Internally Displaced Peoples: Potential Spoilers for Peace?

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Abstract

Armed hostilities and conflicts have not only killed hundreds of thousands, but have also displaced millions of families and communities around the world, forcing them to move out of their homes and seek shelter somewhere else. Some have crossed borders and sought refuge in other countries (refugees). Internally displaced peoples (IDPs) are those victims of conflict who have remained within their own countries, suffering from constant displacements and numerous violations to their human rights. However, they are not mere helpless victims of conflict and displacement, but instead some of them are also heralded as heroes because of their active participation in and contributions to the peace process. Already viewed both as victims and heroes, this qualitative desk study looks at a third perspective to the IDP community: can they also be seen as potential spoilers to peace processes?

An analytical framework outlining some conditions to spoiling activities and behaviour has been developed in this study as a basis to facilitate research into this topic. The framework is then applied to a case study, chosen because of its community’s heterogeneity: the IDPs of Mindanao, also known as the Bakwit. Through consulting previous research and current relevant news reports on the Bakwit, their opinions and attitudes toward the conflict, their proposed solutions to ending the conflict, as well as, their role in the peace process in Mindanao are discussed in this study. With the application of the analytical framework on the case of the IDPs in Mindanao, this research has found out that because of their direct involvement in conflict, limited political participation, and limited socioeconomic inclusion, the Bakwit has the potential to spoiling activities and behaviour. Their exposure to majority of the conditions and characteristics that trigger spoiling behaviour could hinder them in participating in the peace building process. Thus, the analytical framework has also been used to conclude what governments and the international custodians can do to prevent IDPs from engaging in spoiling activities and to ensure that conflict resolution, negotiations, and peace building activities are more sustainable.

Keywords: internally displaced peoples (IDPs), spoiler, spoiling, Bakwit, Mindanao
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MARAMING SALAMAT!!! TACK SÅ MYCKET!!! THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!!!
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Armed Forces of the Philippines</td>
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<td>ARMM</td>
<td>Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao</td>
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<td>ASG</td>
<td>Abu Sayyaff Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIFF</td>
<td>Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRC</td>
<td>BALAY Rehabilitation Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRP</td>
<td>Government of the Republic of the Philippines/Philippine Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>Humanitarian Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDMC</td>
<td>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>IP</td>
<td>Indigenous People</td>
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<td>IPRA</td>
<td>Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>MILF</td>
<td>Moro Islamic Liberation Front</td>
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<td>MNLF</td>
<td>Moro National Liberation Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOA-AD</td>
<td>Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domains</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPC</td>
<td>Mindanao Peoples’ Caucus</td>
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<td>MRCP</td>
<td>Mindanao Resilient Communities Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDF</td>
<td>National Democratic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>New People’s Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>Norwegian Refugee Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>Organisation of Islamic Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>Civil Defense Patrols (Guatemala)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAMANA</td>
<td>Programme for Communities in Conflict-Affected Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPCPD</td>
<td>Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SZOPAD</td>
<td>Special Zone of Peace and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>The World Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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1. Introduction and research problem

The refugees’ situation – their humanitarian needs and the human rights abuses they encounter daily – are important issues to discuss in the developing world precisely because of their humanitarian aspects and the different socio-economic and political impacts of refugees on host communities and neighbouring countries. However, an equally important issue – the internally displaced peoples (IDPs), who experience similar inhumane conditions as refugees – is somehow overshadowed by the refugee discourse. IDPs are people who have been forced to move out of their homes and have left their normal way of living due to “armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters” (UN 2001, p.1). However, unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed any international borders, which mean that they are primarily the concern of their own national governments who usually lack appropriate and efficient policies that deal with IDPs, leading to gaps in assistance and service delivery (IDMC and NRC 2012, p.8).

There are currently 26.4 million IDPs in the whole world as a result of armed conflict, human rights violations and violence, as reported by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. IDPs comprise millions of faceless victims of internal and external conflict who have been living in protracted displacement conditions, experiencing “continued threats to their physical security and integrity, a lack of access to basic necessities and livelihoods, and violations of their rights relating to housing, land, and property” (Ibid).

While available literature has a strong focus on the victim perspective of IDPs, their needs assessments, and human rights concerns (UN 2001; UN 2009; NRC 2010; IDMC and NRC 2012), there is very little known about their impact on peace negotiations and implementations of peace agreements. Recently however, their participation in peace processes and agreements is becoming an increasing topic of discussion, with the rise of bottom-up approaches to peace and development initiatives and cooperation. The Brookings-Berns Project has been studying IDP participation in peace processes in different parts of the globe. In 2007, it had assessed case

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1 The UNHCR website, [http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html](http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html), and the journal series, Refugee Survey Quarterly, has numerous resources and articles on the state of refugee and how the UNHCR and other countries respond to their humanitarian needs through aid or hosting them as refugees, among others.
studies on IDPs in Colombia, Georgia, Sri Lanka and Sudan, which revealed that in all these cases, IDP participation had been significant in the peace processes (Brookings 2007). These studies have looked into varying IDP participation in peace processes, specifically, in Colombia, where IDPs have joined civil society groups to push for more gender-balanced IDP representation in negotiations; in Georgia, where self-organised IDP communities advocated and fought for durable solutions for their return and integration; in Sri Lanka, where IDP participation was still quite limited; and in Sudan, where IDPs have also worked with civil society groups to represent themselves in peace agreements (Brookings 2007; Mundt and Ferris 2008). Other studies on IDP participation in peace processes also include case studies in Azerbaijan (Johansson 2009) and Kosovo (Lacy 2004), where the focus was on voter registration and political participation in elections and in referenda concerning their return and resettlement, as well as proposals for conflict resolution; and the Philippines, where IDPs have peacefully pushed for the government and the rebel groups to resume peace talks, which also created ‘peace zones’ wherein rebel groups hold ceasefire, allowing IDPs to start rebuilding their lives (Anasaria and Berliner 2009; Canuday 2009).

These cases are all unique in themselves, with IDPs’ varying participation in the peace processes, and mostly as positive contributors or facilitators to the peace processes. However, in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, which had intensified in 1992-93, several members of the IDP community were considered spoilers to the peace, wherein a Georgian IDP group, headed by refugee leader Tamaz Nadareishvili, violently protested against negotiations and temporary integration proposals for IDPs (Coppieters 1999, p.16). These violent protests, coupled with unrealistic promises of return made to the IDP communities exacerbated the conflict and hindered the negotiation processes. These protests, however, led to several participatory and inclusive meetings between the IDP and civil society groups and the Georgian government to discuss integration strategies for the IDPs (Brookings 2007, p.25; p.64).

Based on these studies, IDPs, therefore, have had a role in peace processes and have not just been passive victims of conflict. This study wants to look into a third possible perspective of IDP communities, which is, whether they also have the potential to spoil peace processes.
1.1 Research objective and research questions

This study wishes to do an inquiry on the possibility of IDP involvement in spoiling activities. It wishes to investigate IDP participation in peace processes, not only as facilitators of peace, but also particularly as possibly contributing negatively to the peace process, or as spoilers to the peace processes. Building on the current discussions on IDPs and on spoilers, an analytical framework is developed to identify which different activities, conditions, and characteristics could pose as risks for IDPs to become involved in spoiler activities.

The analytical framework developed in this study will then be applied to the case of the IDPs of Mindanao, both singularly and collectively known as the Bakwit, chosen as this research’s case study because of their heterogeneity as a group of IDPs, comprising of tri-people populations of indigenous tribes, Muslim communities, and Christian settlers, and thus, potentially including several of the actors involved in the conflict in the Philippines. Like other IDPs in the world, the Bakwit have been seen as poor victims of forced displacement, constantly being deprived of their access to land, property, safety and security and experiencing violations to their human rights.

The Bakwit have also been celebrated to have influenced the peace agreements between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Republic of the Philippines, with their peaceful protests in 2003, resulting in different zones of peace\(^2\) in the region (Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.185; Canuday 2009; BALAY Rehabilitation Center 2011).

Since their triumph in making zones of peace in 2003, the Bakwit has become a social movement. It has been involved in community development initiatives from the grassroots level to rebuild and restore the lives of IDPs in affected areas in the Mindanao region (Canuday 2009). This study is interested at looking into the ‘Bakwit power’ (Canuday 2009) to influence peace processes – both positively and negatively – in the Mindanao conflict, in the South of the Philippines.

\(^2\) Peace zones are areas where ceasefire agreements are upheld by different conflicting camps, making it easier for IDPs to rebuild their lives.
Using the analytical framework developed in this study, this research wishes to investigate a third untapped perspective on the heterogeneous IDP community: whether the Bakwit has the potential to spoil peace processes.

Thus, the main specific research questions it wishes to answer are:

1. What are the Bakwit’s different opinions about and attitudes toward the conflict and their proposed solutions to the conflict?
2. What has been their role in the peace process in the Mindanao conflict so far?
3. Is there a risk for the Bakwit community to become spoilers to the peace processes?

Why there is a need to look at the Bakwit more closely is explained below.

**1.2 Significance of the Study**

In assessing actors in peace processes, it is important to look at them from different perspectives in order to know what they could contribute to conflict resolution and peace efforts. IDPs are not usually seen as active actors in peace processes but depicted as passive victims of forced displacement. Humanitarian organisations (IDMC, UNHCR, WFP and WB) have tapped widely into needs assessment research of IDPs to deal with the human rights abuses and violations that IDPs experience on a daily basis. Research has also already been done on IDPs’ participation in peace processes, wherein they are celebrated as positive contributors and heroes to peace processes (Brookings Institution; IDMC), being able to actively participate and involve themselves in peace building activities. An untapped perspective of the IDPs is their potential to spoiling peace processes, a perspective triggered by the mention of a spoiling activity by a Georgian IDP group in a Brookings Institution study on IDP involvement in peace processes which eventually led to more participatory meetings between the IDPs and the Georgian government (Brookings 2007, p.25; p.64). This one case poses the question on the potential of IDP communities to spoil peace processes and it would be interesting to raise an initial investigation on whether there can be such phenomenon of spoiling coming from IDP communities.

Because there is no available analytical framework on identifying spoiler activities and behaviour on IDPs, this study has taken upon itself to develop one. The development of an
analytical framework that identifies triggers for spoiling behaviour and activities in IDP communities is significant to the broadening of the discourse on IDP involvement in peace processes and also in understanding the importance of empowering IDPs, in their inclusion and participation in peace negotiations. An understanding of conditions and characteristics for spoiling behaviour and activities among IDP communities could assist local governments, non-government organisations, civil society groups, and international organisations and governments in dealing with and involving IDP communities in peace processes.

The analytical framework developed in this study will be applied to a case study to raise an initial investigation on IDP communities posing risks for spoiling behaviour and activities. Building on the Georgian IDP community’s noted display of spoiling behaviour (Brookings 2007, p.25; p.64), this study wants to investigate whether spoiling conditions and characteristics present in different conflict actors can also be found in other IDP communities. The IDPs of Mindanao, or the Bakwit, have been chosen as a lone case study for this research because of their heterogeneity as an IDP community, being composed of ‘tri-people’ populations of Lumad, Moros, and Christians, coming from different religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, potentially including conflict actors within its community. They are also used as a case study for spoiling behaviour and activities, because they have already been previously researched both as victims of displacement and as heroes of the peace process, and thus a third untapped perspective on the Bakwit as potential spoilers would be significant to look at closely for a more rounded view of this group of IDPs.

1.3 Methodological and Analytical Considerations of the Study

This study does not adopt any existing theoretical framework since there is none which could be adopted to assist in answering the research questions, specifically the question on the possibility of IDPs spoiling peace processes. As mentioned, this study, however, attempts to formulate its own analytical framework through analysing available literature on the concepts of IDPs, spoilers, and spoiling activities, bringing all these information together in a systematic way to formulate a framework that will hopefully help future researchers to evaluate possible spoiler behaviour in IDP communities.
This study only found one research mentioning a possibility of IDPs as spoilers (Brookings 2007), which means that the existing literature on general spoiling conditions and activities involving other actors to the conflict or non-IDP communities, such as rebel groups, refugees, and other activist groups, is instead consulted, organised, and used to create an analytical tool to find out whether the same conditions and activities pose as risks for IDPs. Information on the spoiling characteristics, conditions, and activities is gathered from different published books (Newman and Richmond 2006; Baranyi 2008; Darby and MacGinty 2003), journal articles on spoiling (Stedman 2000; Zahar 2003; Aggestam 2006) and different case studies on spoiling in Northern Ireland (MacGinty 2006), Guatemala (Hauge and Thoresen 2008), and Palestine (Scholey and Shikaki 2008), among others. Although this is not a comparative case study, a further look on the individual case on the IDPs who have disrupted negotiations in Georgia (Brookings 2007; Hansen 1999) is also analysed and discussed briefly as a starting point to analyse possible similarities to the Bakwit case in Mindanao, the main focus of this study. The conceptual and analytical framework will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

This study is a qualitative desk study, which uses case study as a strategy of inquiry. In this case, the IDPs of the Mindanao region, southern Philippines will be the focus. It also makes use of different texts from different international institutions (UNHCR, IDMC/NRC, WB/WFP, ADB) and relevant Philippine newspapers (Philippine Daily Inquirer, GMA News, ABSCBN News, MindaNews), organisations (BALAY Rehabilitation Center, UNHCR), and websites (UNHCR, IDMC, ADB, PDI, MB, GMA, MindaNews, BRC, BBC). A further explanation and justification of the methodology adopted in this study is discussed in Chapter 2.

1.4 Delimitations and Limitations

This research is delimited to the IDPs who have been displaced due to conflict and armed violence, and not as a result of any other factors, such as environmental disasters or economic crisis. IDPs in other regions of the Philippines are not included in this study. Other possible spoilers to the conflict in Mindanao are also disregarded in this study, as it focuses mainly on the Mindanao IDPs. A number of research material and case studies on spoilers are analysed to define spoiling conditions and characteristics, used in the analytical framework, to assess the
spoiler potential of the Bakwit. Because this study wishes to focus only on one case study, it is in no way representative of all IDP communities in the world but could be a starting point to develop and expand an analytical framework that could identify spoiling potential within IDP communities.

Due to the limited time and personal resources of the researcher, this study will be limited to a desk study where neither field visits nor physical contact with the case study area will be done. A further field study in the Mindanao region would be tremendously helpful to gather more information from the stakeholders involved, however, a desk study is considered appropriate and effective at the time being to encourage initial investigation on the issue of IDPs as potential spoilers. A qualitative desk study could also be beneficial for this research as it cannot influence the bias and objectivity of the research in a manner a field study does, in terms of personal “response biases” in interviews and “observer manipulation of events” in using participant observation on the field (Yin 2009, p.102). The lack of first-hand information from a field study will be complemented by consulting relevant and reliable regional (Mindanao) newspapers and civil society organisations websites (BALAY Rehabilitation Center). Canuday’s research on the Bakwit (2009) will also be used as a reference tool to get a more in-depth understanding of the primary stakeholders of this research. Other sources of information are discussed in Chapter 2.

Due to language limitations of the researcher, only documentations in English and Filipino are consulted and analysed in this study.

1.5 Disposition

Chapter 1: Introduction not only presents the research problem, research objective and research questions, but also discusses the significance of the study, as well as the methodological and analytical considerations of the study and the delimitations and limitations of the research. In the following chapter, it will go through a brief description of the qualitative research method adopted in this study and the use of a case study as a qualitative research method, as discussed in Chapter 2: Methodology. The different sources of information for this research will also be part of this methodology chapter, as well as the objective of using them, based on their relevance,
reliability, and validity. *Chapter 3: Conceptual and Analytical Framework*, will give a thorough explanation of the analytical framework developed in this research by first expanding on the concepts of IDPs in the world, their participation in peace processes, and spoilers in peace processes. An understanding of these concepts will also assist in grasping the analytical framework that outlines the ‘spoiling triggers’ or conditions and behaviour that characterise spoiling potential for IDPs, formulated specifically for this study, which is explained in detail in this chapter.

Then, a discussion of the background of the Mindanao conflict follows in *Chapter 4: Background*, to create a clearer backdrop on the reasons behind the conflict, who the actors are, and how the negotiations have developed throughout the peace processes. In *Chapter 5: Findings*, an in-depth description of the primary stakeholders of this research: the Bakwit, the IDPs of Mindanao, will be presented in this chapter, to better understand their diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. The first two research questions will be answered in Chapter 5, dealing with the Bakwit’s opinions and attitudes about the conflict and their proposed solutions to the conflict, as well as their role in the peace processes so far.

In *Chapter 6*, the *Analysis* part of the study, the third research question on whether the Bakwit has the potential to spoil peace processes, will be looked into using the analytical framework developed in this study. Finally, *Conclusions and Recommendations*, based on the research findings and analysis will be presented in *Chapter 7*. 
2. Methodology

This chapter explains the use of the qualitative approach used in this study. The different sources of information for this research, their relevance, reliability, and validity are also presented.

2.1 Qualitative research and case study

This study is a qualitative desk study research, and as such, it will “rely on text and image data” and “draw on diverse strategies of inquiry” (Creswell 2009, p.173). A qualitative case study allows the researcher to go more in-depth into the specific case, which involves looking at different perspectives of the stakeholders involved in this case study. The interest of this study lies in the “diversity of perception, [and] the multiple realities within which people live” (Stake 2008, p.133). In this case, the diversity of perceptions, opinions and realities of the Bakwit will be looked into through consulting previous research and current news reports on the said IDP community.

Case studies are often used to explore “a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (Creswell 2009, p.13). The specific strategy of inquiry used in this study is a case analysis of the IDP situation the in Mindanao region of the Philippines and their involvement in the peace processes from the beginning of their active involvement in 2002, with the rise of the “Bakwit Power” until mid-2012. Yin (2009, p.4) suggests that a case study research is relevant in having a more “extensive and ‘in-depth’” understanding of some social phenomena, which in this case is the involvement of the IDPs of Mindanao in peace processes. This particular case is chosen, because this group of IDPs have already been studied both as victims of conflict and natural disasters, especially in terms of needs assessment research for the particular group of IDPs (IDMC and NRC 2012; WFP and WB 2012), and as heroes to peace processes, in establishing peace zones and staging peaceful protests to plead the Philippine government and the rebels to resume peace talks (Canuday 2009; Anasarias and Berliner 2009). A third aspect of possible IDP behaviour, spoiling, is then an interesting and untapped area of scrutiny. Using the analytical framework developed in this study, the case of the IDPs of Mindanao will be analysed to determine whether they pose as a threat for spoiling activities and behaviour.
This research not only acts as an “exploratory phase” of investigating into, but also as a descriptive research (Yin 2009, p. 6-9) of different opinions and attitudes of the Bakwit on peace and their proposed solutions to the conflict, their role in the peace processes, and how they can potentially manifest spoiling behaviour.

However, due to the possible sensitivity and danger of identifying spoilers and spoiling behaviour among a community (Shepherd 2010), supporting texts, documents and evidence will be presented as fairly and as non-biased as possible, as advised by Yin when doing case study research (2009, p.14). Also, because this involves just a single case study of one group of IDPs, a representation of behaviour and characteristics of all IDPs in the world cannot be made just through this study, but on the other hand, it gives an opportunity to “expand and generalise theories” (Ibid, p.15), which in this particular research is the analytical framework formulated, specifically for this study, as presented in the Chapter 3.

In the formulating the analytical framework used in this study, several different research and case studies were consulted and studied to get a clearer concept on spoilers, as well as behaviour, characteristics and conditions that trigger spoiling. This analytical framework serves as a “blueprint” for this case study (Ibid, p.37) and assists in answering the research questions posed in this study.

2.2 Sources of information

Evidence or information for case study research can usually be derived from “documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (Yin 2009, p.99). Although all or a combination of these sources of information could be tapped to create a more comprehensive and exhaustive study, as a qualitative desk study, this research is limited to using documentation as the primary and only source of information. These documentation include “formal studies or evaluation of the same ‘case’” being studied; and “news clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newspapers” (Ibid, p.103).
Thus, formal data used in this study are mostly taken from the information database organised by Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), an international agency with IDPs as their primary focus of study. Information gathered by the IDMC is thus deemed relevant for this specific study on IDPs. Other international and trustworthy sources of information consulted in this study are the United Nations (UN); the Asian Development Bank (ADB); and the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank (WB). These international institutions work or have worked closely with IDPs, including the Bakwit, through projects and research targeting their humanitarian needs.

For purposes of objectivity and more balanced views on the debate on spoilers, as well as, IDPs in different situations, a variety of books (such as Newman and Richmond 2006; Baranyi 2008; Darby and MacGinty 2003), journal articles (such as Stedman 2000, Zahar 2006, Aggestam 2006); international and Filipino online newspapers (BBC; MindaNews; GMA News; Rappler); and different books written on conflict, peace processes, and the Mindanao conflict (Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005; Brown 2011; Rodriguez 2011), are consulted. Relevant websites of different civil society organisations working with the conflict, such as that of the Balay Rehabilitation Centre (BRC), the Mindanao Peoples’ Caucus (MPC), and Mindanao Resilient Communities Project (MRCP), are also consulted to gain a clearer visual of the IDPs and their situation in the Mindanao region. The use of triangulation is also utilised as a strategy to cross-check and verify different data and information found during the course of research, especially on the different use of the concepts of spoiling and spoilers, which was crucial in the development of the analytical framework used in this study (Chapter 3); as well as in verifying information on Bakwit activities and behaviour, to which different sources have been consulted. Because “triangulation helps to validate observations and information,” different references and sources used in this study have been compared against each other to find the most reliable and objective answers to the research questions (Mikkelsen 2005, p.70; p.96).

In answering the first and second research questions, primary data will be gathered from Canuday’s book on the Bakwit (2009), as well as other articles and documents written on the Bakwit and the displacement issue in Mindanao (Neumann 2010; WFP and WB 2011; IDMC and NRC 2011). Other additional articles on the different Bakwit groups, specifically the
Christians, the Lumad (ADB 2002), Moro (Santos 2005; Fianza 2004) are also consulted. In answering the final research question on the possibility of the IDPs of Mindanao as spoilers, the analytical framework developed in Chapter 3, as illustrated below, is used. A more detailed description of this framework is discussed in Chapter 3.

**SPOILING TRIGGERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential for Spoiling</th>
<th>Total pursuit for power</th>
<th>Direct involvement in the conflict</th>
<th>Limited or no political participation</th>
<th>Limited or no socioeconomic inclusion</th>
<th>Irreconcilable interests within the community</th>
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**Figure 1. Proposed analytical framework for identifying potential spoiling behaviour and characteristics in IDP communities, with a list of spoiling triggers on the left side as identifiers for spoiling potential.**

In collecting data for case studies, Yin suggests looking at documentation, which includes “formal studies or evaluations of the same ‘case’ [being studied]” and “news clippings and other articles [that appear] in the mass media or in community” (Yin 2001, p.103). He outlines the strengths and weaknesses of using documentation as a source evidence and information for case study research. Documentation seem to be the strongest source of information as they are “stable – can be reviewed repeatedly; unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study; exact – contains exact names, references, and details of an event; [and has] broad coverage – [includes a] long span of time, many events, and many settings” (Ibid, p.101-103). These strengths of using documentation confirm the relevance, reliability, and validity of the references used in this
research since information is derived from formal studies (Canuday 2009; Anasarias and Berliner 2009), articles (Bacani 2005; Fianza 2004; Kreuzer 2005; Brown 2011), and news derived from both international (BBC; Time) and Philippine organisations and mass media (MindaNews, ABS-CBN News, GMA News; Inquirer News), as described above.

On the downside, Yin also acknowledges the weaknesses of using documentation as a source of information for case study research, in terms of its “reliability – can be difficult to find; biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete; reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of author; [and] access – may be deliberately withheld” (Yin 2009, p.102). Biases were avoided as much as possible in this research, as this study is carefully presented with fairness and objectivity.
3. Conceptual and Analytical Framework

In order to understand the working background for the analytical framework developed in this study, a brief literature review on IDPs, their participation in peace processes, and the spoiler debate is presented below. After the presentation of these concepts, an analytical framework outlining conditions for spoiling and characteristics of spoilers follows.

3.1 IDPs in the Global Setting

Who are refugees? Who are IDPs? A clear distinction of the two groups is necessary in order to have a better grasp of the discussion. The United Nations and the international community have recognised the refugees in the 1951 UN Convention, following the hundreds of thousands of people who were forced to move due to the World War II. The UN Convention in 1951 and the 1967 Protocol define a refugee as:

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR 1951 & 1967, p.14).

Meanwhile, the United Nations’ Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, define internally displaced people as:

persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (UN 2001, p.1).

It is, however, good to point out that international, as opposed to internal, displacement due to natural disasters does not warrant the refugee status. The internally displaced people have similar experiences as the refugees – they were also forced to move because of unfavourable conditions that threaten their lives; the only difference is that they have not crossed any international borders, thus, they are not under to the UNHCR’s original mandate on refugees. It was only
since 2006 that the UNHCR have assumed a leading role in giving protection and assistance to IDPs in emergency situations. It still remains the responsibility of their national governments, as opposed to the international community, to look after them.

It is important to know the difference between a refugee and an internally displaced person (IDP) as this study only deals with those who have been displaced internally, who are, therefore, the responsibility of their own government. Being the responsibility of their national governments, effective and sustainable programs, assistance, policies and legislations concerning IDPs are the obligation of their national governments and in order for these to be sustainable and far-reaching, the involvement and participation of IDPs in the development of durable solutions and in peace processes and agreements must be recognised and promoted (Brookings 2007; 2008).

While international concern for refugees has been acknowledged since the end of the WWII, it has only been in the past two decades that concern for IDPs has been included in the international development rhetoric. IDPs, as a topic of discourse, are thus a relatively new and developing area for discussion, especially with the increases in natural disasters (such as floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes) and the ongoing conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa, Colombia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Afghanistan and Pakistan (IDMC and NRC 2012).

IDMC and NRC have reported 26.4 million IDPs in the world in 2011, with more than 3.5 million of these being newly displaced mainly due to the post-election violence in Côte d’Ivoire and Arab Spring uprisings (IDMC and NRC 2012, p.8). Colombia holds the record with the most number of IDPs, reaching up to 5.3 million (Ibid). Most IDPs live in protracted situations, which means “the process for finding durable solutions for IDPs is stalled, and/or IDPs are marginalised as a consequence of a lack of protection of their human rights” (Ibid, p.16). Most of these IDPs know no other form of living, as they have been born, raised, and died while in temporary shelters. It is not just the lack of security that the IDPs face, they are exposed to a range of risks that include threats to their integrity, a lack of access to basic necessities such as clean water, food, shelter, and health care, and to the livelihoods which would improve their standard of living. They also faced violations of their rights relating to housing, land and property, separation from family and
community members and violations of their civil and political rights (Ibid, p.19).

Because of these emerging needs, international organisations, such as the UNHCR, assist in helping IDPs through humanitarian intervention and support. The responsibility of ensuring security and protection for IDPs still lies in the hands of the national governments they belong to and because a majority of these IDP populations belong to developing or least-developed countries, this responsibility could be overtaken by other issues such as poverty and stable governance.

While the UNHCR does not have mandate over the IDPs, their expertise on displacement and the cluster approach is adopted in dealing with IDP situations and provide updates on the current situation of IDPs in different countries and regions around the world (UNHCR 2012a). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1998 (NRC), is the main information database for internal displacement around the world (IDMC website). They work in collaboration with the UNHCR to deal with IDP issues in the world.

3.2 IDPs and the peace process

IDPs are either depicted as countless victims of armed conflict or natural disasters, communities with needs for relief shelters, safety, security and human rights protection (UNHCR 2012b; IDMC and NRC 2012; WFP and WB 2011), or more recently, celebrated as heroes, such as the Bakwit of Mindanao in their triumph of establishing peace zones (Canuday 2009; Anasarias and Berliner 2009).

There is a strong and growing discussion on the protection and support of IDPs’ human rights since they are either deprived of their human rights or experience multiple human rights abuses in their IDP situations (UNHCR 2009; NRC 2010; IDMC and NRC 2012). Among these human rights is their right to political participation.

The Brookings-Berns Project’s assessment of case studies on IDPs in Colombia, Georgia, and Sudan reveal that in all these cases, IDP participation had been significant in the peace processes.
For example, in Colombia, IDPs “from different backgrounds, have had different experiences, and belong to different communities and organisations” worked together with a common goal for peace. This group of IDPs have set aside their differences and built on their common distrust against their government’s peace processes and have pushed their agenda on sustainable return and resettlement, participation of women in the negotiating table, and human rights’ reparations. Although the direct participation of Colombian IDPs in peace processes did not guarantee a direct correlation to achieving peace in their region, what the Brookings Project wanted to highlight was the IDPs’ willingness and active political participation, as opposed to being indifferent victims of conflict.

Georgia, experienced a similar situation, as it saw the rise of IDP and civil society activists, including women’s movements in the mid-1990s until the present. Georgian IDP communities have pushed for durable solutions to their return and reintegration, which led to more inclusive and participatory meetings between the government and the IDP and civil society members (Brookings 2007, p.60-64).

There has been an increasing push for the integration of IDPs in peace processes and agreements (Brookings Institution 2007; 2008; Steinberg 2007; Mundt and Ferris 2008; McHugh 2010) but also recognising the possible difficulties that the involvement of the IDPs may be problematic due to their lack of resources and skills needed to participate effectively in peace processes (Brookings 2007; 2008). In Azerbaijan (Johansson 2009) and Kosovo (Lacy 2004), IDP participation involved voter registration and participation in elections and in referenda concerning their return and resettlement, as well as conflict resolution. Because IDPs have the knowledge of their own situations and the local conditions, their participation and inclusion in peace processes assist policy makers in creating more sustainable solutions for peace in their region (Steinberg 2007).

Different actors and participants in peace processes can either be contributors or spoilers to peace. In order to understand conflict resolution and management, peace and development advocates, scholars and academics (such as Newman and Richmond 2006; Brookings Institution 2007; Shepherd 2010, among others) investigate the role of different actors in peace talks – those
who are facilitators for peace and those who also add on to the conflict by hindering peace processes, known as spoilers.

**3.3 The “spoiler” debate**

What does it mean to spoil a peace process? John Stedman defines spoilers as “leaders and parties who believe the emerging peace threatens their power, world view, and interests and who use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it” (Stedman 2000, p.178). According to Stedman, there are three types of spoilers, depending on their varying goals in the peace processes: limited, greedy, or total spoilers, with the total spoilers being the most difficult spoilers to deal with as they usually have non-negotiable “all or nothing terms” or demands in their pursuit of power (Stedman 2000, p.182-183). Stedman also believes that spoilers’ actions and activities are defined by given peace agreements to which they are acting in relation to.

Stedman’s spoiler definition has been widely used in the peace and conflict management discourse (Zahar 2003; Aggestam 2006; Pearlman 2009), with the spoiler management framework also used as an analytical framework in studying different conflict situations (in Algeria by Khatib 2006; in Egypt-Israel, the Dayton Agreement; the Lusaka Protocol, and in Russia and Chechenya by Hoffman 2009).

Most conflict analyses do not have a focus on IDPs, but other actors, as spoilers to the peace process: in Guatemala, former civil defence patrollers (PACs) involved themselves in violence and criminal activities after demobilisation (Hauge and Thoresen 2008); in Angola, the active involvement of church and civil society organisations have been questioned as potentially spoiling peace processes (Grobelaar 2003); also in terms of conflict resolutions and peace talks, custodians or the international community who act as mediators can also potentially lead to spoiler problems (Zahar 2006).

Although violence seems to be a determining factor acknowledged by Stedman in spoiling activities, Zahar (2003, p.116; 119) and MacGinty (2006) recognise that spoiling does not necessarily involve actual widespread violence, but instead can be both violent and nonviolent.
In addition, Aggestam (2006) and Zahar (2006) confirm Stedman’s condition for violence when it comes to spoiler behaviour, they point out that when it comes to spoiling activities, violence may occur when actors respond in relation to the unfavourable outcome or the process of negotiations – meaning they feel that they are disadvantaged in the negotiation processes.

Zahar also points out that third parties’ role and commitment in peace processes are important as it could do more harm than good, by encouraging the creation of spoilers if peace agreements do not ensure security of the different parties involved (2003, p.117; 122). Other researchers on spoilers (Aggestam 2006, p.35; Newman and Richmond 2006, p.15-16) agree with Zahar and stress the crucial role of third parties, especially the international community, in involving themselves in peace agreements and implementations, as this can create more vulnerable conditions for spoiling, depending on how the third parties’ sensitivity to the different actors’ needs in the peace talks.

In addition, Zahar (2003, p. 117) and Aggestam (2006) differentiate on the different reasons for spoiling for insiders and outsiders to the agreements – with insiders being able to voice out more of their demands in the agreements while the outsiders have a sense of insecurity on what would happen to them after the peace agreements. Zahar points out that spoiler goals are usually dynamic and involve a lot of costs and benefits (Ibid, p.120) which would-be spoilers consider before deciding to spoil peace. This is confirmed by Shepherd (2010) in analysing that “actors frequently change their demands, stance and loyalty, and processes are messy, risky and uncontrolled.”

With all the different discussions and case studies on spoilers and spoiling activities, Newman and Richmond conclude that the concept of spoiling is very much subjective depending on the point of view of the different actors in the peace process and that all of these actors are potential spoilers (2006, p.5). They furthermore stress that labelling a group of people as spoilers and activities as spoiling “may reflect subjective criteria of evaluation and ‘external’ rationality and power” (Ibid). It is thus, important to critically assess situations fairly and avoid labelling spoilers, but instead use the concept of spoiling to identify behaviour and conditions that pose threats to peace processes (Shepherd 2010).
Darby and MacGinty (2003, p.267) acknowledge the participation of all actors in peace processes because of the risk for potential spoiling: “the principle of ‘sufficient inclusion’ is that a peace process includes both all actors who represent a significant proportion of their community, and all actors who have the ability to destroy an agreement”. This confirms the Brookings Institution’s (2007) advocacy for the inclusion of IDPs in conflict resolution and peace agreements.

Blaydes and De Maio also recognise that “negotiations between only some of the potential parties to a conflict, is more likely to generate spoiler violence whereas a more inclusive peace process reduces incentives for the strategic use of spoiler violence” (2010, p.4). However, they also point out that the more actors there are in negotiation and bargaining agreements, the less probable it is to reach an agreement that would make all the actors happy (Ibid, p.5).

In a case study of former combatants in Guatemala, Hauge and Thoresen list three conditions that could influence the participation of former combatants in peace-building activities, as opposed to spoiling peace. These influential conditions are: 1) their embeddedness in the armed group and their bondage to society and community; 2) whether the demobilisation framework involves their socio-economic well-being and allow them to actively participate in the peace accord; and 3) whether the implementing institutions are consistent in assisting the former combatants’ political participation and socioeconomic development (Hauge and Thoresen 2008, p.212). Scholey and Shikaki (2008, p.277-281), in their review of the Palestinian disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) experience and spoiling activities, also recognise the importance of “political inclusion in, and the conduct of, peace processes, peacebuilding, and political reintegration as an aspect of DDR”, especially when it comes to Islamist groups. Both these case studies propose that conditions must be favourable to the actors in order for them to be more included and participating, as opposed to spoiling, in peace activities.

While Stedman (2000) wants to manage and minimise the threat of spoilers, especially total spoilers, Newman and Richmond go into an extreme by saying that spoiling can actually be beneficial to the peace process as “spoiling behaviour – at least from those within a peace
process – is normally designed to shape process rather than to end it, because disputants recognise the potential assets the process may offer” (Newman and Richmond, 2006, p.18). This means that spoiling activities can contribute to peace processes, especially when the demands may benefit a large part of the community.

Newman and Richmond (2006, p.4) also recognise that spoiling may come from those who are “geographically external to the conflict but who support internal spoilers and spoiling tactics: ethnic or national diaspora groups, states, political allies, multinational corporations, or any others who might benefit from violent conflict or holding out.” Demmers (2002, p. 86) outlines the reasons for the increase political significance of diasporas in contemporary conflicts. These are: “(1) the rise of a new pattern of conflict; (2) the rapid rise of war refugees; (3) the increased speed of communication and mobility; and (4) the increased production of cultural and political boundaries.” Diasporas in international conflict have also been looked into if they have the potential to either be “peace makers, peace wreckers or neither”, without any conclusive and generalisation on who and what circumstances diasporas can become positive or negative contributors to peace because of their heterogeneity (Smith and Stares 2007, p.9-12).

3.4 The analytical framework

Based on the above analysis of the existing literature on spoilers, the following conditions and characteristics can be inferred as triggers to spoiling behaviour and spoiling activities among different actors in a peace agreement. After each trigger follows a question or a set of questions which will be used to test the Bakwit case in Mindanao.

1. **Pursuit for power is total:** When pursuit of power is total, actors have a non-negotiable approach to peace agreements, which would not lead to any agreements that would benefit everyone but those who want to pursue total control and power. Zartman’s (1997) defines power as “action by one party intended to produce movement by another”. When

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3 Zartman adds that in this sense, “power is defined neither as a component (resources) nor as a result (cause) but, in between the two, as a purposeful action, leaving the analysts' hands free to study the relationship of power with both its components and its results.” (Zartman 1997) This will be the point of analysis of the Bakwit power.
the pursuit for power is total, the spoiler wants to achieve a “radical transformation of the society” (Stedman 2000, p.183). In this case, actors want to impose their non-negotiable demands and radical ideologies to the peace talks, which could result to more conflict. Zahar (2003, p.116) adds that “total spoilers are willing to incur higher risks and bear heavier costs than most in pursuit of their objectives.”

When actors come with non-negotiable terms to a peace agreement, then opportunities for dialogues are not present, thus spoiling the peace processes. In assessing the involvement of the Bakwit in peace processes as potential spoilers, this study wants to test: Do the Bakwit have a total pursuit for power? Do they have non-negotiable demands and ideas concerning the transformation of their society that they bring in to peace talks, which could worsen the conflict situation?

2. **Direct involvement in conflict**: When actors are directly and strongly involved in the conflict because of their societal, institutional, and cultural relationships, it is difficult for them to move on into more peace building activities (Hauge and Thoresen 2008).

In Guatemala, up to 1.3 million men, mostly poor indigenous peasants, aged 15 to 60 were recruited, mostly forced and some voluntary, by the Garcia government in 1981 to be members of organised civil defence patrols (PACs) to provide “cover for the army during military actions, detaining and interrogating men and women who entered their communities, and informing the army of developments in their region” (Hauge and Thoresen 2008, p.215). This was at the height of the armed conflict in Guatemala and although many did not commit human rights violations, those who committed atrocities were either those who had strong ties to the army or were military commissioners. In 1994, President Carpio dissolved the PACs and demobilisation started two years later, which was deemed a failure as ex-PAC members engaged themselves in crime and violence – “This means that, in both political and security terms, the civil defence patrols have become spoilers in the peacebuilding process” (Ibid, p.228; p.230). After their demobilisation, the ex-PACs carried on with them the power given to them during the time of the Guatemalan armed conflict, making it difficult for them to separate
themselves from acts of crime and violence. Being PACs became a normal part of their lives, as they also remained in their villages and homes during the war while being patrollers (Ibid, p.216).

Through the Guatemalan experience⁴, it can be derived that one of the problems that can hinder actors from participating in peacebuilding activities is their direct involvement in the conflict. In assessing the Mindanao experience, in terms of IDPs as actors to be involved in peacebuilding activities, it is necessary to ask if the same conditions of direct involvement to the conflict is true for them: Do the Bakwit have a direct involvement in the conflict in Mindanao which could hinder them to participate in peace building activities?

3. **Limitation or exclusion from political participation during the peace process:** When actors are not included in peace talks and negotiations, they are not able to voice out their opinions and needs during peace talks, disadvantaging them from influencing the outcomes of the peace agreements (Zahar 2006). In writing about lasting peace agreements, Darby and MacGinty explain, “the principle of ‘sufficient inclusion’ is that a peace process includes both all actors who represent a significant proportion of their community, and all actors who have the ability to destroy an argument” (2003, p.266-7). Baranyi (2008, p.28) also acknowledges this participation and inclusion of “a broader range of stakeholders, including leaders of the poor, women, or ethnic groups” as it would contribute to a more sustainable peace if their political, socioeconomic and cultural demands are considered and not overlooked.

As there are different actors in a conflict, they also would have different voices and opinions about peace and conflict resolution. Their participation in the peace processes also determines their participation in peace building activities. For instance, in Guatemala, the 1.3 million ex-PACs were neglected and not properly represented in the

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⁴ Another armed group in Guatemala, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), was used in this case study by Hauge and Thoreson (2008). Compared to the civil defence patrols (PACs), the URNG was a rebel group and after their demobilisation, reintegrated quite successfully back into society, with social and political participation. One of the problems with ex-PACs reintegration was a monetary compensation promise to them which never materialised, which led to frustration by most of the ex-PACs who also refused to go back to work.
peace talks (Hauge and Thoresen 2008, p.233), which have led to their non-participatory attitudes toward the reintegration processes as well. The same is true in Sri Lanka, where six rounds of peace talks specifically targeting IDP issues have failed, due in part to the lack of, or no political representation of the Sri Lankan IDPs (Brookings 2007, p.65-67).

In addition to a limited or exclusive political participation, some intrusive and top-down third party or international role in the peace process and implementation of peace agreements excludes and disregards the participation of parties in the peace process. Darby and MacGinty (2006, p.4) recognise this in saying that some peace processes “reflect the desired outcome of key states in the international community rather than the wishes of local communities”. In a one day seminar on spoilers, Shepherd (2010) notes that the international community, who acts as custodians in peace processes, is “inevitably political” and may be biased in terms of acting as the arbiters for negotiations.

Putting these together, the role of the international community or third party to peace processes can highly disadvantage the local actors who are involved in the conflict – and thus who have the right to participate in conflict resolution and peace building efforts – through politically biased and intrusive third party intervention to peace efforts. This exclusion of stakeholders can create tensions among those whose wishes and demands are not regarded and encourage spoiling behaviour among them. With these in mind, it would be interesting to find out if these apply to the situation in Mindanao: Do the Bakwit have a say on peace processes and if so, is it regarded without bias by the international community? Is the Bakwit’s political participation limited, excluded, or included in peace agreements?

4. **Limited or no socioeconomic inclusion in the peace building process:** When actors do not feel secure about their future and cannot participate in activities that could improve their socioeconomic wellbeing, they feel distrust in the government’s peace building activities, which could lead them to resort to conflict situations. This includes possession of land and property that is crucial for rebuilding their lives after conflict.
Darby and MacGinty state that the “failure to meet the economic needs of post-war populations is linked to a further problem associated with peace processes: their failure to fulfil public expectations”, which exacerbates communities’ distrust and doubts on the government and peace building initiatives (2003, p.5). This distrust and suspicion can trigger spoiling behaviour to peace building initiatives as the actors feel insecure about their future. Similar to political participation, socioeconomic participation is also crucial in peace building for those involved in conflict. If rebuilding and reintegration initiatives do not involve activities that would enable stakeholders to enrich their lives through work and recreational activities, then there can be a tendency for falling back into conflict situations. Baranyi (2008, p.29) confirms this by stating that “economic and social policies/programs in post war settings still fall short of yielding outcomes necessary to sustain peace and to prevent the recurrence of conflict.”

In analysing the Bakwit community, it is important to know whether they are exposed to this socio-economic insecurity, which could potentially lead to spoiling behaviour among the IDP community: Is the Bakwit socially and economically secure, wherein they can participate in activities that can improve their socioeconomic well-being? Do the Bakwit have safe access to possession or repossession of their land and property?

5. **Incompatible interests within the group:** The level of cohesion of a group of actors in a peace process must be quite high, meaning there is unity among its members’ ideas and world views regarding the peace processes, if the aim is to avoid conflict within the group or worsening any existing conflicts. In negotiations and peace talks, every actor puts in their demands and wishes to the table. However, in most instances, not all of these demands are addressed and “when expected gains do not become a reality, or when gains from a return to conflict supersede the benefits derived from peace, insiders are likely to attempt to spoil the agreement” (Zahar 2006, p.45). Blaydes and De Maio (2010, p.5) recognise that the more actors there are in negotiations and bargaining agreements, the less probable it is to reach an agreement that would make all the actors happy. This implies that the involvement of all actors – usually coming from different backgrounds and experiences – in peace agreements, because of a diversity and incompatibility of their
interests and views, some groups or communities have the potential to spoil peace processes as they feel that peace agreements do not cater equally and fairly to these differences.

Making everyone happy is a challenge in negotiations and peace agreements and can potentially create spoilers, especially if demands do not address all the actors’ needs, demands, and wishes. An incompatibility of these demands and interests, as a result of a group’s heterogeneity and diversity, increases the risk of spoilers, as their demands are not met. The Bakwit community is already multicultural in itself, and therefore, it is important to investigate if this diversity could pose as a threat to them becoming spoilers to peace agreements as their world-views and interests are addressed. Do the Bakwit have irreconcilable demands and interests within their community which concern the peace processes?

With Newman and Richmond (2006, p.5) confirming that all actors have the potential to become spoilers, these characteristics and conditions for spoiling will be tested against a case study, in this research, the IDPs of Mindanao or collectively known as Bakwit. Using the questions outlined above, each condition will be tested against the conditions of the Bakwit, to find out if they can be potential spoilers in the peace processes in Mindanao. This study does not claim that this is a comprehensive list of conditions or characteristics that trigger spoiling behaviour as this list may still be expanded and broadened further. However, based on available literature analysis on spoiling threats, conditions, and characteristics, the list is sufficient for this study as an initial working list of triggers that can potentially influence spoiling behaviour within IDP communities. This study also neither claims that these conditions and characteristics are total nor the be-all and end-all identifier of spoilers among actors in a conflict, in this study – IDP communities, since the presence of either one or all conditions among a community does not necessarily make a community spoilers, but rather a community that exhibits or manifests these conditions or characteristics, and has the potential to be spoilers.
The answers to the trigger questions will determine whether the Bakwit community of Mindanao have displayed or are at the risk to become spoilers to the peace processes in the conflict. This analysis will be presented in Chapter 6.

The diagram below simplifies the analytical framework. This diagram will be used in the analytical chapter (Chapter 6) to summarise the findings of whether the Bakwit community have the potential to be spoilers based on the conditions and characteristics that trigger spoiling behaviour and activities.

**SPOILING TRIGGERS**

- Total pursuit for power
- Direct involvement in the conflict
- Limited or no political participation
- Limited or no socioeconomic inclusion
- Irreconcilable interests within the community

Figure 1. Proposed analytical framework for identifying potential spoiling behaviour and characteristics in IDP communities, with a list of spoiling triggers on the left side as identifiers for spoiling potential.
4. Background of the Mindanao Conflict

This chapter gives a background on the complexity of the Mindanao conflict – what it is about, who the actors are, and how the peace process has developed throughout time.

![Figure 2. The Philippine Map highlighting the location of the Mindanao region. Image from IDMC-NRC Global IDP Overview, 2011.](image)

4.1 What is the conflict about?

The Mindanao conflict in the Philippines has its historical roots in the colonial era starting in the 1500s, making it one of the longest standing conflicts in the world. For more than 300 years, the Spanish colonisers have managed to Christianise most of the northern islands but were not successful with the southern islands of Mindanao, due to the local people’s resistance and strong desire to maintain their religious roots in either pagan or Muslim practices. The Spanish used the derogatory term Moro\(^5\) to classify the Muslims in the Mindanao islands as lower class citizens compared to the Christians. In 1898, the Philippines was declared independent from the Spanish.

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\(^5\) The term Moro was in reference to the Moors of Al-Andalusia in Spain. This is no longer considered as a derogatory name. The Muslims have embraced the Moro name as their identity of being proud Muslims.
colonial rule but was conveniently ruled by another group of foreigners, the Americans, until the Japanese invasion in World War II (WWII). During American rule, claim was also taken over the islands the Spanish failed to Christianise, implementing their own policies among the Muslim and Lumad (indigenous) populated islands. Christian migrants began to settle in the lands of both Moros and Lumad, without respect for their ancestral land rights, and eventually dominated the population. This is one of the main issues contested in peace agreements – claim over land rights for indigenous people and the Moro, which most of the settlers, mostly Christian businessmen and politicians, claim over (Fianza 2004; Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005; Tuminez 2007).

The religious differences in Mindanao can be easily mistaken as the root of the conflict, however, there have been studies confirming that this conflict is more related to religious and ethnic identity, coupled with socio-economic and political inequality, rather than simply religious differences in the region. The Muslim population’s exclusion from political decisions and their economic marginalisation had mobilised them to create the Bangsamoro⁶ identity (Schilling 2011; Fianza 2004; Stewart 2009). Naturally, because they were never part of the Spanish colony, the Muslims do not identify themselves as ‘Filipino’ as the term denotes both the Spanish and American colonial rule over the country⁷. This issue of identity of being separate from the Filipino (Fianza 2004) had been described as one of the reasons for the Bangsamoro’s quest for “self-determination”, formerly self-autonomy, from the rest of the Philippines, thus the Muslim population’s pursuit for the autonomy-sovereignty over the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)⁸ which was established in 1990 (Zartman 2011; Santos 2011a, p.66-68).

Violence in the region rose in the 1970s, with the establishment of several armed groups: the Communist Party of the Philippines’ (CPP) military wing, the National People’s Army (NPA); and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which eventually broke into separate entities: the Moro National Liberation Front (MILF), the Abu Sayyaf (ASG), and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)⁹. While the MNLF and MILF troops have been fighting for

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⁶ Bangsamoro means ‘a nation of Muslims’
⁷ The archipelago was named after King Phillip II of Spain, thus the name, ‘Las Islas Filipinas’ or ‘The Philippines’
⁸ ARMM is comprised of the provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Lanao del Sur, and Maguindanao.
⁹ ASG and BIFF were not formed until 1991 and 2010, respectively.
autonomy, sovereignty, and land rights, the NPA have been fighting for communist ideals, being described as “fueled not by foreign ideology but by domestic realities [of] poverty, corruption, unemployment” (Marshall 2007). The Philippine Government has been controlling the actions of the armed communists and the Moro rebel groups through the local police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), but they have contributed to the conflict to the region as well, with their reported killings of civilians, among other human rights abuses (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.46).

Economically, Mindanao suffers from high rates of poverty, with a poverty incidence rate of 38.8%, compared to the national average of 26.9%. This poverty and social inequality in the region is attributed to different factors ranging from increased prices of commodities, natural disasters, the on-going conflict, and lack of infrastructure (ABS-CBN News 2008). The reality of poverty in the region has been recognised as consistent even during more peaceful times (Canuday 2009, p.128) and has been considered as one of the causes of frustration and relative deprivation in Mindanao, together with lack of infrastructure, unemployment, insecurity of peace, and health problems, with the lack of access to water as being considered a major cause of conflict (Edillon 2005).

Because of the protracted nature of the conflict, the reasons behind the conflict have evolved through time. In addition to the already complex conflict, in contemporary times, conflict can also be attributed to the different economic and political interests among its multicultural population: a Christian business-minded majority has diverse economic interests; Muslim clans use violence to protect their hold over local government offices (Kreuzer 2005; Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005, p.1-2; Neumann 2010, p.65).

The Philippine Government can be blamed for the protracted conflict in the region (Neumann 2010, p.66-69; Brown 2011). The poor management of the conflict and inconsistency of policies have prolonged the peace processes, which also have hindered the Mindanao region to

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10 Some of these economic interests involve exploitation of natural resources, such as logging and mining, and clearing of ancestral lands for development projects.

11 The recent violent clan wars related incident happened in 2009 with the Maguindanao Massacre, where members of the Moro Ampatuan clan allegedly led a motorcade of journalists and members of another Moro clan, the Mangudadatu, into a massive grave on their way to file for elections, killing 57 people.
economically prosper to get its people out of social inequality and poverty. The overlapping reasons behind the conflict, with its roots from the struggles in the colonial time to the formation of rebel groups, to the *rido* (also *redo*) or clan wars, can be better understood through a discussion of who the different actors involved in the conflict are, their motives and interests, and their roles in the conflict.

### 4.2 Who are the actors?

As could be inferred from this discussion on the complexity of the conflict in the Mindanao region, there are several actors who play different roles in the conflict. These are the (1) National People’s Army (NPA), the (2) Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the (3) Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the (4) Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), the (5) different clans, the (6) Abu Sayyaf (ASG), and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). These different actors and other stakeholders, who also play different roles in the conflict, as well as peace negotiations, are described below.

The NPA, formed in 1968, is the Communist Party of the Philippines’ (CPP) military arm, which “seeks to overthrow the Philippine government and replace it with a ‘national democratic’ alternative through [its] ‘protacted people’s war’” (Santos and Santos 2011, p.261). It also works with another CPP umbrella organisation, the National Democratic Front (NDF) with the same principles. Unlike the Moro rebel groups, its members are scattered around the Philippines to recruit more members to support its ideals. They can be viewed as a political rebel group, fighting against inequality, poverty, capitalism, corruption, and bureaucracy (Santos, P. 2011, p.19). Its presence in Mindanao is not as strong as it is in other regions in the Luzon, the Philippines’ largest group of islands. However, they still contribute to the conflict in Mindanao as it aims to recruit rebels to support their cause.

In contrast to the communist rebels, the Moro rebel groups – the MNLF, MILF and other breakaway groups from these groups, Abu Sayyaf and BIFF – are only concentrated on having control over Muslim Mindanao and not the whole Philippine archipelago. As reflected in their names, the MNLF is more nationalistic than its defectors, the MILF, which is more religious.

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12 Both the NPA and ASG are considered as terrorist groups by the United States (Santos and Santos 2011).
The MNLF’s focus was autonomy of the ‘Moro nation’ in Mindanao. The final peace agreement they have signed with the Philippine government in 1996 have led to complete ceasefire, an integration of former MNLF troops to the police force and the AFP, and the establishment of coordinating councils that gave the ARMM control over their development projects: Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD) and Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD).

The MNLF no longer poses as a threat to the security of Mindanao but its breakaway group, the MILF, believe that the Moros should have full control over an independent (as opposed to MNLF’s autonomous demand\(^\text{13}\)) Muslim Mindanao, imposing a state separate from the rest of the Philippines. The MILF has been in peace talks with the Philippine government since 1997 and has had its share of on-and-off war and ceasefire relationship with the AFP. The closest it had to reaching a final agreement with the government was with the MOA-AD in 2008, which provided for the Moros to have ancestral domain over specific territories in the Mindanao region. The breakdown of this agreement, due to claims of its unconstitutionality by the Christian elite of the community, paved way for more armed rebellion against the government. Peace talks are currently in order between the Philippine government and the MILF.

The two separatists group stemming from the MILF, the ASG and the BIFF, are relatively new additions to complicating the conflict in Mindanao, established in 1991 and 2010 respectively. The ASG is an extremist “Moro Islamic jihadist group” and has perpetrated the worst human rights abuses among the other rebel groups, which involved bombings, kidnappings, and beheadings of civilians (Santos and Santos 2011, p.364- p374; GMANews 2007). It is considered as a terrorist threat by the US, because of its possible linkages with the international terrorist group, Al Qaeda (Santos, S.M. 2011b, p.95-96; ABC News 2001). The Philippine government has not tolerated the terrorist activities of the ASG and has not entered into peace talks with the extremist group. The AFP, with US military support, has been monitoring ASG to avoid any more human rights abuses. While the ASG uses terrorism as its means to fight for an independent Muslim state, the BIFF wants to carry on the Moro Islamic fight for an independent

\(^{13}\)The MILF were fighting for an independent Moro nation (Bangsamoro), as a separate entity from the rest of the Philippines. The MNLF had agreed to an autonomous region (ARMM), which enabled them to have more control over their own government but still remaining a part of the Philippines.
Muslim Mindanao, because it no longer believes that MILF is capable to do so (Uppsala University; Mercado 2012).

Another group of actors and contributors to the conflict are the different clans\textsuperscript{14} who have a strong hold in the political arena in Mindanao. Rido, or clan wars, has become a household term for understanding one of the aspects of the conflict in Mindanao, being considered to be a growing contributory issue to the complex Mindanao conflict (Santos and Santos 2011, p.360). The infamous Ampatuan massacre in 2009 involving two competing Muslim political clans in Maguindanao, highlighted the rido problem in Mindanao\textsuperscript{15}. Despite difficulties in reaching a final peace agreement with the government, the MILF has contributed in mediating between Muslim clans who have caused rido in Mindanao (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2011; OPAPP 2012a).

The Philippine government’s military arm, the AFP, have been exchanging armed hostilities with the rebel groups to ensure the security of the Mindanao region. However, they cannot really be considered as heroes to the Mindanao conflict since AFP troops have also been reported to commit human rights abuses in its armed hostilities against the rebel groups (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.46), decreasing the trust of the civilians towards the AFP members, especially those that belong to the Muslim communities (WB and WFP 2011, p.10).

The Philippine government has had different policy responses to the conflict in the Mindanao region, depending on the presidents: from an extreme martial law response during the Marcos’ presidency, to a reconciliatory approach of Aquino, to Ramos’ inclusive nationwide consultations, to an all-out-war in Estrada’s presidency, to the inconsistent all-out-peace policy, involving a cycle of war and ceasefire, during Macapagal-Arroyo’s time as president. The deficiency of the Philippine government in managing the conflict has been acknowledged as one

\textsuperscript{14} These clans are groups of people belonging to the same family, and are related to each other by blood

\textsuperscript{15} In 2009, the infamous Ampatuan massacre, also known as Maguindanao massacre, happened, with a total of 58 people, including 32 journalists were ambushed and dumped into a dug mass grave by a roadside, on their way to file the mayoral candidacy for Mangudadatu, against the incumbent mayor Andal Ampatuan. The massacre was about two competing Muslim political clans in Maguindanao: the Mangudadatu and Ampatuan clans. The alleged perpetrators of the massacre are members of the Ampatuan clan, with the involvement of the former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The case has still not been dealt with in the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (Lacorte 2010; Estabillo 2012).
of the major reasons for the protracted conflict (Neumann 2010; Brown 2011), especially with the conflicting policies of one presidential term after another for more than four decades. The inconsistencies with the different approaches of each president to peace talks and negotiations have made the rebel groups doubt the Philippine Government’s sincerity in resolving the conflict, making the secessionist groups feel that promises to negotiable peace agreements are dictated by the election dates rather than a real commitment to achieving peace.

The international community has had its feet set in conflict resolution and management in the Mindanao region, acting as custodians to peace talks. The historical outline of the conflict presented below will give a brief overview on how the peace processes have gone so far, how the Philippine government has dealt with the conflicts, and how the international community, such as Libya, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Norway have become part of the peace talks.

Figure 3. Reported conflict incidents in Mindanao, according to the group of perpetrators. The map shows the incidences and where the different armed groups in Mindanao have contributed to violence and armed conflict in the Mindanao region. Image from: IDMC, US Department of State, Humanitarian Information Unit, 2010.
4.3 The peace process

The rise of the rebel groups – the communist rebel groups and the Moro rebel groups – have been in the late 1960s to the 1970s. The Philippine government deals with the rebel groups separately due to the differences in their motives, demands and interests as described in the previous sub-chapter.

The NPA has been active nationwide spreading its communist ideals and has not had any long lasting peace agreements with the Government. The NPA rebels think that their protracted war will outlast presidents, while journalists and scholars think that the NPA force is declining (Santos, P. 2011, p. 18; Espejo 2009; Marshall 2007). The highlights of peace talks between the government and the NPA were in 1992, when it has entered into the Hague Joint Declaration with the government but has refused to ceasefire; and in 1998, with the signing the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). Since then, there have been a cycle of hostilities and ceasefire between the AFP and the NPA, with the failure of several peace talks between them (Inquirer News 2011).

With the help of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Philippine Government and the MNLF signed a partial agreement in 1976, known as the Tripoli Agreement, which provided for the autonomy of 13 provinces in Mindanao. After 20 years since the Tripoli Agreement, the MNLF and the Government signs a final peace agreement in 1996, known as the Jakarta Accord, establishing the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and the Development (SPCPD), and the Consultative Assembly. The 1996 Final Peace Agreement also made way for the integration of MNLF members into the AFP. This agreement is currently being implemented.

While the MNLF has a lasting peace agreement with the Philippine Government, the MILF, on the other hand, has been on on-and-off peace talks and ceasefire agreement with the Philippine Government since 1997. The most promising agreement that almost ended the insurgencies was in 2008, when the MOA-AD, which would have delineated territories and areas where the proposed Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) would have governed. The signing of the MOA-AD
was halted by Christian politicians, upon their realisation that the MOA-AD would have had covered some areas of their land, appealing to the Supreme Court that the agreement was unconstitutional. The breakdown of the MOA-AD erupted hostilities in the MILF, displacing up to 750,000 people. At the time of writing, peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the MILF have been on-going in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with power-sharing and wealth-sharing as important aspects of the peace process agenda (OPAPP 2012b). At the same time, around 24,000 more people have been displaced due to fear from the recent violent attacks and gunfire at the Mindanao State University (Manlupig 2012).

The communities who have been displaced due to the conflict and failed peace processes in the past and present comprise the Bakwit community of Mindanao.
5. Findings

This section will first introduce and describe the subject of the case study: the Bakwit of Mindanao, in order to have a clearer understanding of the group being studied. Then, it will lay out the answers to the first two research questions, giving an overview of the Bakwit’s opinions and attitudes toward the conflict, as well as, their proposed solutions to the conflict. Finally, an evaluation of their role in the peace process in the Mindanao conflict ends the chapter.

5.1 The Bakwit: The Internally Displaced Peoples of Mindanao

Mindanao has a land area of 120,812.6 km² and a population of 21,586,641 (National Statistics Office 2007 Census). It is home to 18 Lumad tribes, comprising 8.9% of the total Mindanao population; 13 Moro tribes, which is 18.5% of the Mindanaoans; and the 72.5% majority comprise of 64 Christian settler groups (Arquillas 2011; Rodil 2003, in Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.185). This heterogeneity in Mindanao’s populations has led to a development of an “integrative identity frame” in the early 1990s, supported by civil society groups to unite its multicultural population in issues of justice and conflict resolution. Neumann observes that the identity of this ‘tri-people’ is marked by mutual respect. Conceptually, it constitutes a new, all-encompassing layer of identity that is inclusive and recognizes religious differences, and at the same time, excludes all those intolerant and violent, making them the new counter-identity…. It does not do away with the strong ties to one’s religious and ethnic group, but it serves, in most cases, as a remembrance to the joint struggle to overcome war. Such an integrative community focus was important to make use of traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, such as restorative justice, which are based on the strong need to re-create harmony within one’s community and restore broken relationships. Re-defining the community as consisting of all tribes allowed traditional procedures to work again in multiethnic settings and enabled local elders and decision-makers to deal with conflicts in line with local hierarchies and traditions (Neumann 2010, p.77-78).

Before the conflicts erupted in the 1970s, the tri-people communities lived peacefully together and got along (Mindanao Resilient Communities Project; Bakwit Declaration of Spaces for Peace). The tri-peoples not only share but also make up the history of its region – from the
colonial past to the complex conflict situations to peace efforts\textsuperscript{16}. Armed fighting between the government forces and members of rebel groups in the Philippines have caused mass displacement\textsuperscript{17} in hundreds of villages in Central Mindanao and in other areas of the ARMM\textsuperscript{18}. Victims of mass displacement discriminated no one as the conflict has affected Lumad, Moro, and Christian populations alike. At the height of the Mindanao Crisis in 2000, with the declaration of former President Joseph Estrada of an “all-out-war” policy against the rebel groups, there was an estimate of 700,000 to a million people who were internally displaced because of the fighting between the government and the MILF. From these numbers, an estimate of 400,000 IDPs have not managed to return to their homes after a ceasefire agreement in 2003 and were resettled in temporary shelters in 73 municipalities in 12 provinces in Mindanao, while others have resorted to move in with their relatives in nearby towns, but still surrounded by recurring threats of insecurity from the conflicts (BRC 2006, p.9; p15).

The ceasefire did not last for long. After the breakdown of the MOA-AD in 2008, the renewed fighting between the government and the MILF led to the displacement of up to 750,000 people until another ceasefire was declared in July 2009. In 2011, an additional estimate of 100,000 persons was displaced because of rido, fighting within the MILF, and disputes between the government and the communist rebel group, NPA. Although most of these IDPs were able to return home after the conflicts, there were also IDP groups who were unwilling to return home due to security concerns\textsuperscript{19} (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.91).

\textsuperscript{16} For a more detailed history of the conflict, refer to Historical Timeline of the Mindanao conflict in the Appendices section of this paper.
\textsuperscript{17} Other causes of displacement in the Philippines include “violent demolition and forced eviction of urban poor communities” who are not given any relocation opportunities; use of ancestral land for government or development projects; large scale mining; and natural disasters, such as landslides and typhoons (BRC 2006). This study focuses only on displacement caused by conflict.
\textsuperscript{18} Central Mindanao comprises Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. ARMM also comprises Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, but also Basilan (except Isabela City), Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.
\textsuperscript{19} The UN has an estimate of 200,000 IDPs who have managed to return to their homes since 2009 who still need humanitarian assistance. IDMC estimates that at least 46,000 IDPs have been living in protracted IDP situations, with the Philippine government only providing short term assistance rather than long term reintegration needs.
Figure 4. Areas of displacement in Mindanao due to armed conflict. Map illustrates the conflict affected areas in Mindanao and where displacement occurs. Image from: IDMC, Mindanao Humanitarian Action Plan 2011 (IDMC 2010b)

Figure 5. Rido incidences in Mindanao, causing displacement. Image from: ridomap.com, a project of The Asia Foundation and USAID
The IDPs of Mindanao are both singularly and collectively known as *Bakwit*, which literally means “evacuee”, in the local language. Displacement has affected all the tri-people populations of Lumad, Moro and Christians, and has

[denied] victims access to land and livelihood; it [has deprived] them of shelter and security; it [has shattered] their right to live in peace and enjoy their right to development. This state of dispossession and deprivation often leads to a psychosocial crisis which, when left unchecked, breeds a more profound psycho-emotional condition among the IDPs.” (Dela Cruz, in BRC 2006, Foreword to *A Primer on Internal Displacement in the Philippines*)

Through different projects and assistance, the Bakwit’s humanitarian needs are currently being addressed by the WFP, the WB, USAID, and UNHCR\(^{20}\).

‘Bakwit’ is a term that has been used to refer to people who have been forcibly displaced since World War II (WWII). In Mindanao, ‘Bakwit’ is used to refer to IDPs who have been displaced both by natural disasters and armed conflict (Canuday 2009, p.59). This study, however, only focuses on those that have been victims of armed conflict\(^{21}\) between clans, government forces, and rebel troops.

It is difficult to understand how such a diverse group of people can live in harmony together, but the tri-peoples of Mindanao claim to have managed to do so until the conflict developed. The tri-peoples blame the increased conflict in Mindanao, which started in the 1970s and has worsened since then, as the reason behind negative feelings and their distrust against one another (MRCP; Bakwit Declaration of Spaces for Peace\(^{22}\)). The protracted conflict in Mindanao has constantly disrupted their lives and thus the Bakwit tri-peoples have this shared common history of war and displacement, which also led them to peacefully fight for spaces of peace together so they can go back to living in harmony with one another. To better understand both the diversity and unity of

\(^{20}\) The UN’s OCHA has released its Humanitarian Action Plan for Mindanao, using a cluster approach, targeting camp coordination and camp management; coordination; early recovery; education; food security and agriculture; health; nutrition; protection; and water sanitation and hygiene (IDMC and NRC 2012).

\(^{21}\) Thus, literature on those that have been victims of natural disasters in Mindanao have been intentionally overlooked in this study but instead strongly focused on research on IDPs as a result of armed conflict. It is good to point out, however, that IDPs living in temporary shelters, who have been displaced due to armed conflict, are vulnerable to being victims of natural calamities and disasters. Thus, in the Mindanao case, there is a blurry line on differentiating those who have been victims of calamities and armed conflict as they can be both. For a map on the areas of conflict in Mindanao, see Appendices.

\(^{22}\) See Appendices for full transcript of the Bakwit’s Declaration of Spaces for Peace.
the tri-peoples, a description of each people – the Lumads, the Moros, and the Christians – is briefly presented below:

**The Lumad: the Indigenous People**

Lumad is the collective term for the indigenous people in Mindanao. According to an ADB study on the indigenous peoples of the Philippines, Lumads do not consider themselves poor if they have “forests for all their food and health needs; peace; the indigenous characteristic of helping one another in times of need; knowledge about the forest in lieu of formal schooling; and indigenous systems and means to help them choose their own lifestyle” (ADB 2002, p.35-36).

As a people, they have been the most disadvantaged in the Mindanao region and treated as lower class citizens (Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005, p.2). Their lands have normally been targeted to be cleared and used in development projects (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.79-80). Because of this, they value their input in community consultations with regard to development projects, which are not always respected or listened to (ADB 2002, p.37).

The Datu is their leader, and “the center of governance and conflict resolution in the Ata Manobo communities. Common issues are murder, adultery, theft, and unpaid debts…. The Datu’s power is inherited but there is also a selection process to identify an individual worthy of the position among offspring and close relatives” (Ibid, p.42).

IDMC and NRC have reported that there have been instances of human rights abuses against the Lumad – the Barangay Defense System (BDS) in Davao Oriental, a government initiative – involved civilians in the military’s fight against the NPA rebels, this act was mean to “turn Lumad against each other by forcing them to join paramilitary groups fighting NPA rebels” (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.81).

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23 Both Dole and Del Monte plantations, in South Cotabato and Bukidnon, respectively, are Lumad lands. (Ulindang 2011)
The Moro: the Muslim population

Moro is a derogatory term used by the Spanish colonisers to refer to the Muslim populations in the Philippines that they failed to Christianise. The term has been widely embraced by the Muslim community and they no longer consider it as derogatory. Many Filipino Muslims see themselves as “Filipinos only by document” (Neumann 2010, p.68) because they live in the Mindanao islands, which were declared part of the Republic of the Philippines when the Spaniards gave the Philippines independence in 1898. Some of them do not consider themselves Filipinos as the term already denotes its linkage to the Spanish rule and the Catholic faith, which they were never a part of.

Neumann (2010 p. 69) describes that “being a Moro means being loyal to one’s family and ethnic group, but in addition, being a member of the newly created political identity: the transnational Islamic community (ummah).” There is diversity within the Muslim communities as well, as they have different “social outlooks, norms, values and traditions according to clan and ethnic group” they belong to” (Ibid).

It is important to note two things: first, that Moros consider Lumads as being inferior to them (WB 2005, in IDMC and NRC 2011, p.79; Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005, p.2); and second, that the key findings from the World Food Programme (WFP)’s research on the IDPs in Central Mindanao indicate that there are “almost four times as many Muslims as Christians [who] were at risk from unprotected water sources. Muslims travelled twice as long to access a health clinic and elementary school, [and] they were almost three times more likely to have experienced displacement” (WFP and WB 2011, p.1). These findings indicate that the Moro IDPs are more disadvantaged than the Christian IDPs in Mindanao and that Moros and Lumads do not necessarily have that ‘mutual respect’ for one another as described by Neumann (2010, p.77-78).

The settlers: the Christian groups

The Christians are the Christian migrants who have settled in the Mindanao region since the early 1910s. They are the last ones, among the tri-peoples, to live in the islands. Neumann describes the relationship among the Filipino Christian as being “concerned with intragroup
cohesion; the individual receives sustenance and security within this system in return for its defense” (2010, p.71). This implies that the Christian settlers in Mindanao have a close-knit interdependency relationship based on security.

The Christians have become rich and powerful politicians in Mindanao, claiming ownership over land and property; whereas, the Lumad and the Moros, who both claim ancestral domain over some land, remain poor and disadvantaged in a region where they are the original inhabitants of. Claim to land ownership is a huge issue that the government deals with inconsistently (Neumann 2010, p.73) and sometimes unfairly (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.79).

5.2 What are the Bakwit’s different opinions about and attitudes toward the conflict? What are the Bakwit’s proposed solutions to the conflict?

The heterogeneity of the Bakwit as a tri-people community rationalises the differences in their views regarding the conflict in Mindanao. These significantly varied opinions (WFP and WB 2011, p.10-12), which have also been noted as inconsistent and incompatible (Canuday 2009, p.128-129) contribute to how they deal with the conflict and what they see the possible solutions are to ending the war.

5.2.1 Bakwit’s opinions and attitudes toward the conflict
Due to its religious and socioeconomic differences, the Bakwit community has differences in its perspectives about the causes of the conflict in Mindanao; and opinions and attitudes toward safety and security, and the conflict itself.

(1) Perspectives on the causes of the conflict

While there is limited knowledge on the Bakwit’s perspectives regarding the conflict, the Bakwit of Cotabato, in their Declaration of the Spaces for Peace, have expressed their collective view on how they, as tri-peoples of Mindanao, have lived in peace and harmony before the 1970s:

We delight in recalling that in early times, we had known a vibrant and peaceful way of life together despite the differences in our being Muslim, Christian and Lumad. Before the war in the ‘70s, we lived in peace and thrived jointly amidst simplicity…. We lived in harmony during times
prosperity as well as in lean times. We did not have disputes over land. We trusted one another…. But this harmonious relationship was broken along with the destruction of our properties (Declaration of the Spaces for Peace, quoted in Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.189-190).

The Bakwit tri-peoples put the blame on the distrust and disunity among their community on the rebel groups who have devastated their properties and have caused their displacement. The on-going fighting has not only broken down their homes but also their ‘harmonious relationship’ with each other. It is difficult to understand the Bakwit’s description of a ‘harmonious relationship’ since it has also been documented that the Lumad peoples have always been taken as inferior citizens to the Moros and Christians (Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005, p.2; WB 2005, in IDMC 2011, p.79). Have they considered hierarchical societal relations as acceptable in the past? No. If the Lumads did, they would not have fought against the colonial rule and have not constantly asserted and reasserted their rights to their ancestral land. Thus, the harmonious relationship the Bakwit are describing in this Declaration is somewhat doubtful and blaming the rise of the conflict in Mindanao as the reason for the breakdown of this peaceful relationship is an exaggeration.

A WFP and WB study also revealed that the Bakwit community generally trusted those from their own clan more than they did outsiders (2011, p.12). While it makes sense to depend on and have trust in members of one’s family, especially during times of conflict, the extreme clan culture in Muslim Mindanao have led to the ridos. The Bakwit community seem to share this sense of security within members of their own clans. This distrust in other members of the community could lead to tensions among the IDP communities.

In terms of the causes of conflict, the Bakwit community had different assessments on the causes of violence in the Central Mindanao region. Those who live in North Cotabato and Maguindanao believe that the struggle for self-determination is the main cause of violence; while in Lanao del Sur and Sultan Kudarat, they believe it is clan fighting (WFP and WB 2011, p.16). These different assessments make sense due to varying degrees of the presence of MILF around the region: the MILF leaders all come from the Maguindanao area (Santos and 2011, p.346) and rido cases are quite rampant in Lanao del Sur and Sultan Kudarat (Ridomap.com). Also, these
different views of the causes of the conflict reflect how complex the conflict situation is in the Central Mindanao region.

The Bakwit’s different views of the conflict are real to them as they are the evident victims of the armed conflict between the rebel groups and the government troops and the fighting among the clans. These differences imply that the government, non-government institutions, and the international community who are involved in conflict resolution and peace building initiatives must take into consideration these different perceptions of conflict should they be aiming for sustainable solutions to the conflict.

(2) Opinions and attitudes toward safety and security and the conflict

The Bakwit also have varying opinions about coping with the conflict, reflected by their different definitions of security, as outlined by Canuday (2009, p.129-141), which are: (1) security as family and neighbourhood ties (seeking refuge with relatives); (2) security as spaces for peace (peacefully asserting to the government and rebel troops that their villages are ceasefire zones); (3) security as assertion of identity (struggle for self-determination as indigenous peoples); and (4) security as shifting and expanding alliances (using their freedom to defect from the rebel troops and fight against them through being government operatives or through peaceful protests).

Their definitions of security account for their coping mechanisms throughout time as displaced peoples. Canuday describes the Bakwit’s meaning of security “as not something that they merely idealised. It is what they practiced as interacting individuals when they dealt with their condition in a shifting socio-cultural environment and opportunities” (2009, p.139). Although it is natural to have a varying set of opinions, especially in a multicultural society, these differences in perspectives about security reflect the insecurity of the Bakwit regarding their conditions. These definitions demonstrate the lack of support the Bakwit receive from the government as they have to seek their own security in ways that are suitable to them.

In addition to their varying opinions regarding security, the IDPs also have varying levels of trust towards the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), those who are employed by the government to protect them and provide them with security against the rebels. While the Christians and the
Lumads feel more secure with the presence of the AFP in their community, the opposite is true for the Muslim Bakwit (WFP and WB 2011, p.10). This is due to the mishandling of the AFP of the armed conflict against the MILF troops. The AFP has killed Muslim civilians, suspecting them to be armed members of the MILF (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.46; Canuday 2009, p.133). The AFP has also perpetrated human rights violations in the conflict areas (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.46). The history of human rights abuses and the inconsistency of the tri-people community’s trust on the AFP should be taken as important considerations in conflict resolution and peace building initiatives among the rebel groups, the government forces, and the displaced peoples.

5.2.2 Bakwit’s proposed solutions to the conflict
Because there are different ideas about the causes of the conflict, this study has found that the Bakwit have also differing proposals for solution for the Mindanao conflict: (1) that rebel troops go into peace agreement with the government to end the protracted war; (2) that the Philippine government improve the economy and provide more infrastructures to the Mindanao region to solve the poverty and inequality in the region that feed the conflict; (3) that land disputes be resolved; (4) that there should be more interfaith dialogues in the country to foster more understanding, and; (5) that the Lumad be included but separately dealt with in peace negotiations. These proposed solutions are not necessarily conflicting against each other but rather could be considered as a more comprehensive approach in dealing with conflict resolutions and negotiations. A brief explanation of the reasons behind these proposed solutions is necessary in order to understand them:

(1) *that rebel troops go into peace agreement with the government to end the protracted war*

More Muslim IDPs than Christian IDPs believe that signing a peace agreement is a possible solution to the conflict (WFP and WB 2011, p.17). As the conflict in Mindanao has had a long history of abuse and disadvantage to the Muslim community – from the Spanish and American colonial rule to Christianise them to the unrightfully overtaking of their land by Christian settlers – the Muslim community has more reasons to believe that a final peace agreement would indeed end the conflict. This would involve compensations and constitutional changes on the part of the
Philippine government, a responsibility that needs strong political will as fresh and more flexible solutions to the problem could arise (Brown 2011, p.15; Bacani 2005, p.9).

The Muslim Bakwit have also been victims of human rights abuses by the AFP, and according to them, a removal of the presence of the AFP, would also lead to a more peaceful Muslim Mindanao (WFP and WB 2011, p.17). Peace agreements, with the removal of the AFP officers, especially in the Muslim areas, would provide a more peaceful environment for the Moro Bakwit.

(2) that the Philippine government improve the economy and provide more infrastructure to the Mindanao region to solve the poverty and inequality in the region that feed the conflict

Being the poorest region in the Philippines, Mindanao is haunted by the consequences of poverty: lack of infrastructure, unemployment, and health and nutrition problems, among others (ABSCBNNews 2008; Edillon 2005, p.4). Christian Bakwit think that improving the economy of Central Mindanao is a better solution to the conflict than for rebel troops to go into peace agreements (WFP and WB 2011, p.17). Edillon agrees that improving the economy in Mindanao is “a major avenue of peace. [However, the] growth has to be felt especially by those in middle income groups” (Edillon 2005, p.17).

(3) that land disputes be resolved

Resolving land disputes has also been proposed as a solution to ending the conflict in Mindanao (WFP and WB 2011, p.17). The historical land struggle of the Mindanaoans is a key issue that needs to be addressed. The tri-peoples of Mindanao has their own different claims to their own land – the Lumad has fought hard for their indigenous land rights, which made way for the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA), but continues to struggle on fighting for their ancestral land; the Moros are still disputing over their own ancestral domain; while the Christian settlers enjoy the government’s protection as they hold land titles and deeds to their land. The Philippine government’s policies on land in the Mindanao region has been quite problematic and
inconsistent (Kreuzer 2005, p.44; Fianza 2004, p.3-5; Tuminez 2007) and the lack of clarity on bestowing land to their rightful owners must be dealt with in peace negotiations.

(4) *that there should be more interfaith dialogues in the country to foster more understanding*

Although the conflict in Mindanao is not really deemed as a religious conflict by scholars (Stewart 2009; Fianza 2004), civil society supporting the Bakwit communities suggests the need for interfaith dialogue (Mindanao Commission on Women 2007). Dialogues among communities could lead to amicable agreements within the tri-peoples which could eventually lead to the inclusion and participation of stakeholders in peace processes. This in a sense would contribute to the formation of a consensus within Mindanao, which Santos considers to be problematic:

> The lack of national or Mindanao consensus is partly due to the lack of participation of other stakeholders (e.g. other Moro groups, Lumads, Christians, and civil society), and adversely affects support for and sustainability of the peace process, especially when it comes to the implementation of agreements. It also results in their issues (e.g. land rights and indigenous peoples’ rights) not being factored in and addressed properly. (Santos 2005, p.12)

Thus, more interfaith dialogues would open up conversations among the tri-peoples and resolve the disputes among themselves. The Bakwit’s Declaration of Spaces for Peace also calls for “tolerance to different religious faiths and faithfulness to ones’ own belief” and this culture of peace is what the Bakwit community is advocating for (Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.191).

(5) *that the Lumad be included but separately dealt with in peace negotiations*

The Lumad believes that they need to be included more in the peace process so that abuses to their rights would be avoided should they be excluded again from peace talks (Gloria 2010; Balane 2010). Being part of the peace talks would also let them have a say on their ancestral lands, which they could rightfully protect under the IPRA. Schiavo-Campo and Judd (2005, p.2) support the Lumad’s inclusion and participation in peace negotiations as they write that “the involvement of indigenous people in the peace process and their active cooperation with its
implementation will be important not only in itself and for a lasting political situation, but also
for a healthy environmental protection strategy.”

5.3 What has been the Bakwit’s role in the peace process in the Mindanao conflict so far?

The Bakwit community has used different ways in dealing with their own security: as being involved in peace processes and as being part of the armed conflict. It is important to look at these two different roles to understand how the Bakwit has contributed to the peace processes in Mindanao.

Role in the peace process

It is easy to see the Bakwit as constant helpless victims of displacement due to the protracted conflict in the Mindanao region. However, in his book, Bakwit: the power of the displaced, Canuday (2009) celebrates the Bakwit as heroes to peace process. He outlines how a group of Bakwit in Nalapaan, North Cotabato, had declared their village as a “space for peace” in February 2001, where the government and MILF forces have agreed to respect this declaration by holding ceasefire in this area. Six other villages have adopted the declaration, asserting their villages to be “spaces for peace”. This declaration of spaces for peace came out as an outcry when President Estrada’s total war policy in 2000 had destroyed houses and communities in Nalapaan and its surrounding villages. Not wanting to be passive victims of the conflict, the IDPs have asserted themselves and lobbied for the declaration of these villages as spaces for peace, which was supported not only by civil society groups but also by the government and the MILF rebels (Canuday 2009, p.78; MRCP).

Ceasefire did not last long and fighting between the MILF and government troops resumed when the MILF/ASG bombed Davao City Airport in March 2003 (BBC News 2003; GMA News 2007). Having had enough of the fighting, the Bakwit community in Pagalungan, Cotabato has gathered together to plan for a peaceful rally to call the attention of the rebel groups and the

government troops who were fighting in their area (Canuday 2009, p.81). In June 2003, up to 7000 Bakwit lined the national highway connecting Davao and Cotabato to peacefully protest against the fighting, demand ceasefire, and resume peace talks. This peaceful protest was dubbed as “Bakwit Power”, having attracted both the government and MILF to declare ceasefire and work on the Bakwit’s demands to respect “spaces for peace” which included not only geographical areas but also children as “zones of peace”. Shortly after the protest, the government and MILF have committed to respect this declaration of “spaces for peace and children as zones of peace” (Canuday 2009, p.78-81).

These events and the formation of the Bakwit social movement group Suara Kalilintad (meaning ‘Voices for Peace’) to continue peace advocacy efforts in the region, have led Canuday to describe the Bakwit as a resilient community of IDPs who has power “to persistently and creatively deal with the destructive force of repeated displacement in ways that can be described not simply as acts of coping or surviving” (Canuday 2009, p.1; p155). The Bakwit’s “spaces for peace” is described as a best practice model in upholding peace, culture and human rights in conflict situations by Anasarias and Berliner (2007, p.181-195). They describe these spaces for peace as promoting cultures of peace and thus uphold human rights. They make an example of the ‘tri-peoples’ as “a model for the social healing, collective empowerment, and participatory development they considered building blocks for peace building at the grassroots level” (Ibid, p.187).

After the success of the peaceful protests in 2003, the movement Suara Kalilintad decided to join Bantay Ceasefire (Ceasefire Watch), another civil society organisation, to ensure that ceasefire agreements are upheld and that the public will be motivated to stop possible armed hostilities between the rebels and the government (Canuday 2009, p.82). Bantay Ceasefire is a grassroots organisation that attempt to “prevent war in [the] communities by supporting a ceasefire agreement and in general [reduce] threats to the safety and security of civilian populations in conflict affected areas in Mindanao” (Mindanao Peoples Caucus). On top of these contributions to the peace processes, the Suara Kalilintad has also organised different activities and events that involved education on human rights and religious, cultural, and ethnic tolerance through peace
camps, schools for peace, community planning, economic support, and advocacy (Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.193).

The Bakwit’s creation of zones of peace, where rebel groups uphold ceasefire agreements, have enabled the IDP community to begin rebuilding their lives in these areas. These spaces for peace are the Bakwit’s main contribution to the peace processes in Mindanao, as well as having influenced the government and the MILF to resume peace talks in 2003. However, peace talks have been called on and off since then (especially with the breakdown of the MOA-AD in 2008) and the Bakwit’s influence on future negotiations is unknown.

What is known is that their participation at the negotiation table and peace agreements concerning their return, rehabilitation, and reintegration is absent: they do not have real participation and are not being consulted on resettlement issues which concern them most. Some Bakwit communities have been forced to return home because the government could no longer provide food and assistance to them in camps or temporary shelters, this happens without consultation or warnings from the government. On a positive note, in mid-2010, the UNHCR has recognised the different issues of IDP communities, in terms of return and rehabilitation, and more participatory measures are included in its strategies to deal with these issues (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.86, p.98)\(^{25}\).

In terms of the Bakwit’s role in political processes, there is a wide gap of information among the IDP community: the Bakwit in Maguindanao have failed to cast their votes in the May 2010 national elections because of the lack of information about the election procedures (Carumba 2010, p.2; IDMC and NRC 2011, p.73). This lack of participation of the Bakwit in the national elections implies that they also have limited influence on the governance and leadership that could affect their lives as displaced people.

\(^{25}\) The UNHCR’s Protection Cluster (PC) aims to target five identified issues among the IDP communities: “(1) lack of IDPs participation in the design and implementation of assistance and return programmes; (2) the lack of formal mechanisms by which humanitarian organisations can share and validate information and data; (3) the lack of a policy framework for returns: (4) the lack of access to education; (5) and the lack of a common strategy to prevent human rights violence” (OCHA 2011 in IDMC and NRC 2011, p.98).
Role in the conflict

The Bakwit, as already established, are comprised of different groups of people, coming from different backgrounds. As such, they deal with the conflict differently from each other. While the Bakwit are heralded as heroes to the peace processes, they have also had a role in contributing to the conflict, with some being directly involved in the armed conflict. Some communities “threatened and displaced by Moro armed groups have joined paramilitary forces” to deal with security concerns and to protect themselves (Canuday 2009, p.151). Although there have also been cases of former Moro rebel members who have defected and have either joined the government troops to fight the rebels, or civil society organisations to peacefully protest against the conflict (Canuday 2009, p.133-135).

Children are not isolated in the case of being involved in armed conflict as “many children are reported to join voluntarily or because of the influence of family, peers, and community members” (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.78). Children join armed groups for numerous reasons, including protecting themselves and their families from being killed, getting revenge for their family members and relatives being killed in conflict, or other factors influenced by their family’s culture, religious or ideological beliefs. Sadly, it is not just the rebel groups who involve children in their activities but also government supported armed groups, or the AFP, recruit child soldiers (Ibid; Solaiman 2010). On a positive note, training courses on the ‘Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’ have been carried out in the region, including for the AFP to avoid any more similar instances and more human rights abuses (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.77-78; p.93).

The Bakwit community, then, has not been only involved in the peace processes, but has also been on the other side of the fence – being part of either the rebel groups or the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This dual role in the peace and conflict environment, as well as their varying opinions and perceptions regarding the conflict, is further analysed in the next chapter as the Bakwit’s potential to spoil peace processes is looked into using the analytical framework developed in this study.
6. Analysis

This section will answer the last research question: Is there a risk for the Bakwit community to become spoilers to the peace processes? Using the analytical framework developed and presented in Chapter 3, the conditions for spoiling will be used as a backdrop to analyse whether the Bakwit community of Mindanao, Philippines have a risk for spoiling and spoiling activities.

6.1 Applying the analytical framework

Each spoiling trigger, with the help of the questions formulated in Section 3.4, will be tested against the Bakwit situation in Mindanao to test whether the Bakwit community exhibits the conditions and characteristics that could potentially give way to spoiling behaviour and activities within the community.

6.1.1 Total pursuit for power

Do the Bakwit have a total pursuit for power? Do they have non-negotiable demands and ideas concerning the transformation of their society that they bring in to peace talks, which could worsen the conflict situation?

In relation to the IDPs of Mindanao, Canuday (2009, p.1-2) defines power as “the capacity of the displaced to persistently and creatively deal with the destructive force of repeated displacement in ways that can be described not as simply as acts of coping or surviving” but also as acts that involve “asserting, contesting, complicating, and introducing actions and solutions to what ails their – and our – social conditions.”

Stedman’s definition for pursuit of ‘total power’, as “a means to achieve radical transformation of society” through radical ideologies and unchangeable goals (2000, p.182-183) is not really congruent to the first part of the definition of ‘Bakwit Power’ as this deals more with the Bakwit’s human capacity to cope with their displaced situations rather than power in terms of peace agreements and negotiations. Canuday’s definition of Bakwit Power is not in the same lines as the ‘power’ which Stedman defines in describing spoilers. Being peacemakers, the
Bakwit did not have any non-negotiable and radical ideals unlike the NPA-NDF, who wanted Communist ideals to take over the government.

However, Zartman’s (1997) definition of power as “action by one party intended to produce movement by another” may be applicable in the Bakwit situation. The second part of Canuday’s definition shape ‘Bakwit Power’ more, which is known as the symbolic movement of the Mindanao IDPs to push the Philippine government and rebel groups to resume peace talks and hold ceasefire (Canuday 2009, p.81; Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.185). The Bakwit did not necessarily have a pursuit for power but a mere influence on the peace processes in staging their peaceful protests in 2003. Their actions led the government and the MILF to resume peace talks. This influential power also led to the creation of peace zones, where the rebel groups uphold ceasefire agreements (Ibid, p.79; Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.181) so the Bakwit can start rebuilding their lives. The Bakwit’s Declaration of Spaces for Peace did not have any clear demands but it was binding for the government troops and the MILF rebels to avoid gunfight in the seven villages stated in the Declaration. As the Declaration only covered seven villages, it can be said that it was quite limited and not so far-reaching. Fighting still continued in other places outside the seven villages and up to the present, the MILF and the government have not signed any peace agreements. Lasting peace talks have not been achieved and internal displacement and IDP issues have not ceased since the rise of ‘Bakwit Power’ in 2003.

Canuday’s Bakwit also represents those that have just been part of the peaceful protests and those who are members of the civil society movement, Suara Kalilintad. Therefore, is not representative of all the Bakwit of Mindanao. It has only covered those IDPs of Cotabato while other Bakwit from different parts of Mindanao have not followed suit in asserting themselves, and thus cannot hold the same heroic status in peace processes as Canuday’s Bakwit (2009). Although the Bakwit expanded their ‘Bakwit Power’ through the Suara Kalilintad social movement and through joining in with other peace keeping organisations, such as Bantay Ceasefire, the ‘Bakwit Power’ celebrated by scholars (Canuday 2009; Anasarias and Berliner 2009) can be considered a one-off peaceful protest event which lasted for a few days and its consequences lasted quite briefly as well, with the breakdown of the MOA-AD in 2008.

26 At the time of writing this paper, peace talks between the MILF and the government were ongoing in Malaysia
Therefore, does the Bakwit have a total pursuit for power? No. The Bakwit’s power was merely symbolic to influence rebel groups and the government to resume peace talks. It can be said though that in their Declaration of Spaces for Peace, pushing to protect certain areas from any armed conflict between the MILF and government troops, they have, in a way, imposed and asserted their rights for having a more peaceful environment where they could start rebuilding their lives. This imposition of their “spaces for peace” to the fighting parties, making them sign the declaration as well, was their power. Although, this ‘power’ was quite significant in pushing for a ceasefire agreement and establishing “spaces for peace and children as zones for peace”, the resumption of peace talks did not last for long, as MILF and the government troops have gone back to fighting since then. The later peace talks after the breakdown of MOA-AD in 2008 could not be attributed to the Bakwit. Thus, Bakwit Power is limited and their influence is not far-reaching.

Do they have non-negotiable demands and ideas concerning the transformation of their society that they bring in to peace talks, which could worsen the conflict situation? No. Their ideas were that of hope to rebuild their community where human rights are upheld:

> We yearn for the eventual eradication of war, ambushes, massacres, 
redo, kidnappings, hold-ups, rapes, stealing, and other violent and oppressive acts trampling upon the human rights of people. We pray for the genuine peace to rule our land (excerpt from the Bakwit ‘Declaration of the Space for Peace’, Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.189-190).

This implies that on the question of the Bakwit’s total pursuit for power as a potential trigger for spoiling behaviour, the Bakwit does not meet this condition.

6.1.2 Direct involvement in the conflict

*Do the Bakwit have a direct involvement in the conflict in Mindanao which could hinder them to participate in peace building activities?*

The involvement of members of the Bakwit community in armed groups, as an act of security and protection, describes their direct involvement to the conflict. Those who have joined the
armed agenda due to revenge or cultural, religious or ideological beliefs (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.78), have more personal ties to the conflict as their reasons are quite ingrained in their identities. Lack of trust in government soldiers and government officials (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.49; WFP and WB 2011, p.10) also contribute to the IDP communities to seek security under the protection of rebel groups. For some, joining the rebel groups was the only way to protect themselves and their families from the armed conflict (Canuday 2009, p.151). Some IDPs, however, have become part of government-organised groups, such as the AFP, to combat the guerrilla troops.

It was not just the rebel groups who have committed human rights abuses (Santos and Santos 2011, p.273, p.339, p.357, p.374), the AFP has also been very much linked with human rights violations (Canuday 2009, p.153; IDMC and NRC 2011, p.45-46). The rebel groups MILF, ASG, and NPA were also reported perpetrators of employing child soldiers in their ranks. However, the government is not free from guilt as they have also recruited persons under the age of 18 years into the AFP (Solaiman 2010). Thus, the IDP communities, including children, who have been part of both the government forces and the guerrilla groups have been exposed to crime, violence, and human rights abuses in their involvement to the armed conflict.

Could this direct involvement to the conflict be a hindrance for the IDP community to move into more peace building activities? Yes. There is a possibility for these experiences and involvements in the conflict to be hindrances for the Bakwit community to be involved in peace building activities while the conflict remains unresolved in Mindanao. Since joining armed groups is a coping mechanism for them to provide security and protection for themselves and their family, the combatant groups can use this as a way to sustain the armed conflict in the region by relying on the fact that they could always recruit members from the Bakwit community. This could lead to a sustained armed conflict rather than more sustainable peace building activities.

As long as the Bakwit communities are providing support and human reinforcements to the rebel groups, as they seek security and protection from the armed groups, they are spoiling the peace processes and peace building is not possible.
While fighting the rebel groups through joining the AFP, by force or voluntary recruitment, seems like a more legitimate option for the Bakwit in being part of the armed conflict, the Guatemalan case (discussed in Chapter 3.4) can serve as a warning that civilians who have been recruited to support the army had become spoilers to peace as they have involved themselves in crime and violence during the peace building process. No one can really ensure that members of the Bakwit community, especially the children, who have been recruited to the AFP, are spared from the risks of being involved in crime and violence during the peace building process, and become spoilers to the peace.

6.1.3 Limited or no political participation

*Do the Bakwit have a say on peace processes and if so, is it regarded without bias by the international community? Is the Bakwit’s political participation limited, excluded, or included in peace processes?*

The Bakwit’s participation and involvement in political processes, not only include their role in the peace processes but also their inclusion in national democratic processes. As previously mentioned, the ‘Bakwit Power’ has generated much attention in terms of their peaceful protests in 2003 and in their Declaration of Spaces for Peace and Children as Zones of Peace. They were able to push for ceasefire agreements between the MILF and the government, and urge the conflicting parties to resume peace talks. However, the Bakwit’s influence on the peace process was not far-reaching enough and was quite limited to seven villages in North Cotabato and thus cannot be a representative for all the Bakwit communities of Mindanao. The Declaration has also not influenced the recruitment procedures of neither the AFP nor the rebel groups as there has been a continued involvement of children in war zones after 2003 (UNICEF 2008; Solaiman 2010). Thus, although the declaration of Children as Zones of Peace was quite a good initiative, the depth of its implementation was not quite as effective.

It can also be said that their involvement in pushing for the government and the MILF to go into peace talks was for reasons real to them as they have been consistently the direct victims of the armed conflict. In addition, the Bakwit’s involvement to push for both the government and MILF
to resume peace talks could have led both parties to go back into the negotiating table as they realized that the conflict has already reached its ripeness\textsuperscript{27} for resolution. Bacani writes that the Mindanao conflict was already ripe for resolution as both the MILF and government have already realized that it is more beneficial for them to do negotiations than to involve themselves in armed conflict, especially after the wars in 2000 and 2003 (Bacani 2005, p.7). The Bakwit’s push for peace talks was done in perfect timing. However, the failed signing of the MOA-AD peace agreements in 2008 led the MILF troops to disrupt ceasefire again, displacing thousands of people.

In terms of their involvement in other political activities, some members of the Bakwit community have been involved in the actual armed conflict. Political participation for some members of the Bakwit community seemed to have gone wrong in this case, since their involvement in the conflict and peace processes included being “forcibly recruited into civilian auxiliary combat units…. in police and/or military operations as guides or shields, forcible evacuations as well as food blockade” (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.82). If being recruits to the AFP, the government’s military arm, is considered political participation, then it is a destructive rather than peace building form of participation to the peace processes.

The Bakwit are also not generally consulted in plans involving their own return and resettlement, leaving them insecure about their and their children’s future. This lack of participation has already been recognised by the UNHCR and more participatory measures are adopted to deal with the Bakwit’s issues (Ibid, p.86; p.98). The Moro issues on ancestral domain and the Christian settlers claim for their own land, coupled with unclear land rights and the long history of disadvantage of the Lumad have also left the issues of indigenous peoples’ neglected in peace talks. This led to a call for a Lumad representation in peace panels so they could have a say in protecting their ancestral land rights, as well as, their safety during the ongoing conflicts (Gloria

\textsuperscript{27} Zartman writes that a conflict is ripe when the two conflicting parties are ready enough to go into peace agreements: “The concept of a ripe moment centres on the parties’ perception of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS), optimally associated with an impending, past or recently avoided catastrophe. The concept is based on the notion that when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them (although not necessarily in equal degree or for the same reasons), they seek an alternative policy or way out.” (Zartman 2003, p.19)
The proactive Lumad community can now assert their rights and raise their issues at the negotiating table.

If having their voices heard through democratic elections is a form of inclusive political participation, then the Bakwit’s voices are definitely silenced, as an investigation for the May 2010 elections reveal that many IDPs lacked information on the elections, “including the names of the candidates or on how to proceed with the voting. As a result, many IDPs appeared indifferent to the elections” (IDMC and NRC, 2011 p.73). There was no information on the election procedures and on the new system for casting votes, which did not allow the Bakwit to participate in the national elections. This not only deprives them of their freedom to vote but also contributed to their hopelessness with regards to their displaced situation (Carumba 2010, p.2).

Therefore, do the Bakwit have a say on peace processes and if so, is it regarded without bias by the international community? Yes and no. As already mentioned above, the Bakwit Power was the IDP’s contribution to the peace process in Mindanao. It influenced both the government and the MILF towards going back to the negotiating table, with the interest of ending the on-going displacement as a result of the armed combat between the troops. Thus, they did have a say on peace agreements and it was heard by the government and the MILF.

As far as their issues as a tri-people are concerned, there seem to be no real influence in negotiations as their land and property rights are not part of the negotiating table – the demands of the MILF are the only ones considered in peace talks. It has only been recently that the issues of the Bakwit have been included in negotiations, especially with the assertion of the Lumad to be represented in the peace panels.

In terms of peace building, their return and rehabilitation concerns have also been neglected by the Philippine government, with only international organisations recognising the need for more participatory measures for the IDPs in their own resettlement programs.

Thus, the Bakwit’s political participation is limited in peace processes, as illustrated above.
6.1.4 Limited or no socioeconomic inclusion

Are the Bakwit socially and economically secure, wherein they can participate in activities that can improve their socioeconomic wellbeing? Do the Bakwit have safe access to possession or repossession of their land and property?

As discussed in Chapter 4.1, Mindanao is the poorest among the three major islands in the Philippines (ABS-CBN 2008). The reality, rather than the ‘risk’ of poverty, has been recognised as “the ‘major problem’ of the displaced” in Central Mindanao even before the rise of armed conflict and displacement (Canuday 2009, p.128). According to the IDMC/NRC report (2011, p.53), during times of peace, 25% of homes in Mindanao are “severely food insecure.”

With this backdrop, it is not difficult to see why the Bakwit have significant humanitarian needs even after they have returned to their homes (IDMC and NRC 2011, p.52). Competition for scarce resources and employment occur within and among the Bakwit communities and the host communities, which could cause tensions between them:

In early 2011, the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) noted with concern that the authorities had not increased their support to host communities and that although there had been no reported tension between hosting and displaced populations as a result of the reduction of available resources, the potential for such tension remained (Ibid, p.53).

The tension among the host communities and the Bakwit population is a potential spoiling condition for peace building activities, and if not addressed, this could potentially add to the already complex conflict in the Mindanao region.

In terms of their options to access land and property, more than 50% of IDP communities have none (Ibid, p.64). This is also due to the government bias on the property claim of the settlers, mostly Christian communities, over ancestral and traditional lands which both Muslims and

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28 On a more positive note: “At the end of 2010, Aquino launched the Programme for Communities in Conflict-Affected Areas (PAMANA in local language), a three-year peace-building, reconstruction and development initiative that covers all conflict-affected areas in Mindanao and incorporates assistance for IDPs” (MB 25 December 2010, in IDMC and NRC 2011, p.95)
indigenous populations (Lumads) claim, with Lumads being the most disadvantaged as their lands have been targeted to be cleared to give way to development projects (Ibid, p.79-80).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Bakwit are socially and economically insecure since Mindanao has always dealt with poverty as a region. This limited social and economic participation can hinder them in improving their socioeconomic well-being as opportunities for work and access to land and property are competitive and limited between the Bakwit communities and the host population. The limited opportunities to participate in socioeconomic activities could be a potential environment for spoiling behaviour.

6.1.5 Irreconcilable interests

*Do the Bakwit have irreconcilable demands and interests within its community that concern the peace processes?*

The diversity of the Bakwit community, being comprised of tri-peoples, has both positive and negative implications. On one hand, the unity of the Bakwit, and their common goal for peace brought about ‘Bakwit Power’ in 2003, which led to the creation of zones of peace. This meant that they are capable to put aside their differences and work as one group of people with mutual respect for one another (Neumann 2010, p.77). Anasarias and Berliner commend on this ability by saying that:

> The “tri-people” composition of the community could provide a model for the social healing, collective empowerment, and participatory development they considered building blocks for peace building at the grassroots level (2009, p.187).

On the other hand, this diversity also meant that each group of people in the ‘tri-people’ – the Lumads, the Moros, and the Christians – have their own views, interests, and agenda in the peace agreements. For example, in reaction to the President Noynoy Aquino’s recent State of the Nation Address (SONA), the Lumads pointed out that nothing concrete has been planned for them, as indigenous peoples with concerns on their ancestral domain, by the Philippine government (Balane 2012). The issue of ancestral domain is also important for the Moro population and likewise, the Christian settlers put a claim on their land. The tri-people
populations of Mindanao all have different claims to their land and they all need to be part of the peace panel. This is important for the peace building process so no one would be disadvantaged during negotiations and everyone can have their say on issues that concern them and negotiate among themselves what is due them. A sustainable peace agreement will only happen if there is support and strong political will from the Philippine government.

In analysing the Declaration of Spaces for Peace, Anasarias and Berliner (2009, p.192) outline that the Bakwit’s demands for peace building call for “(1) tolerance, (2) active participation, (3) responsibility of all parties, (4) mutual trust, (5) the moral principles of caring and forgiveness, (6) human rights, and (7) farmlands, income, and schools.” These demands cater for all the communities across the tri-peoples and no one is disadvantaged in heeding these demands.

Therefore, do the Bakwit have irreconcilable demands and interests within their community that potentially hamper the peace processes? Yes and no. Yes, it is a given that because of the diversity of the Bakwit tri-peoples, their views and interests would also be diverse, especially with their claim for land. However, their manifestation of the Bakwit Power in 2003 says that they are capable to come together and reconcile their differences. The Bakwit’s call for peace building also includes tolerance and respect for all the members of the community so no one would be disadvantaged over another. No, they do not have irreconcilable demands and interests, as their interests, such as access to land and property, are the same but they just push for these interests in varying degrees that could disadvantage one group over another. Although the Bakwit has demonstrated its peaceful ways in pushing for their demands, another potential characteristic for spoiling behaviour would be when separate Bakwit communities would push for their own interests more strongly than the others, and thus would disadvantage other members of the IDP community.

6.2 Is there a risk for the Bakwit community to become spoilers to the peace processes?

The final question for this research paper that would summarise all the findings and analysis in this study is then, whether or not there is a risk for the IDPs of Mindanao, the Bakwit, to become spoilers to the peace processes. In answering this question, a summary of the answers to the
questions formulated in the analytical framework is necessary, which is reflected on this diagram:

**SPOILING TRIGGERS and the BAKWIT COMMUNITY**

The Bakwit community does not have a total pursuit of power (reflected by a missing connector to potential for spoiling in the diagram above); they exhibit direct involvement to the conflict, have limited political participation, as well as limited socioeconomic inclusion (as represented by bold connectors above). In addition, although they have proven that they are capable to set aside their differences and do not have irreconcilable interests within the community, the community has also manifested that their different ways to push for their similar interests can lead to spoiling activities (represented by the dashed connector above).

In looking at this diagram and its explanation, it can be concluded that the Bakwit community has the potential to spoiling activities and behaviour because they are exposed to a majority of these conditions and characteristics that trigger spoiling behaviour among communities.
7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The focus of this study was to investigate on IDP communities as possibly being exposed to conditions that could potentially trigger spoiling behaviour and activities. The analytical framework it proposes is not meant to be an absolute framework for finding out potential spoiling behaviour and activities for IDP communities, but rather is an initial investigation on this possibility, which has never been looked into attentively before. As an initial study, this analytical framework is open to modifications, expansions, or even rejection, in future studies and research to be done regarding spoilers and IDPs.

In going through this study, this research was able to confirm personal concerns about the danger of labelling a group of people ‘spoilers’ not only because it gives a negative connotation to the particular group of people, but also because the act of labelling itself imposes a “value judgment about the nature of that society and [tries to] apply ‘universal values’” which are not necessarily ‘universal’ (Newman and Richmond 2006, p.5). With this thought in mind during the whole course of the writing this paper, careful consideration and critical analyses have been applied in analysing the case of the Bakwit of Mindanao, which was chosen as the specific case for this study because of their heterogeneity as a group of people. It would be interesting to look at applying the analytical framework in other IDP groups in other parts of the globe, and check whether the framework may be applied to their cases or whether there could be other additional conditions that could trigger spoiling behaviour and activities in IDP communities.

It is important to point out that this study neither neglects the Bakwit’s victim point of view, since they are victims of displacement and as such continue to suffer and experience a number of security and protection issues and human rights abuses, nor does it diminish their heroic role in establishing peace zones and launching the ‘Bakwit Power’ and the formation of Suara Kalilintad as a significant IDP civil society group in Mindanao. Rather, in choosing the Bakwit as a case study for potential spoiling, this paper only wanted to explore a third untapped aspect of the group as potentially spoiling peace processes. In exploring the potential conditions for spoiling within the Bakwit, it can be concluded that they are much more victimised due to the presence of these conditions, as presented in the analytical framework, in their displacement.
situation: their limited participation and exclusion from matters concerning them (third and fourth identified spoiling triggers) obviously deprives them of their human right to political participation, as well as sociocultural participation and development. Also, this study has explored the Bakwit’s heroism in peace processes as they claim their right to be heard through declaring “spaces for peace” and through peaceful protests to push the Philippine Government and the rebel groups to work on ceasefire agreements and peace talks. Their exhibited role in peace processes, although quite limited, has been significant to their inclusion in later peace talks and negotiations.

This study does not propose any concrete solutions to solving the conflict in Mindanao. Rather, with this study’s formulation of an analytical framework that narrows down five conditions and characteristics that can contribute to spoiling behaviour, this framework can serve as a guideline in preventing or lowering the risks of any spoiling activities among the IDP communities in Mindanao. Because the Bakwit community has manifested four out of five conditions that can trigger spoiling behaviour and activities, the Philippine government, NGOs, civil society groups, and the international community who are working with the peace processes in Mindanao can focus on these conditions to decrease the risk of potential spoiling.

While having irreconcilable interests within the Bakwit community (fifth identified trigger) is inherent and cannot be controlled externally, the three other identified conditions can be targeted: (1) The Philippine government can prevent the Bakwit’s direct involvement in conflict (second identified trigger) by being firm on ending the forced recruitment of IDPs in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, while continuing to support civic society groups and NGOs in implementing IDP and Human Rights education workshops in the Mindanao Region. The Government also needs to be proactive and consistent with its Programme for Communities in Conflict-Affected Areas (PAMANA) to assist IDP communities in rebuilding their lives so they can avoid resorting into joining rebel groups as a fall back for their own security. (2) Lack of participation by IDP communities in return and rebuilding activities has already been identified by the UN’s OCHA as one of the areas to deal with in their Protection Cluster in 2010. Both the Philippine Government and the international community can thus, use more consultative, inclusive and participatory approaches for the Bakwit so not only their political needs are met, but also their
socioeconomic needs are addressed especially in peace building activities (addressing third and fourth identified triggers). The Bakwit’s participation and inclusion in the peace process in Mindanao would lead to more sustainable peace building efforts as they become involved in solutions that concern them.

It is important to point out that this study does not conclude that the Bakwit community are indeed spoilers to the peace processes. Rather, this study does conclude that, based on the analytical framework formulated for this study, they exhibit and manifest conditions and characteristics that can potentially trigger spoiling behaviour and activities. With this knowledge at hand, it is good to point out that the risk is present and thus, government, non-government organisations, civil society groups, and the international community can focus on the triggers as they work on peace building initiatives in the Mindanao region.

This study recommends a further review of the analytical framework developed in this study for identifying potential spoiling triggers in IDP communities. This study also recommends an expansion of future research on IDPs and spoiling behaviour in order to shed a different light on the capabilities of IDP communities, and not just see them from a victim/humanitarian perspective or as heroes of peace processes, but rather, without necessary support for them to reintegrate and rebuild their lives, there is a risk for sowing spoiling characteristics and behaviour among them.
Appendices

1. Mindanao Historical Conflict Timeline

The timeline below highlights the most important points from the Mindanao conflict, which has its origins from the colonial period when the Spanish came to Christianise the Philippines. This is the author’s own compilation from the different references used in this study. This is a summary of the conflict’s timeline and is in no way a complete detailed historical outline of the conflict. This includes events that are relevant to the understanding of the study.

The Colonial Period

1521 to 1898: The Spanish colonisation, which gave the archipelago its name Philippines, after the Spanish King Philip (Felipe). The Spaniards used Christianity to colonise the Philippine islands but was not successful in the Mindanao region, who was already practising Islam. Spaniards call them, as ‘Moros’, a derogatory term for the Muslims. The Muslims have eventually embraced the name ‘Moros’ and do not consider it as derogatory.

1898: The Americans take over the Philippines, as it is named a Republic. The Muslims in Mindanao refuse to be part of the Republic of the Philippines, not identifying themselves as Filipinos, because the term already denotes its linkage to the Spanish rule and the Catholic faith, which they were never a part of.

1903-1919: Americans introduce land laws to the Philippines, depriving Muslim Filipinos of their rights to their ancestral land

Ferdinand Marcos Presidency (1965 to 1986)

1968: The Communist Party of the Philippines’ (CPP) was established, with the National People’s Army (NPA) as its military wing

Early 1970s: Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) established, fighting for an independent Muslim, or Moro nation

1972 to 1981: Martial Law

1976 Tripoli Agreement, with the support of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) – started the provision of the creation of autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao

1977: Former members of MNLF create Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), as a separate entity to MNLF

Corazon Aquino Presidency (1986 to 1992)

1986: People Power

1987 New Philippine Constitution – provision for the creation of autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao
1990: Establishment of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), covering Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Shariff Kabunsuan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi

1991: Former members of MNLF form Abu Sayyaf, a radical rebel group rumoured to have connections with Al-Qaeda

1992: National Unification Council = encouraged Christians and Muslims to talk

1993: Peace talks between the Philippine Government and MNLF

1996: Philippine Government and MNLF signs 1976 Tripoli Agreement establishing the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD), the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), and the Consultative Assembly.

1996: Start of peace talks between Philippine Government and MILF

All-out war

1998: Abu Sayyaf leader and co-founder Abubakar Janjalani killed, replaced by his brother Khadafi Janjalani

2001: Inclusion of Basilan and Marawi city in the ARMM

2001: MILF ceasefire.

2002: With international support from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Libya, the Philippine government signed the ‘Implementing Guidelines on the Security Aspect of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement’ in Malaysia, which included an overall agreement to handle the pursuit of criminal gangs – This was not fully operationalised (Rood, p.5)

2003: Davao Airport bombings. Ceasefire agreement between Philippine government and MILF breaks down but signs another ceasefire agreement.

2003: Bakwit Power: More than 7000 IDPs peacefully protest along the national highway from the town of Pikit, Cotabato to Pagalungan, Maguindanao (covering two major provinces), asking for the MILF and the Philippine government to speed up the peace negotiations.

2004: Peace talks begin between Philippine government and NPA, in Norway, but called off by the NPA.

2006: Abu Sayyaf leader, Khadafi Janjalani killed, replaced by Abu Sulaiman, who was also killed by Philippine troops and replaced by Yasser Igasan.

2008: Philippine Government and MILF agree on The Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domains (MOA-AD), providing for the delineation of Bangsamoro land domain, was strongly opposed by
Christian government leaders and questioned as unconstitutional. The breakdown of the MOA-AD led to war in the region, displacing at least 750,000 people.

2008: CPP/NPA celebrates its 40th anniversary, calling its members, friends, and relatives to confront the Philippine government and the military in combat, rejecting the request for ceasefire by the Philippine government, as a condition for resuming peace negotiations.

2009: Maguindanao Massacre – On their way to file for elections to run against the Ampatuan, a group of 57 people, which included journalists and women, were led to mass graves and were massacred. Members of the political clan, Ampatuan, are currently on trial for the organised massacre.

2010: Former members of MILF form Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), as a separate entity from MILF

2011: The Philippine Government and NPA agree to resume peace talks in 2012 in Oslo

2012: Peace talks between Philippine Government and MILF on-going
2. The Declaration of the Space for Peace

We are Muslim, Lumad and Christian inhabitants of Barangays Ginatilan, Nalapaan, Panicupan, Lagunde, Dalengaoen, Takepan, Kalakacan, collectively known as GiNaPaLaDTaka in the municipality of Pikit, Cotabato in Mindanao.

We delight in recalling that in early times, we had known a vibrant and peaceful way of life together despite the differences in our being Muslim, Christian and Lumad. Before the war in the ‘70s, we lived in peace and thrived jointly amidst simplicity. We worked in the fields even at night, and we owned and raised many animals. We had bountiful harvests and our children were able to go to school. Even though the prices of farm products were low, the prices of local commodities were also cheap.

Despite our poverty, we helped each other. We shared our food together, especially during the “kanduli” of the Muslims, the Christian feasts, and the “samayann” of the Lumads. We lived in harmony during times of prosperity as well as in lean times. We did not have disputes over land. We trusted one another. Muslims slept in the homes of their Christian friends and the Christians in the homes of their Muslim friends. This can be gleaned from the number of Muslim-Christian intermarriages, which have generated many families up to this day. In short, our relationship was strong and beautiful.

But this harmonious relationship was broken along with the destruction of our properties. This happened following the breakout of one war after another in Mindanao in the ‘70s paving way for Ilaga, Blackshirt, Barracuda, MIM movements, and the declaration of Martial Law along with rising cases of redo, ambushes, and armed conflicts, the most recent of which took place in 1997, 2000, 2001, and 2003.

The upsurge in ambushes, redo, hold-up, and the dumping of human bodies along the National Highway, and the daily broadcast of bad news over local radio stations, sowed fear among us and gave a bad reputation to our place. This fuelled negative feelings and increasingly affected the mutual trust formerly enjoyed by everyone. Soon, we lost the lively and joyful atmosphere of our place.

We lost our possessions including our farm animals; they were stolen during the war. The remaining ones were eventually sold at cheap prices. Most of our houses were razed to the ground while bullets and bombs flattened other houses. To escape the war, we were separated from one another as we fled and evacuated to different places. We abandoned our farms and lost our sources of sustenance.

Many of us were also wounded and killed by bullets. Many more fell ill and children who were the most vulnerable died in evacuation centers. Most of our children were unable to go to school anymore. At night, most of us could not sleep well because of fear and suspicion. Guns proliferated. Even the first Barangays, which were earlier declared as spaces for peace, were tainted with doubts. The war succeeded in erecting an invisible wall which alienated communities and tribes.

Every family suffered after the war. There was no income because there were no jobs and capital. Skyrocketing prices of consumer goods and commodities aggravated the plight of the people, not to mention the onset of natural calamities like droughts and flash floods. Life was very hard as we struggled to rebuild our lives from the scratch. Cases of salvaging and extra-judicial killings continued. There was no security and certainty to our life and livelihoods.

As our response to the aforementioned situation and to strengthen the Peace Process and to restore the prosperity and peace we once enjoyed as a tri-people in our communities, we hereby DECLARE our Barangays GiNaPaLaDTaKa SPACE FOR PEACE and Children as Zones of Peace.

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29 Taken from Anasarias and Berliner 2009, p.189-190.
We dream of a life where there will be no more oppressors and oppressed. We aspire to restore our trust towards one another. We seek to rebuild our community life where love reigns, and where there is forgiveness and recognition of mistakes. We strive to build our community on good moral principles where one is faithful to one’s religion and culture.

With this DECLARATION, we appeal and seek the respect and support of all concerned parties including the armed groups and organizations in Mindanao, whether this be the MILF, AFP, local police forces, Cañgu, CVO, MNLF, “Balikbayan,” including the civilians as well as the leaders of our local and national government. We likewise call on various agencies of government and non-government organizations, the media practitioners, religious groups, school administrators, and students, and other sectors of society, to support and stand with us in this DECLARATION.

Beginning today and in the years to come, we hope that the Space for Peace and Children as Zones of Peace will expand to other barangays of Pikit and Mindanao. We yearn for the eventual eradication of war, ambushes, massacres, redo, kidnappings, hold-ups, rapes, stealing, and other violent and oppressive acts trampling upon the human rights of people. We pray for the genuine peace to rule our land.

With the blessings of Allah/Magbabaya/God, we hope that this endeavour will bear fruit for the good of all, today, and in the next generation of tri-peoples in Mindanao.
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