THE ANALYSIS OF THE PHILIPPINES ONLINE NEWS'S ROLES ON RECONCILIATION AFTER CONFLICT IN MINDANAO, REPUBLIC OF PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the roles of The Philippines' online news in reconciliation after the conflict in Mindanao and analyze information of The Philippines' online news of peace activities or non-violence actions after the war in Mindanao. The conceptual framework is based on the concept of peace journalism and ideas of peace and non-violence actions. The qualitative method and content analysis are used to analyze The Philippine's online news, the winning article from the EU peace award 2015. The findings are that the roles of the Philippines' online news in reconciliation after the conflict in Mindanao as follows: 1) The Philippines' online news informs historical and context data that are primary causes of conflict in Mindanao. 2) The Philippine online news presents creative information as a Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro-CAB for conflict resolution. 3) The Philippine online news informs various perspectives as Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), governmental sectors, private sectors, non-governmental sectors, civil sectors, and influential persons in agreement on Autonomous. 4) Disclosure of blast's fear, the anxiety of MILF attack, fear of soldiers, need of security, and hope of Mindanao's people to settle down in their homeland. The results also found that the information of The Philippines online news about peace activities or non-violence actions after the conflict in Mindanao as follows: 1) The Philippines online news informs about the project of educational development and development project that is operated by communities. 2) The Philippines online newsstand for the provision of the contract as Intellectual property (IP) rights and Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) and informed participants of women in pressing of Bangsamoro basic Law 3) The Philippines online news inform usage quality mind and creative activities that are the stories about traditional ritual for peacebuilding, the visual usage of positive relationship between Mindanao's people and soldiers, and the visual image of Mindanao's people who is hope in peace.

Keyword: Online news, Conflict Reconciliation, and roles of media

1. **Introduction**

   Muslims arrived in the Philippines in the 13th century. Mindanao, the southernmost of the country's three regions, was ruled by sultanates well before Spanish Christians came in the second half of the 16th century. This historical perspective drives many Filipino Muslims (part of the Bangsamoro ethnic group) who want to re-establish a Muslim. When the Philippines passed from Spanish to American control at the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, large areas of the Muslim south remained untouched. A process of economic and political integration followed in the first decades of the 20th century, accelerating when the Philippines won independence in 1946. In the years that followed, the government encouraged Catholic settlers to move from the north to resource-rich Mindanao, displacing the comparatively poorer Muslim communities. By the late

1960s, campaigners were demanding recognition of Moro rights, angered by their increasing marginalization. They argued that the influx of Christians had, by this time, reduced their presence to some 5 percent of the population (Thomson Reuters Foundation, October 30, 2012).

Minority Muslim groups in the southern Philippines - known collectively as the Moros – have fought for self-determination for more than 40 years. The conflict has killed about 150,000 people and, since 2000, has displaced nearly 3 million people, according to the Internal Displacement Centre (IDMC). After 15 years of violence-interrupted talks, the Philippine government and the largest Muslim rebel group – the Moro Islamic (MILF) - agreed in October 2012 away end the conflict. The two sides want to set up an autonomous region, known as "Bangsamoro," in the south of the top country before President Benigno Aquino steps down in 2016, giving the Muslim-dominated area more extraordinary political powers and more control over resources. Bangsamoro will replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) – a region of about 4 million people created in 1989 with its government, but foreign policy will remain under the central government. Details on sharing and the pace of decommissioning MILF's 11,000-strong army have yet to be thrashed out. The new legislation is needed to create a for Bangsamoro, the name given by the Moro tribes for their homeland. A plebiscite by 2015 in Muslim-dominated areas in the south will determine the shape and size of the new Bangsamoro region, which is rich in, oil and. The agreement guarantees both Muslims and non-Muslims, unlike a failed 2008 peace deal that was struck down by the as unconstitutional (Thomson Reuters Foundation, October 30, 2012).

From the success of a peace agreement between the Philippines government and the largest Muslim rebel group – the Moro Islamic (MILF) in October 2012. The two sides agree with an autonomous region, known as "Bangsamoro" before President Benigno Aquino stepped down in **2016.** In this research, the researcher will give a tremendous interest in the mains function of communication, especially online news media on religious conflict resolution in a conflict of the southern Philippines. The researcher will apply the thought of McQuail (2000) about the functions of media to analyze parts of the Philippines's online news in conflict resolution processes, namely a fifth functions item - information, correlation, continuity, entertainment, and mobilization. Moreover, research will analyze functions of the Philippines's online news in four phases of international conflict based on the thought of Eytan Gilboa (2009) that based on different critical conditions and principal intervention goals: (1) onset-prevention, (2) escalation-management, (3) de-escalation-resolution, and (4) termination- reconciliation. Each phase has distinct characteristics

and specific outcomes. The researcher uses the specified thought to state the research problem as follows:

First research question: How the Philippines' online news play the functions in religious conflicts resolution of Mindanao, the Philippines?

2. **Objectives**

To analyze the functions of the Philippines' online news in religious conflicts resolution of Mindanao, the Philippines

3. **Theories and Conceptual Framework**

3.1 The functional theory of communication

Lasswell (Quoted from Denis McQuail**, 2000)**   proposed the main functions of communication in a society that was surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of the society in responding to its environment, and the transmission of the cultural heritage. Wright (Quoted from Denis McQuail**, 2000)** developed this basic scheme to describe many of the effects of the media and added 'entertainment' as a fourth vital media function. This may be part of the transmitted culture. Still, it has another aspect – that of providing an individual reward, relaxation, and reduction of tension, which makes it easier for people to cope with real-life problems and for societies to avid breakdown (Mendelsohn quoted from Denis McQuail**,** 2000). With the addition of a fifth item – mobilization is designed to reflect the widespread application of mass communication to political and commercial propaganda. Denis McQuail (2000) addressed the following set of basic ideas about media tasks (functions) in society:

1. Information
   - providing information about events and conditions in the community and the world;
   - indicating relations of power;
   - facilitating innovation, adaptation, and progress.
2. Correlation
   - explaining, interpreting, and commenting on the meaning of events and information;
   - providing support for established authority and norms;
   - socializing;
   - co-ordinating separate activities;
   - consensus-building;
   - setting orders of priority and signaling relative status.
3. Continuity
   - expressing the dominant culture and recognizing subcultures and new cultural developments;
   - forging and maintaining the commonality of values.

4. Entertainment
- providing amusement, diversion, and the means of relaxation;
- reducing social tension.
5. Mobilization
- campaigning for societal objectives in politics, war, economic development, work, and sometimes religion.

Denis McQuail **(2000)** explained that we could not give any general rank order to these items, nor say anything about their relative frequency of occurrence. The correspondence between function (or purpose) and explicit content is not exact, since one function overlaps with another, and the same content can serve different parts. The set of statements refers to processes for society. It needs to be reformulated to take account of the perspective of the roles of media in society and individual users of mass media.

3.2 Phases of Conflict

Eytan Gilboa (2009) proposed that international conflict is a dynamic process as moves through several distinct phases or stages. Scholars and practitioners have identified life cycles of wars and analyzed them in chronological terms.25 Many scholars and practitioners have distinguished three primary steps: pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict, or pre-violence, violence, and post-violence. These approaches are not very useful because they focus on "conflict" or "violence" and treat the other phases as merely insignificant stages that chronologically come before or after conflict or violence. A more useful approach would consider the pre- and post-phases as equally essential and would attempt to fill them with valuable and relevant content. Eytan Gilboa suggested distinguishing four stages of international conflict based on different critical conditions and principal intervention goals: (1) onset-prevention, (2) escalation-management, (3) de-escalation-resolution, and (4) termination- reconciliation. Each phase has distinct characteristics and specific outcomes.

The first stage, onset-prevention, is characterized by the surfacing of conflict, the beginning of disagreements, and growth in hostile verbal and behavioral exchanges. At this stage, only effective prevention measures can stop the conflict from deteriorating into violence. If prevention succeeds, the dispute is peacefully settled, and the conflict process temporarily or permanently terminates. If not, parties may escalate the conflict believing they can impose a solution via violence. Uses of force include full-scale war, military intervention, terrorism, guerrilla warfare, firing across borders, and deployment of troops. Conflict management—limiting and halting violence to relatively tolerable levels—applies to the escalation phase, which typically ends in a formal or informal ceasefire or a truce.

The post-conflict period should be further subdivided into two separate phases: (1) resolution and (2) reconciliation. The difference stems from the significant distinction set forth by sociologist Johan Galtung (Quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009), who focused on "negative peace" and "positive peace" in his pioneering article, Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. Negative peace refers only to the absence of violence. In contrast, positive peace refers to the building of new relations in many relevant areas between former enemies, including open borders, trade,

tourism, and cultural ties. Positive peace is equivalent to what international relations scholar Kenneth Boulding (Quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009) called "stable peace." Stable peace is "a situation in which the probability of war is so small that it does not enter the calculations of any of the people involved." Other scholars have made a similar distinction between conflict "resolution" and conflict "transformation." According to scholar John P. Lederach (Quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009), conflict transformation usually involves transforming perceptions of issues, actions, and other people or groups, and it takes place both at the personal and the systemic level.

In the resolution phase, leaders attempt to negotiate an agreement to end violence. If leaders reach a formal arrangement, they may end violence and facilitate transformation. If leaders do not get a legal deal, they may resume violence or create a stalemate. International relations scholars had believed that positive or stable peace could be achieved and maintained via security and economic and political cooperation. More recently, however, they have become aware of the need to examine the psychological dimensions of this phase. (Fen Osler Hampson Quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009)

The reconciliation phase goes beyond conflict resolution and peace agreements and addresses psychological and cognitive barriers to stable peace. (Herbert C. Kelman quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009) Reconciliation moves from formal peace agreements to "changing the motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions of the great majority of the society members regarding the conflict, the nature of the relationship between the parties, and the parties themselves."(Danie Bar-Tal & Gemma quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009) Reconciliation is both a process and an outcome.40 The result is friendship and harmony between former enemies.

Eytan Gilboa (2009) explained the distinction between resolution and transformation of conflict based on the assumption. Even if the opposing sides reach a peace agreement, it is only an agreement between leaders, not between peoples, and it has to be fully implemented and respected over time. Therefore, the distinction between the third phase, conflict resolution, and the fourth phase, reconciliation, is that during reconciliation, the parties attempt to move from negative peace to positive peace, or from conflict resolution to conflict transformation. The parties try to engage their respective peoples fully and transform relations from hostility to amicability. Scholar Raimo Väyrynen (Quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009) raised questions about the meaning of transformation and placed the concept in a different context. For Väyrynen, shift meant a significant change in a principal element of a conflict that includes actors, issues, and rules, and therefore, it may occur at any phase. Väyrynen argued that transformation must happen before the resolution becomes possible. Given Väyrynen's approach and the different meanings applied to change, other concepts from Roland Paris (Quoted from Eytan Gilboa, 2009) have had to be identified and used in connection with positive peace. The options are "peacebuilding" and

"reconciliation." Several scholars have equated the two, but others have used peacebuilding as a general concept that applies to all the phases and levels of conflict.

4. Research Methods

4.1 Type of research: Qualitative Research

4.2 Population and sample group: Population is Philippines online news with the content of conflicts in Mindanao, after a peace agreement between The Philippines Government and The Moro Islamic(MILF) in October 2012. The researcher uses purposive sampling to get the population; Philippine's online news was awarded the EU Peace Award in 2015. This sample group includes Jefry Tupas (2015), "The teachers of Rajah Muda," Voltaire Tupaz (2015) "Son of a rebel" Jes Aznar (2015), "Bridge To Peace" Stella A. Estremera (2015), "Rituals for peace" Fritzie Rodriguez (2015) "Who are the women in the Bangsamoro Peace Process?" Joan C. Cordero (2015) "Insha'Allah: Muslim orphans hope for peace" Ruji Peter Abat (2015) "A model of peace and unity" Froilan Gallardo (2015) "In pursuit of Marwan, deaths in the marshland."

4.3 Research tools

The researcher used data collecting with the main point of analysis, which is the role of the Philippines online news in encouraging reconciliation in society.

4.4 Data analysis: The researcher analyzed Philippine's online report in response to the purposes of research, which is to promote reconciliation in society. There are analysis measurements of data about background information, related-contexts that formed the reconciliation after the conflict in Mindanao.

5. Conclusion

The Philippines online news' role of making reconciliation after the conflicts in Mindanao can be concluded as follows,

5.1 Presenting background information and related-contexts that formed the conflict, as follows

1) Government management in solving conflict. There is some historical information from 1970 until the ceasefire agreement was signed in 2010, which is when Aquino was the president. That decreased the Mindanao violent situations

2) Factors that made war the solution of the conflict. It was stated that war was the only solution that would make them survive in childhood.

3) The references of conflict research reports can be divided into two groups; References of the research report at the international level or used the connections from Government officials, such as United Notions or information of the Philippines Government's budget.

4) Causes of conflict, which is from the inequality in prosperity, the oppression upon locals, the lack of government's public services, lands, and poverty.

5) The effects of conflict are the participation of children in the force to act against the government, the migration, violence towards women and children, the decrease of locals' income, which affects their capability to support their children in schools.

6) Personal information of those who are related to the conflict. The person is the key person of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Force (BIAF) known as "Marwan" or "Mads," the terrorist wanted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

5.2 Offering the creative ideas about the solution, as follows,

1) Law enforcement: there is a report about the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro(CAB). It is supposed to be the leading way of making Mindanao people's lives back to the normal stage, according to the agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic.

2) Providing education for youth. There is a report about area management in the help center to modify the area to be the classroom for children, especially in the area that used to be the battlefield between the government and the Moro Islamic.

3) Using the development projects driven by the community. There is a report about a cooperative fund project called "local rights certification in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for sustainable development and support people's power." It focuses on cooperative local community development between Muslims and Christians in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It will be a successful model of peace progress in the local community.

4) The attempt to change the negative attitude that Muslims and Christians have against each other. There is a report about the development project in Barangay Romongaob village, which is the local community that includes the Teduray ethnic group, Maguindanaoans, and Christians, which are the majority. Different people learn to live together by collective learning in developing the community.

5) Using the striking force to defeat the terrorists and their actions. There is a report about the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force: PNP-SAF and over 80 soldiers had marched pass their village to follow the plane to arrest or kill the Malaysian bomber, Zulkifli bin Hir. The person was known among the terrorists and the most-wanted person, the FBI.

6) The cooperation against the terrorists between the Philippines government and international organization. There is a report about The PNP Special Action Force, an especially trained-marine force with a high level of ability against the terrorists. The member of the squad will be trained by the FBI Hostage Rescue Team to master in attacking.

7) The cooperation after the SAF had attached the MILF. There is a report about the Coordinating Committee of the Cessation of Hostilities(CCCH) or Ceasefire Monitoring Committee from the government and the MILF in response to the crisis after the SAF had attacked the MILF. They provided the conference with the International Monitoring Team – IMT and contacted the military and the MILF to seek about who was related to the attack.

5.4 The suggestion from every view, well-rounded, and every level. In the report has presented the suggestion from different resources as follows,

1) The advice about education through children, parents, government officers, private sectors, and authority's views. There is a report stated about the cooperation between military and local people who used to be rivals to the government.

2) The suggestion about development projects through the view of people organization. According to the report, there is some co-working process between Muslims and Christians in Maguindanaoans, which had a conflict about differences in religions and cultures. The report stated that the process was supported by the government, private sectors, and people organization.

3) The suggestion about defeating the terrorists through the perspectives of Muslims, every government's unit, and US diplomats. The report stated that the SAF had attacked the MILF. They reported the contexts through every related-sides perspective, including Muslims, every government's unit, and the spokesperson of the US embassy. Because there were news reports mentioned that the US military was in the situation and helped carry injured police officers.

5.5 The exposure of dishonesty or hidden intention. There are some revealing of people's feeling in the news report, as follows

1) They are fearful about bombs and are anxious about the attack towards the MILF. The report has referred to the interview of a Muslim who has feared for the military.

2) The physical requirement and live safety. In the report of Dar Amanah Foundation, the private foster home, they have mentioned helping children whose parents were dead in the conflict in Mindanao, providing them food and a safe place to live.

3) The need to continue their education and live in the usual way in their hometown. In the report mentioned about the dream of an orphanage who had to escape from the conflict to stay in Dar Amanah Foundation. The child wants to be an architect and to be able to Muslim friends and family.

6. Discussion and suggestion

6.1 Discussion

The Philippine's online news has a role in encouraging the reconciliation after the conflict in Mindanao. They provide the context information about the government's management, causes that led to war. They also give the report information about violence and its effects on people. Moreover, the report has an interview of the news resource related to a government organization, its rival organizations, and international organization. Furthermore, the report mentioned people's fear of violence and their hopes about the suitable solution between the government and the MILF.

The perspective-taking paradigm can explain the role of Philippine's online news in creating reconciliation. There is the presumption that individuals perceive the world from different perspectives according to their experiences. Therefore, the contexts are formed within their views. Roger Brown (referred in Morton Deutsch, 2000) suggested that effective communication has an honest perspective. Even though it is challenging to present a different view. However, in the conflict situation, there is a chance that the communicator could make a misunderstanding due to

the limitation of knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. Therefore, to make a mutual understanding about the conflict, there should be the exposure of every perspective of related-units, or to fulfill the missing knowledge. Moreover, it can also be explained by the suggestion from John W. Burton (1990) stated that, people can use media to be the channel for negotiation with the government about their needs. That will also encourage them to follow the norm of society. According to the research result of John W. Burton (1990), it was found that people had no channel to negotiate with the government to let them know about their human needs, so they choose violence to solve the conflict, which is not the norm of the society.

6.2 Suggestions

In case of reporting situations of conflict, the media should present the contexts of the situation in every different way, along with the related-contexts. However, it was found by the research that the Philippines newspaper has reported the violent actions in defeat the terrorists. Still, from the view of the force leader, that is the obstacle of peace progress in Mindanao. According to the suggestion from Cees Hamelink (referred in Lederach(2014)) stated that people differently give value to belief, and they search for different things. However, if the government wanted people to believe or agree to everything the government does, once people think differently, they will realize that living with others has created conflict among them. Furthermore, when they have their own different goal, the difference will lead to violence. However, if the media present different perspectives of the news contexts, it will allow the rivals to use the media to be their channel to portray the forces' needs.

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