one member, such that an injury inflicted on a member of a group would be considered an injury to the whole group, and thus creating conflict with the injured group. The basis of collective responsibility is the need to help each other in a hostile environment. As agricultural and pastoral societies collectively held territory, they also had shared interests and shared commitments such as security. According to Ginat, "collective responsibility" is the "defining thread that runs through blood revenge, family honor, mediation, and outcasting" (1997, 1–2).

Security based on collective responsibility is effective because, on the one hand, the possibility of retaliation from an individual's group serves as a deterrent for coming into conflict; and on the other hand, an individual knows that he is also responsible for the actions of his group members, such that he can also be a target for reprisal if his group member comes into conflict. Robert Bates (2001), in his discussion on the development of agrarian societies, supports this view. He explains that the numerous risks faced by agrarian societies from nature and from the conduct of other people resulted in the development of social

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[18] Barton's earlier works also proposed the ideas of collective responsibility and collective procedure in Ifugao legal system (1949, 71–72, 82; 1969, 7).

arrangements that not only allowed families to organize production, but also provide security and protection through the private provision of coercion. In such societies, the threat of retaliation from the private provision of coercion served as a deterrent that kept a fragile peace (Bates 2001, 46–47).

HONOR, SHAME, AND RECIPROCITY

The interplay of honor, shame, and reciprocity within the cultural context of a society may serve to regulate relations among its members, determine prestige and political influence, facilitate access to resources and economic distribution, reinforce social ties, and promote cohesion.

Julian Pitt-Rivers defines honor as the value of a person in his own eyes and also in the eyes of his society. "It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his right to pride" (Pitt-Rivers 1966, 21).[19] It must be noted, however, that the conception of honor varies across different social contexts (region, period, class, culture, etc.). For instance, honor as understood in European society is quite different in the Arab world. In France (and somewhat similarly in England), the concept of honor originated from the ideology of noble military service that later on became associated with the idea of noble race through reproductive and inheritance strategies in order to keep wealth intact (Nye 1998). Depending on different periods, honor in Spanish society was connected to lineage and social class and the notion of "pure blood" (Baroja 1966). In Arab society, Abhou-Zeid (1966, 256) differentiates the types of honor such as *sharaf* which can be accumulated or lost according to the man's behavior, and the *ird*, which is honor that only applies to female chastity and can only be lost and even affect the man's honor. Among some indigenous groups in the Philippines, concepts of honor locally known as *bansa* or *bantug* are recognized through a person's capacity to help others or, in the case of village headmen (datus), in the capacity to settle disputes. Among the Meranao, the *maratabat* approximates the concepts of honor, self-esteem, and prestige but is sometimes equated to lineage or social status in the community.[20]

Across many societies, when honor is challenged, it can be resolved through an appeal to some form of tribunal such as the court of public opinion, the monarch (sultan, datu), and other ordeals such as judicial combat (as in the French duel), which imply an appeal to God.[21] Physical violence is usually the ultimate vindication of honor especially when other means to settle disputes

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[19] Julian Pitt-Rivers discusses honor, social status, and shame in Western Europe and compares the range of this notion with modern Andalusian society (1966).

[20] The *maratabat* has a universe of meanings which can include honor, status, rank, self-esteem, dignity, pride, self-respect, etc. For a thorough discussion of *maratabat* please refer to the studies of Abdullah 1982, Bartolome 2001, and to the chapters of Matuan, Burton, and Doro in this volume.

[21] See Pitt-Rivers in Persistiany 1966.

fail. In Albania, the blood feud is considered the ultimate sanction in all cases where personal honor is concerned (Hasluck 1954, xii)[22] such that failure to seek redress for honor that is violated is severely criticized by society:

> Public opinion also spurred the avenger on. A man slow to kill his enemy was thought 'disgraced' and was described as 'low class' and 'bad'. Among the Highlanders he risked finding that other men had contemptuously come to sleep with his wife, his daughter could not marry into a 'good' family and his son must marry a 'bad' girl. (Hasluck 1954, 231–32)

While honor can sometimes be a driving factor in revenge, this same sense of honor also demands that vengeance is not taken indiscriminately. In many societies (like the communities in this study), revenge and blood feuds are governed by a multiplicity of rules. The Albanian blood feuds documented by Hasluck provide many examples of such conventions. For instance, it is considered dishonorable to kill and not tell, to steal from a victim, to hide a victim's body, and to violate the sanctity of the "pledged word" such as a truce (*bese*) (1954, 220). There are also practices governing house guests and women. House guests, for example, are considered under the protection of the host such that the host is obliged to avenge the guest when killed under one's protection, while killing women and persons who are physically frail, feeble-minded, or not capable of carrying arms is abhorred.[23] Curiously, other conventions exist concerning religious beliefs that demonstrate the persistence of customary laws despite the influence of Christianity and Islam. In some parts of Albania, an assailant is expected to face a dead man's body to the east if his victim is Christian and towards Mecca if the victim is Muslim (Hasluck 1954, 229).[24]

Complementing the concept of honor is the concept of shame. Ginat says that "just as honor is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society, so should shame be seen not only in how the individual feels but also in what people will say" (1997, 131). Shame involves sensitivity to the opinion

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[22] According to Hasluck, the Albanian blood feud has its roots in the customary laws of the mountaineers which evolved as part of the legal framework they devised for every aspect of their life (1954, 9). Administered by a ruling rank collectively known as elders, these customary laws are enshrined in the *kanun* of Lek Dukagjini (Code of Lek Dukagjini). The *kanun* contained methods for dealing with crimes against property and person, conventions that govern trespass, travel, the administration of oaths, the imposition of penalties and conventions that govern the blood-feud (Hasluck 1954, xii).

[23] Among the Kalinga, a host is similarly obligated to avenge the slaying or wounding of his guest (Barton 1949, 83).

[24] According to Hutton (1954, xv): "As a result of the Turkish conquest, several of the Albanian tribes changed from Christianity to Islam, and there are now many Muslim Albanians as well as both Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians. The Mirdite, who constitute the biggest tribe, were perhaps at one time Orthodox, and are now staunch Catholics. But their profession of faith seems to have affected but little the adherence of the Albanians to their ancient customs."

of others and includes a consciousness of public opinion and judgment (Pitt-Rivers 1966, 52). It is related to a person's status in the context of his community—being a source of standards, values and validation—and in a way, recreates volatile hierarchies of moral and social rank (Miller 1993, x, 134).

The significance of shame and its contextual embeddedness has been observed by Kiefer in his analysis of Tausug revenge patterns (*mamauli*). Kiefer points out that the basic element in shame is "the discrediting of the self in front of others"(1972, 68). He explains that in Tausug society where the values of bravery and masculinity are highly expected in adult males, an offense committed against a man that shames (*sipug*) him results in a reduced self-image. This situation creates a state of enmity and has potential for conflict as society expects the offended person to seek redress for the grievance so as to erase the shame and sustain his self-image as a brave man (Kiefer 1972, 53).

Meanwhile, the concept of reciprocity cuts across honor and shame, kinship ties, and collective responsibility. Reciprocity is an exchange relationship that can unite or divide persons and also serves as means of expression and manipulation of social relationships and social identity (Seymour-Smith 1986, 240). Gift exchange is an important expression of reciprocity and a serious business in honor-based or prestige-oriented societies. Among the Tausug, Kiefer observes that reciprocity is the essence of friendship and thus, reciprocal gift-giving through commodities, services, and sentiments is pervasive in Tausug social organization (1972, 65). He adds that a type of reciprocity called *buddi* (debt of gratitude) is usually created in a person who has received a great favor and consequently feels a strong moral obligation to do something in turn for his friend. These obligations to repay a debt of gratitude can be observed in the daily village life of the Tausug, but is especially emphasized during times of conflict when persons in an exchange relationship can aid each other in providing military assistance, assisting in taking revenge, and lending out weapons. Conversely, reciprocity can also be applied during a state of enmity. During such instances, revenge or *mamauli* can be seen as a negative form of reciprocity wherein men exchange hostile feelings that drive them apart instead of bringing them together (Kiefer 1972, 67).

However, it must be noted that while conceptions of honor, shame, and reciprocity are factors in conflict, these must not be reified or seen as dysfunctions in culture. During the public presentation of the rido study in the Davao conference, there was a lively discussion among the participants on the salience of *maratabat* as a major culprit in clan conflicts. While many affirmed *maratabat* as a factor for rido, others pointed out that a society's sense and concepts of honor, self-esteem, and dignity also ensure the integrity and survival of communities. In the end, it was agreed that there is a need for a deeper understanding of notions of honor such as the *maratabat*, and the need to harness its positive aspects or transform it in a positive way.

TURBULENT HISTORIES, TRANSITIONS,
AND NEGOTIATED MIXED SYSTEMS

The incidence and magnitude of internal conflicts (such as feuding) in a region may vary across different periods and changing political contexts. For instance, the effectiveness of a state to provide security and protection to its citizens and lessen dependence on security based on self-help may wax or wane depending on a variety of reasons (i.e., legitimacy of government, distance of the central government from conflict-affected regions, ethnic plurality, presence of a marginalized community, influence of neighboring states, insensitive policies, etc.). Below are some instances where turbulent histories and political transitions contribute to endemic conflicts.

The Balkan Peninsula is a natural bridge between Asia and Europe, and is considered a crossroad of different religions, cultures, and civilizations (Zagar 2000, 129). Because of this, the region experienced frequent wars, migrations, and displacements that have continually changed the ethnic composition of the population. The region's turbulent history coupled with successively weak central governments led communities to rely more on kinship for survival, and on the private provision of coercion for protection and social control.[25] This situation was similarly observed by Gerard Rixhon in a comparative study of feuding in Sulu and Corsica (Chapter 11 of this volume). According to Rixhon, the turbulent histories of Sulu and Corsica such as numerous military occupations and incursions from foreign powers and pirates, their (forced) inclusion into the territories of France and the Philippines, divisive politics, widespread corruption, inadequate justice system, and government neglect have led the citizens to resort to private forms of justice called vendetta or vengeance for the Corsicans, and *mamauli* for the Tausugs.

Transitioning polities and modernization also contribute to the increasing instances of internal conflicts.[26] The rise of dueling in France in the 16th century is said to be the result of internal conflicts caused by religious civil wars and the expansion of the monarchy's powers, while its recurrence in the 1800s was reported during general elections and political crisis (Nye 1998, 24, 185).[27] More recently, the collapse of the communist regime in Albania in 1991, and the weak quasi-democratic government that replaced it, is said to be the source of

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[25] This is observed in highlands of Albania where customary laws and the institution of the blood feud are more recognized by communities in governing their lives than the authority of colonizing governments (Hasluck 1954, 9, 219).

[26] An increasing number of studies show that governments in transition, whether toward democratic or authoritarian direction, are more prone to internal conflicts because of weakened institutions. See Kim Ninh 2003; Muscat 2002, 6; Anderson 1999, 9, 11; Zagar 2000, 129, 143–45.

[27] In France, the duel became a social phenomenon that in 20 years between 1589 and 1610, it is estimated that 10,000 deaths resulted from it (Nye 1998, 26).

the recent blood feud crisis in the country.[28] In the Philippines, there was a documented rise in intertribal feuding in the Cordilleras during the general unrest that followed the withdrawal of the Spanish and the imposition of American authority as well as during the end of the Japanese occupation (Jenista 1987, 13; Dozier 1972, 74).

Modernization, rapid change, and the encompassing forces of nationalism and globalization not only contribute to internal conflicts, but also affect changes in the economic structure and social organization of local communities. These in turn influence the nature and resolution of such conflicts. In Israel, education and economic opportunities are drawing rural tribal communities into the larger socioeconomic system.[29] As a result, state and tribal structures are influencing each other, resulting in a mixed system. For instance, while Israel does not recognize blood revenge as a sanction for homicide, an increasing number of government officials engage in mediation and are actively involved in traditional mechanisms like the *sulha* (peace settlement) committees to resolve blood disputes. Meanwhile, traditional mediators are also leading the resolution of blood disputes into state structures. These changes, plus the strong authority of the state, have undermined self-help as a means of social control. Hence, in Israel, it is foreseen that the resolution of blood disputes will increasingly utilize the legal apparatus of the state (Ginat 1997, 192).

Resolution of Rido Conflicts in the Philippines

The studies in this volume document several conflict-resolution bodies and mechanisms that address rido and other community-based conflicts (mechanisms which sometimes compete with each other). Such conflict-resolution bodies and mechanisms may utilize the more formal legal framework of government, or the various indigenous systems, or a combination of both systems in resolving conflicts.

The government framework generally involves cases that are passed on to the formal courts, the local chief executives, the *katarungang pambarangay* (barangay justice), the police, and, in some cases, the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The indigenous means of resolving rido usually involves elders and leaders of communities affected by conflicts who utilize local knowledge, beliefs, practices, and their network of personal ties to help repair or restore damaged relationships. Among the Meranao,[30] such local conflict-resolution mechanisms

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[28] It should be noted that from 1992 to 1996, the press in Tirana reported more than 5,000 murders linked to vendettas (see "Honour" Killings and Blood Feuds in www.gendercide.org).

[29] See Philip Carl Salzman in Ginat 1997, x.

[30] The words Meranao, Maranao, Maranaw used in this book refer to the same ethnic group just as the

include the *taritib-ago-igma* and the *kokoman a kambhatabata'a*.[31] Among the Menuvu, dialogues among the elders (i.e., timuay and datu) to settle conflicts are common, which eventually lead to *husay* (indemnity/settlement) and various peace covenants such as *dyandi* and *tampuda hu balagon*. The studies also mentioned several cases that involve the payment of "blood money" as indemnification for murder, accidental death, or even injuries. In the Middle East, this payment is called *diyya*[32] while among Philippine local groups, the term is variously known as *diat, kandiat, bangun, bangon*, etc.

Like many customary laws, the practice of giving "blood money" or similar indemnifications in reparation for crimes committed goes against the formal laws of the state. However, such practices should not be misinterpreted as a simple payment in isolation of more significant processes. Blood money can be seen as restoration money or settlement money which is only one aspect in the resolution and healing process—that may involve restoring relations within a community and a dialogue with the spirits or a Supreme Being. The practice of giving "blood money" should be understood beyond its material aspects and be viewed more for its symbolic and spiritual elements that facilitate forgiveness and healing.[33]

There are also a variety of innovative or hybrid mechanisms that combine the mainstream or formal government framework with the traditional ways of resolving conflicts. These include the Joint Ulama Municipal Peace and Order Council in Barira, Maguindanao; the Walay na Bitiara in Sultan Kudarat municipality in Maguindanao; and the Mayor's Council "tri-people" conflict resolution body in North Upi, Maguindanao. In Sulu, local government units have integrated traditional conflict-resolution processes and customary laws into municipal and provincial executive policies such as the Tausug Customary Law Ordinance. Government, religious, and traditional Moro leaders have also collaborated in resolving conflicts under the auspices of the Reconciliation and Unification Council of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The other conflict-resolution mechanisms documented include the various "spaces for peace" such as the Ginapaladtaka spaces for peace in Pikit, North Cotabato; the revolutionary courts patterned after the Shariah concept of justice in areas occupied by the MNLF and MILF; the mobilization of ceasefire-monitoring

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words Manobo and Menuvu, as well as the words Magindanaon, Maguindanaon, and Magindanao. The editor has retained the spellings used by the individual researchers.

[31] The *taritib-ago-igma* is an indigenous set of laws, while the *kokoman a kambhatabata'a* is a mode of conflict settlement based on kinship. Please see chapters of Matuan, Burton and Doro in this volume.

[32] In Ginat (1997, 15).

[33] This assertion is also based on the author's personal experience in Sulu and Semporna, wherein indemnifications are sometimes given even without the shedding of blood. For instance, a *diat* can also be given by a person who only assisted or rescued another person from harm. Part of the *diat* process is the communal sharing of food from one plate and the prayers. The entire process is said to diffuse tensions and facilitate the quicker healing of injuries (Torres 2006, 315).

mechanisms such as Local Monitoring Teams, Bantay Ceasefire, and the Joint Government-MILF-CCCH and IMTs which stood out in effectively responding to armed tensions between government and Moro liberation forces.

More recently, this author has personally observed interventions initiated by some youth organizations to facilitate the settlement of rido. The United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD) has successfully helped the settlement of a celebrated rido case in North Cotabato between the Mangansakans and the Tayuans clans. The group did this by conducting research about the conflict, consolidating and strengthening the council of elders of both clans, finding an acceptable mediator, and conducting consultations and information dissemination to grassroots members of both clans. This settlement culminated in a grand *kanduli* or thanksgiving celebration between the two clans. Another youth organization, the Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO Inc.) has been trying to resolve rido through the comprehensive documentation and analysis of genealogies (an account of relationships of descent) and the use of traditional governance and authority such as the sultanates of Marawi.

In general, the various community-based initiatives and the peace-building efforts of the broad network of civil society organizations in promoting dialogues among residents, armed groups, and feuding families have contributed a lot in defusing armed tensions. More successful examples are highlighted in the following chapters.

The Rido Studies in Brief

This volume is presented in two parts. The first part presents nine studies that investigate the dynamics of clan conflict or rido, covering twelve provinces of Mindanao: Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 provide us with a general idea on the prevalence of clan and family feuds across Mindanao. Three research institutions inventoried rido cases in eleven provinces. This inventory records the number of settled, unresolved, and recurring cases of rido, as well as the number of deaths, injured and jailed in relation to these feuds. The first chapter, written by Dr. Jamail Kamlian of the Mindanao State University (MSU)-Iligan Institute of Technology, surveys the incidents of feuding families and clans in nine provinces: Basilan, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and Zamboanga Sibugay. This survey is complemented in the next two chapters by the studies of Prof. Abhoud Syed Lingga in

Maguindanao, and Dr. Moctar Matuan in Lanao del Sur.[34] The three studies documented a total of 1,266 rido cases that killed over 5,500 people and displaced thousands.

The study of Prof. Abhoud Syed Lingga, of the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, looks into rido incidents that occurred in Maguindanao within a period of 35 years (1970–2004). It presents several cases of rido caused by elections, land conflicts, crimes against chastity, theft, jesting, and suspicion. The study also explains the different conflict-resolution bodies utilized by disputing parties, including the MILF conflict-resolution procedures. This study asserts that rido is a consequence of the absence of justice brought about by the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the justice system. This is further aggravated by the existence of competing justice systems that give contending parties the opportunity to "forum shop" or to look for a venue where a satisfactory result can be obtained.

The study of Dr. Moctar Matuan of MSU-Marawi shows the scope and magnitude of rido in the different municipalities of Lanao del Sur within a ten-year period (1994-2004). It also discusses the significance of the Meranao indigenous political organization (*pat a phangampongang ko ranao)*, indigenous laws (*taritib ago igma)*, and kinship system (*mbatabata'a or thothonganaya)* in the resolution of conflicts. This study asserts that no single case of rido has been resolved through the formal justice system in the province. All the rido settled went through the *igma* and *taritib* or the traditional way of the Meranao, which is influenced by Islam. In looking at the profile of assailants and victims, the study also discovered that those involved in rido are more educated and economically well-off.

Collaborative studies by leading academic institutions in Mindanao—Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Notre Dame University, Xavier University and Mindanao State University Marawi—are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The team from Ateneo de Zamboanga and Notre Dame University, headed by Dr. Ofelia Durante and Dr. Norma Gomez, investigates clan conflicts among the Tausug, Maguindanao, Maranao, Sama, and Yakan. The study confirms that most incidents of clan conflicts in the research areas are settled through traditional practices, mediation, and amicable settlement. The study also discusses in detail the conflict-resolution processes, the qualities of mediators, and the different strategies in settling clan conflicts.

The team from Xavier University and MSU Marawi, headed by Dr. Linda Burton and Dr. Moctar Matuan, compares the response to conflict situations of

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[34] It must be noted that three studies have different timelines. Dr. Kamlian's survey covered a 75-year period, while the studies of Prof. Lingga and Dr. Matuan covered a period of 35 and 10 years respectively. The different timelines is due to the varying objectives of the researchers. While a comprehensive accounting of rido is not possible, the studies' contribution is that it shows a reasonable estimate of clan conflict incidences in Mindanao.

the Meranao of Lanao del Sur and the Lumad from three different communities, namely the Matigsalug Manobo of San Fernando, Bukidnon; the Higaonon of Claveria, Misamis Oriental; and the Talaandig of Lantapan, Bukidnon. The study discusses how the different groups conceive of conflict, justice, honor, and pride. The study shows how the communities use traditional (customary laws) and non-traditional (formal law and courts) means to maintain social order and harmony. Specific conflict cases and instances of conflict management among the Meranao and Lumad are presented.

 The study of violent conflict involving families belonging to the Menuvu and Maguindanaon communities is highlighted in Chapter 6. Conducted by a team from the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, the study focuses on communities in North Cotabato and Bukidnon that were affected by war. The study asserts that the 1970s war in Mindanao, involving militias such as the ILAGA and Blackshirts, disrupted the harmony between the Menuvu and Maguindanaon communities. The study shows that up to this day, incursions by illegal loggers, political and business interests, vigilante and paramilitary groups continue to displace and marginalize both the Menuvu and Maguindanaon and deepen the prejudices between the two peoples.

 The studies in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 feature in-depth investigations of specific clan conflict cases. Monalinda Doro's study of rido among the Meranao of Baloi, Lanao del Norte, highlights six case studies of rido involving theft, "unfavored" love affair, heated argument, suspicion, envy, and election fraud. The case studies describe in detail the process of escalation of seemingly simple conflicts and the process of mediated settlement where the complementary role of men and women mediators is observed, and the role of the *bae a labi* (female counterpart of the datu) is highlighted. The study also discusses the different types of land conflict leading to rido and the different modes of settlement utilized.

 The study on *Big War, Small Wars* in Chapter 8 by Jose Jowel Canuday describes the explosive consequences of the interplay of community armed conflicts and large-scale armed conflicts which contribute to the recurring character of violence in the conflict-prone areas of Central Mindanao. The investigation presents five case studies of communities in Maguindanao and North Cotabato repeatedly affected by both large-scale and community armed conflicts. The cases include the Linantangan assault in January 2005, the Dapiawan encounters in August 2004, the armed confrontations in Gli-gli in 1989, and the contrasting cases of restraint and healing in Buliok in 2003 and in Lebpas in 1987. The study reveals the significant roles played by paramilitary forces supported by government troops and local militias aligned to the MILF in the outbreak and escalation of violence, as well as the equally important roles played by ceasefire monitors, civil society organizations, and the joint Government-MILF ceasefire committees in de-escalating such conflicts.

The study of the United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD) in Chapter 9 focuses on three case studies of feuding involving prominent families in Mindanao that at some point have threatened the peace of the local communities. The study looks into the rido of the Mangansakan and the Tayuan clans,[35] the Abas and the Sinsuat clans, and the Bagundang and the Manduyong clans. The cases illustrate how political rivalries and land disputes escalate into rido, and how such conflicts become complicated by the involvement of the military and local militias. The study also analyzes the different stages of rido, starting from the pre-rido or "cold war" stage to the transformational stage—where trust and confidence between conflicting parties are gradually restored. The study asserts the importance of identifying potential conflicts early on, and recognizing when a conflict has reached the "realization" period when the feuding families are more open to talks and settlement.

The concluding chapter of Part One features some of the insights of Dr. Samuel K. Tan on the rido studies, the peace process, and some thoughts toward a sustained peace in Mindanao. Drawing from history and trends in the region, Dr. Tan also explores the relationship of rido to indigenous folk traditions and pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, and warns of the dangers of how clan conflicts can be transformed with the emergence of advanced weaponry and strategies, and the assimilation of extreme ideologies.

The second part of this volume presents the actual work being done by civil society partners to mitigate rido that demonstrates the application into concrete interventions of the lessons learned from the rido study. The section is also enriched by the comparative studies and personal reflections on conflict which provide differing but important perspectives on the phenomenon of rido and its relationship to the various aspects of life in Mindanao.

The section starts with the study of Prof. Gerard Rixhon in Chapter 11, which is an exploration of Tausug and Corsican clan feuding. As discussed earlier, the study of Rixhon points to several internal and external factors that contribute to the incidence of feuding in Corsica and Sulu, significant of which are the turbulent histories experienced by both islands that eventually forced the locals to rely on private justice characterized by revenge killings. This essay is a valuable contribution to the literature on violence, revenge, and feuding.

The study of Alber Husin in Chapter 12 is based on his master's thesis which attempts to answer a question that has perplexed outsiders for a long time—a Mindanao society's fascination for firearms. In an introspective manner, Husin explores the symbolism of traditional and modern weaponry in Tausug society and how these define the meaning of violence in their worldview.

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[35] This is the rido for which UNYPAD subsequently assisted in a settlement, noted earlier.

Dr. Francisco Lara Jr. and Phil Champain in Chapter 13 discuss how horizontal and vertical armed challenges in Mindanao interact in ways that sustain an exclusionary political economy that only serves the interests of a few economic and political elites, thereby marginalizing the rest of the population from opportunities that can make improvements in their lives. The authors argue that the shifting balance of economic and political power within Bangsamoro society itself is also responsible for perpetuating the region's underdevelopment.

Chapters 14 and 15 highlight actual rido resolution efforts and presents some cases of rido engaged by action-oriented civil society partners. The essay of Hamidullah "Pogi" Atar deals with the dynamics of clan wars in Lanao and discusses some new approaches for conflict resolution such as the use of genealogies and clan organizing. He argues that rido prevention and resolution are inseparably linked to cultural values and relationships, which necessitates efforts to revive and cultivate these shared values in Maranao society.

The essay of Norma "Bing" Constantino discusses her experience in facilitating a resolution to the deadly feud between the Imam and the Macapeges families of Matanog in Maguindanao. The case shows the importance of an inclusive consultation process and demonstrates the spill-over effect of rido resolution efforts. It also highlights how invisible networks of women actors led to openings and made the reconciliation more sustainable. The mediation efforts eventually became a journey of self-discovery for the actors in the conflict, in the process of discovering "the other."

Chapter 15 by Haironesah Domado is a personal reflection of a Muslim woman with a mixed Maranao-Muslim and Christian-Ilocano parentage. She reveals the challenges of her mestizo status in Maranao society and how she constantly negotiates her identity amid the expectations of her family and society. In contemplating her own struggles, she realizes how this parallels with the struggles of her own family, and how all of this beautifully unveils insights about the intricate web of kinship, the liberating power of agency, and the potential of *maratabat* to be transformed into a positive force for change and reconciliation.

The concluding chapter of this volume looks back and examines all the efforts of the Foundation and its partners to increase attention to the problem and dynamics of rido. It brings together the experiences of local partners in conflict management and highlights important lessons and insights that could enhance conflict-resolution processes. This essay tells the story of the continuing journey of The Asia Foundation and its partners in evolving better responses to violent conflicts to prevent the loss of life. While successes are chronicled and metrics measured, the essay asserts that the many community-based varieties of peacemaking complement the broader political processes being pursued for peace and development in Mindanao. Structural causes of conflict are addressed at the local level by repairing community relationships, helping control local-

ized conflicts, preventing manipulation by outsiders, and reducing uncertainty. Community activity allows articulation of different perspectives, which can be crucial to lasting progress.

Prospects for the Future

Rido is a complex problem that requires a combined set of strategies for prevention and resolution. Drawing from the experiences of other countries, we see how the combination of socio-economic benefits, a reliable justice system, and the use of non-formal local mechanisms such as the *sulha* committees (composed of traditional and government mediators) curbed the incidence of blood disputes in Israel.[36] In Albania, a campaign was mounted to reconcile feuding families by setting up the Committee of Blood Reconciliation, which resolved 756 blood feuds in August 2000.[37] Elsewhere in Sabah, Malaysia, where a number of indigenous communities reside, the recognition of the Native Law (based on *adat* or customary laws) by the Malaysian Federal Government and the Sabah State, and its institutionalization through the Native Courts have empowered local communities to use indigenous means in resolving conflicts, thereby ensuring swift access to justice. [38]

In the Philippines, where there is a wide range of community-based peace initiatives and indigenous or alternative conflict-resolution mechanisms as well as more formal legal approaches, the challenge is to approach conflicts in a contextual manner and work with the local people on shared objectives, to harness and strengthen the assortment of existing conflict-resolution mechanisms and translate these into strategic interventions that will promote an enabling environment that will help communities and government address conflicts. Some strategies that can be pursued along this line include:

Recognizing, enhancing, and supporting the development of mixed or hybrid institutions or systems composed of formal and informal structures utilized by communities in managing and resolving conflicts. Mainstream or formal legal systems of government can be successful in resolving conflicts if they are accepted by the people. But sometimes, indigenous or traditional ways of resolving conflicts and hybrid mechanisms are practiced because the formal legal systems do not work or are not appropriate to the local context. As previously mentioned, hybridized or mixed systems combine the formal government framework with the traditional ways of resolving conflicts. Examples of these may include bodies composed of a combination of local government and

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[36] See Ginat 1997.
[37] See "Honour" Killings and Blood Feuds in www.gendercide.org.
[38] See the works of Phelan 1993; Kitingan 1993.

traditional leaders such as peace councils and council of elders, or practices that integrate formal and informal conflict resolution approaches like those devised by local governments in Maguindanao. Such mixed systems and institutions are local innovations that represent compromises with the formal systems and can be considered rules-in-use or working rules developed by communities through time as part of their adaptive strategies to cope with the challenges of daily living. Enhancing such institutions allows the formal and non-formal practices to draw strength from each other and strengthen the conflict-resolution process.[39] This is important especially if the state and its apparatuses are weak.

Building the capacities of recognized and potential leaders and mediators in managing conflicts. Leaders, whether traditional community leaders or formal government officials, have the important function of bridging societal divides, foremost of which is in conflict resolution and maintaining peace and order in their respective communities. Building their capacities to understand the nature of conflicts and a range of conflict-management techniques (i.e., conflict mapping, mediation, peace and conflict impact assessment, negotiation coaching, conflict research and documentation, as well as human rights and paralegal trainings) is important because these will complement and enhance existing local knowledge and skills, and provide stakeholders with a flexible "toolkit" for addressing conflicts depending on the situation and context. Knowledge of such techniques will increase the options available to communities when faced with conflict situations and, in the long run, help prevent abuses from armed elements.

Establishing networks of community-based, community-initiated conflict-monitoring and rapid-response mechanisms that will help in the resolution of ongoing rido and other communal conflicts, and prevent the interaction and escalation of smaller conflicts. Communities play a vital role as focal points for conflict management, peace-building, and transformation for various reasons already mentioned. Despite this, a more programmatic and holistic response to conflicts by stakeholders is lacking. Developing a network of community-based conflict-monitoring and rapid-response mechanism provides a framework where stakeholders can engage each other and work collaboratively to formulate and implement a multi-pronged approach to monitor, prevent, and respond to security issues in their respective communities. Similar mechanisms have already existed in the Philippine experience in various degrees of refine-

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[39] A similar method of hybridization was adopted by American colonial authorities in implementing new policies in the Cordilleras by successfully utilizing existing indigenous systems, an example of which is the practice of American administrators in using Ifugao customary laws in combination with the American legal system and in involving elders in assessing and settling disputes (see Jenista 1987, 119).

ment. Examples include the network of interlocking peace pact institutions that have controlled feuding and reinforced territorial boundaries among villages in the Cordilleras; the various peace zones and spaces for peace that have sprouted throughout the country, originally as a response to communist insurgency and government counter-insurgency; and more recently, the ceasefire monitoring mechanisms and buffer zones being implemented in Central Mindanao by the Joint GRP-MILF Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team, and civil society networks.[40] Some strategies that can further be adopted in developing such community-based mechanisms might include developing community protocols so that people will know what actions to take in case conflict occurs. In communities where kinship ties are strong, a comprehensive documentation of genealogies is a logical strategy so that in case conflict occurs, it is easier for locals to assess the lines of descent and find neutral relatives of conflicting parties that can act as mediators. Establishing mosque-based initiatives in addressing local conflicts can also be effective since mosques are important centers for welfare activities and the potential of religious leaders are largely untapped.[41] It must be noted that such networks and mechanisms are made into reality by communities, and reflect the genuine desire of the people aspiring for peace.

The Asia Foundation believes that forging a just and sustainable peace in Mindanao involves a thorough understanding of specific conflicts and creating spaces for the active engagement of all stakeholders to discuss issues, generate options, and come up with mutually agreed courses of action to address problems. The body of work presented in this volume is the product of sincere dialogue and engagement of the Foundation with its partners, the communities, and other stakeholders, and forms an indispensable basis for moving forward towards peace and development in Mindanao.

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[40] For a detailed discussion of peace pacts, see the works of Barton 1949, Dozier 1966 and 1972, Prill-Brett 1987, Scott 1982. On peace zones, please refer to Soliman Santos, Jr. 2005.

[41] The Asia Foundation's Bangladesh office, with support from USAID has successfully implemented mosque-based and imam-centered strategies in development through their Leaders Outreach Initiative Program which is worth replicating for addressing conflict-related issues.

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