TOWARD A SOCIAL-SCIENCE THEORY ON THE SOCIAL CONFLICT IN MINDANAO

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The Philippine South, just like many southern regions else-where, has had a notorious history of social violence. Over the last 300 years or so, many of the bloodiest conflicts known in the land are registered in the Muslim areas of Mindanao and Sulu where ethnic groups have fought one another in what might be called fratricidal wars. While most of the battles are now history and the warriors are no longer remembered, the bitter past still lingers and keeps the ember burning. During the 1970s, the conflict broke out anew between two major groups, Muslims and Christians, who carried on the fight with greater intensity that they did during the 1600s at the time when Spanish imperialism was expanding to conquer the "Moros" (then a derisive term for Muslims), using converted Indios (Christian Filipinos) in the fight-ing. Documentation of the present conflict is fairly adequate, for which details are reserved elswhere (Glang, 1969, McAmis, 1973, Tamano, 1973, Stewart, 1972, Baradas, 1972, Majul, 1972, 1976; Guerrero, 1973, delos Santos, 1975, Noble, 1976, 1977; Tan, 1977 Gowing, 1972, 1978; Tiamson, 1972, Utrecht, 1975, Lo, 1973, Abubakar, 1973, Tiamson & Cañeda, 1979, Magdalena, 1977). The literature is not remiss in the identification of its causes, neither does it lack concrete suggestions to terminate the hostility that engulfs the Muslim areas of Mindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

An intriguing problem in any discussion of the Mindanao conflict consists of the variable (and sometimes confusing) analy-ses of what the southern crisis is all about. This variability is a

testimony to the dynamic and complex nature of the crisis. According to one writer (Tiamson, 1972:34), the contemporary Muslim-Christian conflict is nothing new. "This is the same thorn which had plagued the Spaniards as early as the 16th century and during the three centuries of their colonial rule over the islands [and was] the same problem which [had] made and unmade half a dozen American|governors during the American regime." Also called the "Moro Problem" when it reappeared in the Kamlon and other Muslim insurrections, it was defined by the Philippine Congressional Report in 1954 as ". . . the problem of integrating into the Philippine body politic the Muslim population of the country, and the problem of inculcating in their minds that they are Filipinos and that this Government is their own."

Tagging it with another label, the "Mindanao Crisis," Majul (1972) showed its dynamics as metamorphosing from the ferocious "Moro wars" during the colonial periods to one of politico-economic conflict at present between Muslim inhabitants and Christian-dominated institutions, and possibly involving a "problem of religion . . . [which] is bound to emerge sooner or later." Gowing (1978) offered a cogent view which takes the "crisis" as a psychosocial expression of cultural differences. Muslims and Christian who are involved in the interlocking relationships, of which conflict is one, perceive themselves as simply different in many ways. What the Christian government pursues as a policy of integration is interpreted by the Muslim as assimilation. The "special privilege accorded to them are, to them, their human rights. And what are regarded by the Christians as "secular" are, to the Muslims, part of religion and their total way of life. Noble (1977:19) took off from where others ended when she spoke of religion as an issue by itself in Muslim-Christian conflict, summarized as follows:

> /B/ecause of their essentially religiocentric world view
> Filipino Muslims have perceived various policies pursued
> by Filipino Christians, acting officially or unofficially,
> as discriminating against them as Muslim. More pre-

cisely they have perceived these policies as threatening a
way of life which they identify—rightly or wrongly—as
Muslim.

In one sentence, Noble (1977:20) concluded that "The problem
the Filipino Muslims have . . . is that Christian Filipinos have been
unwilling to let them define the problem, let alone a possible solu-
tion." The most unique definition, although still loaded with
accusing statements on the Christian institutions which gave rise
to the Muslim problem, is the essay of delos Santos (1975) ob-
versely entitled, "The Christian Problem and the Philippine
South." In this work, he attributed much of the woes of Moro-
land to some Muslim *datus* whose leadership is regarded as weak
and corrupt (also see his later work in delos Santos, 1980).

Realizing the gravity of the Mindanao situation, well-meaning
citizens, participants to the conflict, and policymakers adopted in
1976 the so-called Tripoli Agreement in order to avert further
bloodshed. The agreement could have been a turning point, said
Canoy (1979), in the attainment of a lasting peace in the region.
But it was "couched in an imprecise language that was open to
different interpretation, depending on the side making it." The
temporary ceasefire it yielded between the adversaries was so
fragile that a "mistaken encounter or a shot fired in the air was
all it would take to break it." Several solutions were proposed
before or after the Tripoli Agreement, some of whic were heeded,
but the Mindanao crisis remains without any definite sign of
abating . Noteworthy are the "bulletless" proposal of Tamano
(1973), the disarmament of the mind through education by
Marohombsar (1979), the development of the Lernerian "empha-
tic" personality through the mass media by Roperos (1979), the
"special" political treatment of both Muslims and Christians of
Mindanao through legislation (Stewart, 1972), the "orchestrated"
approach to the Muslim problem by Glang (cited in Gowing,
1978), and social policies with the object of rectifying past mis-
takes through educational and economic improvements of the
Muslim (Majul, 1976).

Origins

The genesis of the smoldering Muslim-Christian conflict is multi-faceted and complex. However it may be defined, the forms of the conflict and its manifestations are essentially the same as elsewhere. It is a friction of two social groups occasioned by control or differential claims over scarce resources (e.g., land, power) and by differences in adherence to important survival values (religion, security), consistent with a characterization of conflict phenomena. But more importantly, the violent conflict would not have occurred if there were no contestants, or if they were not sharply demarcated by the differences which easily polarized them into warring camps. The issues on which the observed animosity is based are loud and clear: economic, political, religious and social.

Largescale immigration to Moroland of Christian settlers during the 1930s up to the 1950s was a critical social process that set the stage of untold grievances, particularly among the Muslim inhabitants. Owning a piece of land was the chief motivation for most of these settlers who regarded Mindanao as the Land of Promise. It also became the central source of fighting, justified by the newcomers in the name of survival and by the indigenes in the name of original right. Scaff (1955:70-71) documented conflicts over land claims by Muslims and Christian settlers in the two EDCOR farms in Buldon and Kapatagan, which were stimulated by differences in legal and traditional land rights.

Resentment against the progressive and technologically superior Christian neighbors, who appeared to have developed economically faster and received more benefits from the national government than did the Muslims, served to heighten the threats of displacement and dispossession of Muslims from their ancestral homes (Tamano, 1973). There fears were reinforced by the suspicion of a "master plan" for genocide, if not of a systematic program to drive them away from their traditional habitat (Majul, 1972). Add to these their hatred and disgust over the collusion of local leaders and government strategists, the partisan and nepotis-

tic politics of the village level which made as priority recipients of government aid the few privileged Muslim families and their relatives (delos Santos, 1980), and the anomic squabbles between Muslim and Christan warlords who pressed for more power of their own (Utrecht, 1975), and one would appreciate how violence can become even more tempting as a solution to redress grievances or to right the wrongs.

At the beginning, confrontation was limited to few individuals from both sides. An aggrieved Muslim landowner, whose land was mistakenly allocated to a Christan settler would vent his hostility by firing at people or killing that settler, as what happened in Buldon in 1953 (Scaff, 1955). The response from the other side was also expectedly one of kind which could have developed, as it were, into a tribal war approaching the considered characteristics of a social conflict. Such cases were the precipitants of the making of a Robin Hood in Cotabato, when Feliciano Luces (alias "Toothpick") organized an armed band later to be known as the *Ilaga* (literally, in Hiligaynon, rat) and the appearance of several vigilante and counter-vigilante movements in all of Moroland, notably the Muslim para-military units called the *Blackshirts* and the *Barracuda* (these were said to be private armies of Muslim *datus* who relied on them for protection).

Thus, in capsule, is the tragic situation in Minanao. Up to now the flame remains, though in somewhat different arenas, where the fighting has shifted somewhat upon different adversaries: the government forces and the Muslim secessionist rebels. We have deliberately exluded discussion of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) movement and its conflict that ensues with the government. We also did not touch upon the communist-inspired conflict between the New People's Army (NPA) and the government in Moroland, which adds a new dimension to the turmoil in Mindanao. The omission is intentional, because we shall be concerned only with the theoretical underpinnings of the outbreak of violent conflict between Muslims and Christians during the early seventies and before that period.[1]

Theorizing the Mindanao Conflict

The variables for theoretical and empirical analysis of the Mindanao conflict are already spelled out in the potpourri of studies or observations made of it. But does a new study warrant the effort? What benefit can we gain from a re-analysis of the situation in Mindanao which is made of the same stuff already concocted, or discovered, by others?

These questions are raised because they were questions asked ten years ago that have not found satisfactory answers. Baradas (1972:363-364) remarked on the futility of searching for causes of the conflict and insisted that the more relevant issue should be why the situation has persisted. Others added by saying that we should be more concerned with solutions for peace than with anatomy of causes, sensing that much of the latter has stirred discussion only to produce a laundry list of causes.

Without doubt, there is substance in the clarion call for relevance, if by that is meant distinguishing etiological questions (of conflict) from those of persistence, and of peace. (Realize that others do not make a critical distinction among these three.) It does not take science to validate this notion.

That Mindanao is still burning, however, suggests that a few points may have been missed. First, it may well be that the conditions of conflict have been improperly diagnosed. Second, the conflict that appeared in the 1970s may have been different from that of the present. And third, solutions for peace are less effective than they should have been because they fail to recognize the basic roots of the conflicts, or address themselves wrongly to what the conflict is.[2]

Any search for peace, therefore, is only meaningful to the extent that the roots of the disturbances have been fully exposed and understood. There may be as many solutions as there are roots.

This essay does not intend to pursue the academic litany that has now overwhelmed budding scientists in their search for order

and which has, perhaps, bewildered policymakers as well in deciding what measures would, give the highest degree of satisfaction. It begins with a premise that the Mindanao conflict is not formally accorded a place in social science theorizing,[3] especially by Filipino social scientists who had earlier described this conflict. If this assumption is correct, we are confronted with a void that needs to be filled up. The task here, therefore, is limited to gap-filling rather than theory-building, per se. Let us proceed by first weaving together observations about the conflict and bringing them under the eyes of an explanatory concept, here called social strain, which appears valid under the situation. Then, we collect data against which to test the empirical validity of this concept. This body of explanation is considered meaningful in that, aside from being logically appropriate to the conditions in Mindanao, it is also bedded in the contexts of such models of conflicts as change, equilibrium, ecological balance and violent subcultures, among others, which are taken as complementary--not competing —explanations. Like other theories, the social-strain thesis is imperfect. One among its chief weaknesses of which the author is aware is that it is a generalized explanation of conflict, a sort of a "middle-range" hypothesis, which may not account for other expressions of social conflict.

Social strain is a notion that has come of age. It implies an adverse experience of a population due to an objectionable discrepancy, as in Merton's (1957) disjuncture of cultural goals and institutional norms, Feierabend et al's (1969) transitional gap, Galtung's (1964) disequilibrated ranks, Lenski's (1954) status inconsistency, Davies's (1962) J-curve of rising expectations and falling attainments, Sofranko and Bealer's (1973) modernization imbalance, Russett's (1964) inequality calculus, and Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation, among others. We do not suppose that those concepts are synonymous, since they are defined with reference to a variety of experiences and are phrased at different levels of abstraction. But what is common among them is that they all posit a measure of differential, which presumably accounts for discon-

tent and the the disposition toward violent social conflict, especially when the gap is so large that it normally defies toleration.

What makes the disparity stressful depends on prevailing social definitions of injustice, which are objectified (or reinforced) by values, myths and traditions. It goes without saying that not all disparities are productive of anomalous feelings of strain, just' as a people may imagine future inequality as a portentous experience.[4] Thus, only those experiences of which the affected are conscious and regard as frustrating will be considered social strain.

To the Muslim this gap is well recognized in various aspects of life (see Boransing, 1979) and is regarded as a new source of fear: "that an uneven advance between the educational and technical progress of the majority and minority groups might leave the latter at the mercy of their more advanced compatriots in matters of professional and economic competition" (Majul, 1976). At least one Muslim leader (see Macatuno, 1970) saw in this gap an opportunity to level a charge of discrimination, that the Muslims are discriminated against in not receiving benefits accorded to Christians (land settlement, schools, hospitals, irrigation, etc.). Technically, the specific charge is a sociological case of relative deprivation, in Stouffer's (1949) language, in which discontent is aroused by social comparison with another group of individuals.

Conditions that give initial impetus to, or continual sustenance of, social strain are various. The most familiar is social change, development, or the general process of modernization. it carries with it new ideas, more powerful technology and greater devastation than one can expect of an erstwhile traditional society which is exposed to new influences. Wolf (1969) succinctly described how the introduction of the modern, capitalist market disrupted the stable and conventional ways of peasants and left in its wake a dialectic of its own.

The picture is quite true among the indigenous Muslims of Moroland who, although not peasants by theoretical discourse, have suffered greatly from the windfalls of change since their first rancorous contact with the Spaniards. Proud of their culture and

allergic to political subjugation, they defended themselves in the name of freedom, justified by the religious elan of *jihad* (holy war). But change is always change, and something has to give, as the expression goes. Now that they have become part of the Filipino nation, and from which they continue to receive heavy doses of change, modernity has put them elbow to elbow with Christians not only in economics, but also in politics and social airs in which the governing principles are Darwinian: competition and survival of the fittest. Forced to dance to an unfamiliar music, they felt the awkwardness of their position. For unlike the Christians, they are disadvantaged by lack of modern education, inferior implements, low occupational differentiation, and outmoded traditional designs of living.

The onslaught of modernization makes as its quick victims the gullible citizens, Christian or Muslim, who are least prepared to accept new social arrangements but are most easily persuaded to react to them violently. First among those who fall prey to the menacing tentacles of modernity are the illiterate, poverty-stricken and deprived. They are misled into believing that the modern is to be dreaded at all cost, that the familiar cannot be exchanged with the unknown without suffering certain risks and that whoever brings it is someone with a sinister design in his mind, who must therefore be opposed. For the Muslims, this is a singular factor for their delayed "progress," that is, the lack of social and economic participaton in a modern system which they vehemently resisted at the beginning: they did not send their children to school for fear of secular alienation from Islam (Isidro, 1968), paid less taxes to the government for lack of understanding of their value (Tamano, 1969), and more.

Social change also infused new elements into Moroland and altered the happy ecological balance of a once free country, thus triggering strain. Light and heavy industries, which have flourished in the capital cities of Cotabato, Zamboanga, Marawi and particularly Iligan, demanded the exploitation of natural resources for the manufacture of needed products or delivery of ser-

vices. Whereas they have spurred economic development, they have also wantonly destroyed the resources, making various plant and animal species extinct, and causing impoverishment to the indigenes who depended on them for vital life support. It is not clear how the changing natural ecology has impinged on the conflict groups, but something definite can be said of the demographic shift which resulted in the heterogeneity of population in the Muslim land. Ecologically, the coming of a new group to a settled territory ushers in a cognate, painful process of change where the "originall" inhabitants are disturbed and threatened with some form of extinction . While there may not be actual genocide, or ethnocide, as others have claimed, the depredation of one cultural group by another succeeds in creating population displacement which appears more concretely as a strain-producing experience than has been repeatedly suggested (Majul, 1972:24) as a basis for theory development.

Let us return to the central concept implied in our analysis. Social strain generates a psycho-social concept of frustration, discontent or anomie. It is psychic because it causes feeling of threat, annoyance, displeasure and deprivation among those individuals who are exposed to the experiences described. It is social because strain is assigned meanings, rightly or wrongly, with respect to some standards: other groups, one's culture, one's past. When the psychic feelings of strain contaminate others within the same group through intense communication, similarly situated individuals are mobilized into action groups whose spirit feeds upon, or is energized by, common discontent. Certainly not all of them become violent, for protest can be expressed in other ways. To the extent, however, that a group has had a history of conflict, or a tradition of violence, and whenever a culture encourages display of force and, in fact, provides the facilities (e.g., guns) for violent conduct, the likelihood of physical aggression becomes hairline.

The concept is at best a "theory sketch," but stands nearly complete and parsimonious, for it requires no exogenous in-

fluences to make it more powerful as an analytic tool of the Mindanao conflict. It appears complete because it need not touch upon foreign support and government social controls as "external variables" which either accentuate or repress the eruption of violence, although these two are admittedly important in the process.

Social strain, or the implied dissatisfaction resulting from it, is a simple explanatory concept because it sets the minimum antecedent condition for conflict. With it the shell of dormant interests is shattered and the spirit of group awareness is kindled, thereby sharpening group boundaries and enabling the affected members to redefined their situation and forge common loyalties. One assumed outcome of this internal social process is the emergence of collective solidarity within lines of ethnic divisions and separateness, inaugurated as it were by cultural or psychic differences, and reinforced by isolated and cumulative but polarizing experiences.

Finally, solidarity makes it easy for collective mobilization of energies toward (or away from) conflict on such a group that grievances find a room for social politicization (or containment) so that leaders and members arrive at a consensus much faster, and that concerted decisions and actions are facilitated by common interests, shared experiences and similar aspirations.

Our theoretic analysis, therefore, links social strain and group solidarity on the strength of a crisis situation which is potent enough to trigger the process of initial group work and the consequent formation of solidary ethnic communities (compare Coser, 1956).

Another assumption about conflict, subject to further analysis or field confirmation, is the role of "violent sub-culture" or "contra-culture" in the provision of probable "models" of conflict behavior. According to this concept, definitions are made and normative acts specified as to what constitutes conflict and what response is appropriate under a particular circumstance. The availability of certain cultural prescriptions emanating from a sub-

group (e.g., a gang or "street-corner society") defines the scope of violent behavior, hence conflict, to those acts that are considered justifiable in a given situation (e.g., revenge). Recourse to physical violence, or retaliation in kind, as a means of entering a conflict is an alternative action guided by prevailing group norms when a behavior is taken as sufficiently provocative to warrant a violent response.

Specific cases of violence within groups have been reported in the literature, such as those for the Maranao (see Saber, Tamano and Warriner, 1960) and the Tausug (see Kiefer, 1972), which have been amply documented to support the contention of violent sub-culture. The conflict that has ensued, however, is limited among members of the society. By its nature, the threat of intra-group violence also serves as a deterrent to the actual expression of violent conflicts. Potential participants are well aware of the fact that once it occurs at all, the conflict easily becomes a serial pattern of family vendetta over a long period of time. Elegant though the model may be, much ethnographic data are yet to be collected to demonstrate how violent sub-culture can be used as a hypothesis to account for inter-group conflicts as a cross-cultural conduct.

From limited observations, it is tempting to state that a tradition of violence has developed in certain sectors of Christian and Muslim societies. Such groups as the Ilaga, the Blackshirts, and the Barracudas figured prominently in the violent clashes of armed men in Cotabato and Lanao during the 1970s. The Ilaga is said to be an organization of a privately armed group of Christian vigilantes who are pitted against the the might of the Muslim Blackshirts and Barracudas. Though the fighting was supposed to be between these two parties, reports have it that even unarmed or innocent civilians, Muslims or Christians, often became victims of their atrocities. Before long, they had to be stopped as the terror on both sides was quickly spreading and sustaining the charge of a Muslim genocide in Mindanao.

On the basis of available data, however, it can be argued that the violent-subculture thesis is a critical bridge between social strain and social conflict in Mindanao. As in the development of group solidarity, it assumes that cultural injunctions toward rancorous conflict are set into play by the same forces that activate group solidarity.

Hypothesis

At least two related subconcepts and hypothesis may be derived from the foregoing theoretic discussion of strain: relative deprivation and relative displacement. Relative deprivation implies a disjuncture between what people aspire for and what they attain; it occurs when aspiration outraces attainment. The greater the gap, the more intense the discontent among the affected individuals (see Gurr, 1970) or societies (see Feierabend et al., 1969), whichever is the appropriate unit of analysis. Aggression follows to the extent that the anomaly is attributed to others, not the making of the actors.

The second subconcept, displacement, is defined as the decreasing proportion of an ethnic group (Muslims). It is also hypothesized that displacement engenders a sense of discomfort on the part of the disadvantaged group. Unlike relative deprivation, whose references are the uneven levels of achievement and ambition, the idea of displacement presupposes that there is a comparison group, a betteroff one, against whom the disinherited group evaluates its own social and economic improvement or deterioration. The higher the displacement, the greater the feelings of frustration, provided that the displacement is blamed on the intruding group.

Procedures

Measurement of the variable relied on data from the 1960 Philippine Census of Population and Housing, from which mean

ings are inferred on the magnitude of relative deprivation and relative displacement on the community level.

Relative deprivation is a ratio between achievement and aspiration. Achievement is indexed by a composite of the percentage of households with radios, flush toilets, electric lights and the proportion of commercial buildings. Aspiration is measured by the percentage of the population completing high school education or better.[6]

The extent of relative displacement among Muslims is inferred from the degree of changes in population density between 1948 and 1960, under the assumption that the population density is a proxy index for the inverse relationship between increases in Muslim and Christian population.[7] The ideal would have been to get a measure of a declining Muslim population, which data are not available from the 1960 census.

For the dependent variable, violence, newspaper reports were used as the basis for coding communities into "violent" or "non-violent." Daily issues of the now defunct *Manila Times* were read and tallies produced for each community on the prevalence of attacks on the civilian population by either Muslims or Christians, resulting in deaths, physical injuries and destruction to property during the period October 1, 1970 to September 21, 1972.

The sample cases are 80 municipalities from the Muslim areas and adjoining regions within Mindanao where conflict broke out during the early seventies. Not all the municipalities, however, have a recorded history of violence although they are contiguous to one another, at least when the data were collected for this study. The cases were then dichotomized using the arithmetic mean as cutting points. Table I gives the distribution of the communities according to the three variables studied.

Analysis of the data was done through a simple cross-tabulation of cases in the familiar two-by-two contingency tables. Here the dependent variable (violence) was matched separately with the independent variables (deprivation and displacement) by counting the number of cases which dually possess the characteristics of

being violent or non-violent and being rated as high or low in deprivation (or displacement).

Table 1: Distribution of the sample of communities, by characteristic

	Number	Percent
1. Violence (1970-1972)		
Violent	40	50.0
Non-violent	40	50.0
2. Relative deprivation (1960)		
"High"	38	47.5
"Low"	42	52.5
3. Relative displacement (1948-1960)		
"High"	23	28.7
"Low"	57	71.3

Table 2: Relationship between violence and relative deprivation (Percent)

Type of Community	Relative Deprivation	
	Low	High
Violent	33.3	68.4
Non-Violent	66.7	31.6
N of Cases	42	38

Gamma Coefficient = .62

Table 3: Relatonship between violence and relative displacement (Percent)

Type of Communtiy	Relative Displacement	
	Low	High
Violent	38.6	78.3
Non-Violent	61.4	21.7
N of Cases	57	23

Gamma Coefficient = .67

Table 4: Violence as a Joint Function of deprivation and displacement (percent)

Type of Community	Combination of Two Variables		
	Low-Low.	Low-High	High-High
Violent	30.8	60.6	100.0
Non-Violent	69.2	39.4	0
N of Cases	39	33	8

Results

Inspection of the individual crosstabs (Tables 2 and 3) suggests some validity of the hypothesis, that is, communities which are highly deprived or highly displaced tend to experience more violent conflicts than those that are low an either characteristic.

On the level of individuals, we cannot claim with accuracy that the trends observed for communities also hold up for the people making them. It is incorrect to say that the violent communi-

ties are necessarily peopled by violent individuals, for they are units of analysis which specify different structures. We assume, however, that individuals respond to contextual situations in a predictable way, making it logical for us to expect that communities which are "high" in discontent expose their residents to a high probability of engaging in violent actions.

While the data limit our interpretation to what there is, they give credence to the strain model as a fruitful explanation of the Mindanao crisis. We have not had the opportunity of testing the violent-subculture hypothesis in the data, which would have been possible, although crudely, to verify by correlating the prevalence of "loose" firearms with the reported occurrence of community disorder.

It may also be inquired at this point if deprivation and displacement combine to produce a higher level of violent confrontation than the separate effect of each variable. The question makes sense because in combination they both result, theoretically, in a higher magnitude of social strain (frustration). To answer this, we re-tabulated the cases by first determining three possible combinations (low-low; low-high or high-low; high-high) in the independent variables and then filling out the empty cells of a two-by-three contingency table.

Result of the re-analysis shows that the expectation of a stronger relationship is warranted and that the prediction has greatly improved. A reading of Table 4 demonstrates that communities "high" on both deprivation and displacement have all become violent, as opposed to those which scored consistently "low" where only less than a third turned out to be violent. Those which had a mixed pattern (low-high or high-low) stayed in between, with close to two-thirds gripped by turmoil.

Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to bring the social conflict in Mindanao, known for its violence and high cost, within the scope of

social science analysis. The research goal is to probe into the situation once more in order to find a new meaning as to why the internecine conflict involving Muslims and Christians occurred as it did in the early seventies.

The study sought to explain the origin of the conflict by referencing to the concept of social strain as a theoretical insight, quite similar to the model of frustration and aggression. Two specific, though conceptually independent, hypotheses were formulated consistent with the tension argument. The first invokes a derived concept based on relative deprivation, the second on relative displacement. Both are taken as strain or frustration-provoking instances, which in turn lead men into violent conflicts.

Analysis of aggregate data for a sample of 80 communities in the affected areas suggests that the explanatory concepts imbedded in the hypotheses are of some value in the search for probable causes of the conflict. Those communities which have higher deprivation or higher displacement tend to experience more violence than do those which are low on these conceptual characteristics. Together, the two variables are much more highly related to the occurrence of violence than are the separate effects of either one.

The findings are far from conclusive to imply that the observed ecological processes similarly operate in the level of individuals. They are nonetheless rich in insights for future research of a social-psychological nature as well as in implications for adoption of policies that may help scale down, if not totally eliminate, the raging violence in Muslim Mindanao. If a recommendation is warranted at this point, this writer wishes to enter a plea for systematic peace studies into the situation to find out if the measures adopted by private and and public situations, particularly by the Philippine Government, have resulted in the reduction of strain by quashing the sources of high discontentment (e.g., balanced development through education and economic opportunities, reversing migration, etc.). It may also be inquired to what extent have the two autonomous governments in Region IX and XII influenced the social and economic improvements of the affected communities and whether they have changed the stereotyped image people have of the Government.

NOTES

[1]This paper is a sequel to an earlier study (Magdalena, 1977). Here, it focuses on a conceptual frame of analysis which invokes some relevant hypotheses for the development of an explanatory model valid for the situation in Mindanao.

[2]Solutions for peace can also be viewed as a battle of philosophies among those who propose them. Two examples may suffice. First, people may advocate that violence by and in itself is a solution, a philosophy taken by many revolutionary leaders around the world who use violent strategies as an instrument to attain peace. The second example is more striking. The apocalyptic chess game between the superpowers is guided by the goal of deterrence, not victory, "and the arms race, no longer a preparation for war, can now be justified only on the grounds that more and more deterrence is the best guarantee of peace" (Arendt, 1(72:106).

[3]Spanned by two decades of opinion, Barnard (1950) and Bottomore (1970) are unanimous in saying that there is no modern sociology of social conflict, or an acknowledged corpus of theory. Conflict was, and probably still is, viewed as a social process, if not entirely eschewed owing to cultural disapproval of aggression and war and the belief that conflict is harmful or evil.

[4]Such was a case of fears entertained by the Maranao Muslims during a mass meeting on March 18, 1935 at Dansalan, where they codified a declaration sent to the United States, to register their opposition to becoming part of an independent Philippines (see Tamano, 1973:21). The declaration reads:

> Our Christian associates have for many years shown their desire
> to be the only one blessed with leadership and with progressive
> towns, without sharing with us the advantage of having good
> towns and cities . . . Their provinces progress by leaps and bounds
> and ours lay behind.

[5]For the procedures adopted in the computation, see Magdalena (1977).

[6]This substitute measure based on increases of population, though imprecise, captures the essence of heavy Christian in-migration and progressive reduction among Muslims. From 1939 to 1960, nearly one-third of the population in the Muslim areas can be identified as migrants. During the same period the Muslim population dropped from 31 percent to 24 percent despite its rapid natural increase (see Wernstedt & Simkins, 1965).

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