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Settie Sahara Mutia, Sulpecia Ponce and Mark Anthony Torres

ABSTRACT

This study explores how narratives within communities affected by the All-Out war of 2000 contribute to the creation and transmission of enemy images against the government. It examines the role of these stories in fostering a social identity that otherizes the government and discusses the mechanisms of vertical transmission of these images from parents to children. The paper also considers the implications of these narratives for recruitment into violent extremist groups and suggests strategies for reframing stories to mitigate their impact on borrowed trauma.

KEYWORDS

Enemy images, Meranao narratives, violent extremism, social identity, borrowed trauma, narrative reframing

INTRODUCTION

The Southern Philippines has long been marked by complex socio-political dynamics and prolonged conflicts, deeply rooted in historical grievances and cultural distinctions. One of the most intense episodes in this turbulent history is the 2000 All-Out War against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which significantly impacted the political landscape of the Philippines and deeply affected the lives of those in Kauswagan and Munai in Lanao del Norte (Lara, 2014; McKenna, 1998). The response to this conflict, primarily fought in the Mindanao region, was part of the broader struggle for autonomy and self-determination by the Moro people. The ramifications of this conflict are still felt today, manifesting in political discussions, peace negotiations, and the everyday lives and community dynamics of the affected populations (Gutierrez & Borrás, 2004).

The origins of the conflict can be traced back to the historical marginalization and discrimination faced by the Moro people, an ethno-religious group in Mindanao. The Moros have historically resisted colonial and post-colonial subjugation, seeking autonomy and recognition of their cultural and religious identity (McKenna, 1998). The establishment of the MILF in the late 20th century marked a significant phase in this struggle, with the group advocating for an independent Islamic state in Mindanao. The Philippine government's response to these demands has oscillated between negotiation and military suppression, culminating in the 2000 All-Out War under President Joseph Estrada's administration, which aimed to decisively defeat the MILF (Gutierrez & Borrás, 2004).

The All-Out War had devastating immediate impacts on the civilian population. Extensive military operations, including aerial bombardments and ground assaults, resulted in significant casualties and widespread displacement. Over 900,000 individuals were displaced, with many seeking refuge in overcrowded and inadequately equipped evacuation centers (Santos & Santos, 2010). The destruction of homes, schools, and agricultural infrastructure further compounded the suffering, disrupting livelihoods and access to essential services. These immediate humanitarian consequences set the stage for prolonged socio-economic challenges and entrenched animosities (McKenna, 1998).

The long-term socio-economic impacts of the conflict are profound. The destruction of agricultural infrastructure and disruption of economic activities led to prolonged poverty and food insecurity in the affected regions. Many displaced individuals were unable to return to their homes, and those who did often found their properties and means of livelihood destroyed. This economic deprivation has had cascading effects on education, health, and overall community well-being (Lara, 2014). Additionally, the lack of effective post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts by the government has contributed to persistent feelings of neglect and marginalization among the affected populations (Gutierrez & Borrás, 2004).

Beyond the tangible socio-economic impacts, the conflict has also left deep psychological and socio-cultural scars. The trauma of violence, loss, and displacement has had lasting effects on the mental health and social cohesion of

the affected communities. Stories of the conflict, particularly those involving brutal violence and human rights abuses, have been passed down through generations, shaping collective memories and identities. These narratives often emphasize a dichotomy of "us" versus "them," perpetuating cycles of mistrust and animosity between different groups (Montiel, 2003).

Storytelling plays a crucial role in the vertical transmission of enemy images and collective memories. In Kauswagan and Munai, narratives of the 2000 conflict are shared within families and communities, embedding perceptions of past grievances and enemies in younger generations. These stories encode powerful images of the adversary, often portraying them as violent and untrustworthy, thus reinforcing group identities and animosities (Bar-Tal, 2007). The process of storytelling serves not only as a means of preserving history but also as a mechanism of socialization, where the younger members of the community learn about their heritage and the perceived injustices committed against their group (Volkan, 1998).

The continued transmission of these narratives influences contemporary community dynamics and individual identities. In Munai, where narratives of government oppression and military brutality are prevalent, there is a deep-seated resentment towards state forces. This resentment manifests in a strong sense of victimization and a desire for retribution, complicating efforts towards reconciliation and peacebuilding (Gershman, 2013). In Kauswagan, the focus on MILF attacks fosters a different set of dynamics, where the primary antagonists are seen as the insurgent groups, and the narratives underscore the need for security and protection. However, perceptions of government failure or excessive response also contribute to a complex view of state authority, oscillating between distrust and reliance (Santos & Santos, 2010).

The distinct narratives in Munai and Kauswagan present unique challenges to peace processes. In Munai, the emphasis on historical grievances and systemic injustices requires peace initiatives to focus on truth-seeking, acknowledgment of past wrongs, and tangible reparations. Efforts must be made to address the deep-rooted mistrust and provide platforms for genuine dialogue and reconciliation. In Kauswagan, peace processes must balance security concerns with socio-economic development and inter-community trust-building. Addressing the economic and social disruptions caused by past conflicts is essential to fostering a stable and cohesive community (Gutierrez & Borrás, 2004).

The Bangsamoro Peace Process and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) exemplify the critical role of storytelling in transitional justice. The CAB includes provisions for transitional justice measures to address grievances and human rights violations during the conflict. The Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), established under the CAB, focuses on documenting stories from victims to ensure their voices are heard in the peace process. This approach humanizes the victims and perpetrators, fostering empathy and understanding among conflicting parties. Highlighting personal stories and shared humanity aims to create a collective memory that supports restorative justice and social cohesion (Minow, 1998).

The TJRC's recommendations emphasize the need to acknowledge past atrocities and promote narratives that foster reconciliation rather than perpetuate enmity. One key recommendation is to establish mechanisms that address historical injustices suffered by the Bangsamoro people, ensuring that the stories of those affected by the conflict are incorporated into the region's history. This effort helps address immediate grievances and works towards long-term reconciliation and understanding (Hayner, 2011).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Understanding the mechanisms of narrative transmission and their effects offers vital insights for conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies. By addressing the enduring impacts of conflict narratives, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable peace and community resilience in conflict-affected regions. It aims to provide a framework for addressing the historical grievances that continue to affect inter-community relations and to propose narrative interventions that can facilitate healing and reconciliation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study on the vertical transmission of enemy images through storytelling in Kauswagan and Munai is anchored in several interdisciplinary theories that collectively illuminate the complexities of narrative transmission, community dynamics, and conflict resolution.

1. **Narrative Theory:** This theory provides insights into how stories shape human perception and identity. Narratives are actively constructed and reconstructed through social interactions and cultural practices, creating and sustaining social realities, including the formation of collective memories, identities, and the delineation of 'us' versus 'them' critical in conflict contexts.
2. **Social Identity Theory:** This theory explores how individuals' self-concepts are derived from perceived membership in relevant social groups. In Kauswagan and Munai, it explains how narratives about the All-Out War reinforce group identities and distinctions, solidifying a sense of belonging and differentiation that can either perpetuate conflict or foster social cohesion.

3. **Collective Memory:** This theory examines how groups remember their past and how those memories are embedded within social frameworks. It is pertinent to understanding how historical events like the All-Out War are remembered, commemorated, or forgotten within communities, shaping contemporary perceptions and behaviors.
4. **Conflict Transformation Theory:** This theory provides a framework for understanding how conflicts evolve over time and how they can be redirected towards more constructive outcomes. It emphasizes addressing underlying social structures and relationships that contribute to conflict, rather than merely seeking resolutions to immediate problems.
5. **Intergenerational Transmission:** This aspect examines how attitudes, values, and traumas are passed from one generation to the next, particularly in post-conflict settings, influencing how younger generations perceive historical events and their aftermath.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework visualizes how various theories interact to explain the vertical transmission of enemy images through storytelling within the context of Kauswagan and Munai. The narrative theory serves as the foundation, focusing on the role of storytelling in shaping human understanding and perception. These stories highlight historical grievances, cultural pride, or victimization, contributing to how groups see themselves and define their in-group versus out-group dynamics. Social identity and collective memory theories show how these narratives impact how communities remember conflicts and their aftermath. Conflict transformation efforts must consider how these narratives are transmitted across generations to prevent the recurrence of old patterns of hostility and violence. Intergenerational transmission examines how values, traumas, and narratives perpetuate certain perceptions and behaviors.

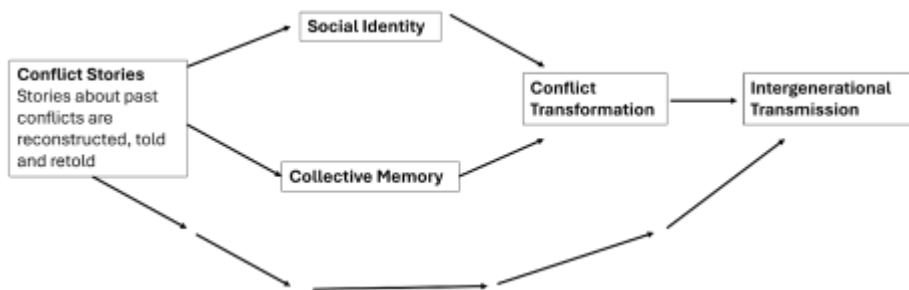


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively examine the intergenerational transmission of conflict narratives and their influence on the socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics within the communities of Kauswagan and Munai in Lanao del Norte. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. Identify the conflict stories from Munai and Kauswagan related to political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal, and environmental aspects that contain enemy images or narratives of pain and lack of healing.
2. Analyze the implications of these conflict narratives on community dynamics through focus group discussions among civil society actors.
3. Generate recommendations and affirmative actions to address these conflict stories through focus group discussions with community members and stakeholders.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The transmission of enemy images through storytelling is a complex topic spanning various disciplines. Traditional storytelling has long been a cornerstone in the transmission of cultural values, including the depiction of enemies. Folktales, myths, and legends frequently feature antagonistic characters who embody the negative traits that a community seeks to reject or guard against. These narratives serve to reinforce social cohesion by delineating clear boundaries between 'us' and 'them' (Niles, 1999; Lund et al., 2018). Many cultures use mythical creatures or evil spirits to symbolize external threats, fostering unity against perceived dangers (Krevolin, 2016). These stories also play an educational role, imparting moral lessons about the consequences of negative behaviors and the importance of virtues like bravery and solidarity. Such narratives not only entertain but also instruct listeners about societal norms and values (Lund et al., 2018).

Indigenous storytelling traditions offer unique perspectives on the transmission of enemy images. These stories are deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual contexts of Indigenous communities and often emphasize harmony and reconciliation rather than conflict (Bartlett et al., 2012). The concept of "two-eyed seeing" integrates Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, promoting a holistic understanding of narratives and their impacts (Elevating the uses of storytelling approaches within Indigenous health research, 2023). Indigenous stories frequently highlight the potential for reconciliation and coexistence, contrasting with many Western narratives that tend to depict enemies in a more

adversarial and dehumanizing manner. By presenting a more nuanced view of adversaries, Indigenous storytelling can foster empathy and understanding, challenging the simplistic dichotomy of good versus evil.

Narratology, the study of narrative structure, provides valuable insights into how stories are constructed and convey meaning. The structure and elements of a narrative—such as plot, character development, and symbolism—significantly influence how audiences perceive characters and events (Ryan, 2013; Thon, 2016). Analyzing these techniques helps researchers understand how enemy images are constructed and reinforced over time. For instance, narratives often use specific character tropes and plot devices to highlight the negative qualities and actions of enemies, creating a lasting impression on the audience. These narrative choices shape perceptions and attitudes toward depicted adversaries (Ryan & Thon, 2014).

The psychological effects of storytelling, particularly in the context of enemy images, are profound. Stories depicting enemies can evoke strong emotions such as fear, anger, and hatred, influencing individual and group behavior (Armstrong, 2003). Understanding these psychological impacts is crucial for developing strategies to counteract negative stereotyping and promote more nuanced perspectives. Recognizing the emotional power of narratives can help educators, policymakers, and media creators foster empathy and understanding rather than division and hostility.

Transitional justice refers to the set of practices, mechanisms, and concerns that arise following periods of conflict, civil strife, or repression, aimed at addressing past human rights violations and promoting reconciliation. Storytelling plays a significant role in transitional justice by providing a means for victims and perpetrators to share their experiences, thus facilitating healing and understanding (Teitel, 2000). In the context of the Mindanao Bangsamoro Peace Process, storytelling has been crucial in promoting reconciliation and understanding. The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), signed in 2014, includes transitional justice measures to address grievances and human rights violations during the conflict. The CAB emphasizes the importance of acknowledging past atrocities and promoting narratives that foster reconciliation rather than perpetuating enmity (Hayner, 2011). The Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), established under the CAB, has focused on documenting stories from victims of the conflict to ensure their voices are heard in the peace process. This approach helps to humanize the victims and perpetrators, fostering empathy and understanding among conflicting parties. By highlighting personal stories and the shared humanity of all parties involved, the TJRC aims to create a collective memory that supports restorative justice and social cohesion (Minow, 1998).

The Bangsamoro Peace Process is a critical example of how storytelling and transitional justice intersect to address the impacts of violent conflict. The conflict in Mindanao, primarily between the Philippine government and Moro insurgent groups, has resulted in significant loss of life and displacement. The peace process seeks to address these issues through comprehensive agreements and transitional justice mechanisms. The CAB includes provisions for transitional justice, recognizing that addressing past grievances is essential for lasting peace.

The TJRC's work involves collecting testimonies and personal stories from those affected by the conflict, which are then used to inform policies and initiatives aimed at reconciliation (Teitel, 2000). This storytelling process is vital for acknowledging the suffering of victims, holding perpetrators accountable, and promoting healing within the community. One of the key recommendations of the TJRC is the establishment of mechanisms to address the historical injustices suffered by the Bangsamoro people. This includes initiatives to ensure that the stories of those affected by the conflict are incorporated into the broader narrative of the region's history. By doing so, the peace process not only addresses immediate grievances but also works towards long-term reconciliation and understanding (Hayner, 2011).

In educational contexts, storytelling is a powerful tool for teaching history, ethics, and social norms. The portrayal of enemies in educational stories can shape students' understanding of historical conflicts and current events. Educators must be aware of the power of these narratives and strive to present balanced perspectives that promote critical thinking and empathy (Banaszewski, 2005). History lessons that include stories from multiple perspectives help students develop a comprehensive understanding of conflicts and the people involved. Presenting enemy images in a way that encourages critical analysis and empathy allows students to move beyond simplistic notions of good and evil and understand the complex realities of human conflict (Barrett, 2006).

Storytelling remains a vital means of transmitting cultural values and images, including those of enemies. Understanding how enemy images are conveyed through storytelling can help educators, policymakers, and media creators craft more responsible and constructive narratives that promote reconciliation and social cohesion. The case of the Mindanao Bangsamoro Peace Process illustrates the significant role that storytelling can play in transitional justice and dealing with the past, providing a model for other conflict-affected regions.

METHODS

Study Design

This qualitative research design focuses on narrative inquiry, particularly suited for understanding human experiences and the meanings ascribed to those experiences. The research involved gathering and analyzing narrative accounts from residents of Kauswagan and Munai.

Participants

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents from Munai and Kauswagan.

Category	Munai	Kauswagan
Gender		
Male	25 (50%)	20 (40%)
Female	25 (50%)	30 (60%)
Age		
18-25	10 (20%)	5 (10%)
26-35	20 (40%)	15 (30%)
36-45	15 (30%)	20 (40%)
46-55	5 (10%)	10 (20%)
Occupation		
Farmer	15 (30%)	10 (20%)
Fisherfolk	10 (20%)	5 (10%)
Small Business	5 (10%)	10 (20%)
Unemployed	10 (20%)	10 (20%)
Government Worker	5 (10%)	10 (20%)
Other	5 (10%)	5 (10%)
Education		
No formal education	5 (10%)	5 (10%)
Elementary	10 (20%)	15 (30%)
High School	20 (40%)	15 (30%)
College	10 (20%)	10 (20%)
Postgraduate	5 (10%)	5 (10%)

The demographic profile of respondents from Munai and Kauswagan provides a comprehensive overview for easy comparison. In terms of gender distribution, Munai has an equal split between male and female respondents (50% each), whereas Kauswagan shows a higher proportion of female respondents (60%) compared to males (40%). This gender difference could influence the types of narratives and perspectives gathered, particularly around gender-specific experiences of the conflict.

When examining age distribution, both communities have a significant proportion of respondents in the 26-35 and 36-45 age brackets. Munai has 40% of respondents in the 26-35 age group and 30% in the 36-45 age group. In Kauswagan, 40% of respondents fall in the 36-45 age group, followed by 30% in the 26-35 age bracket. This suggests that most respondents are in their prime working ages, which might shape their views on economic and social stability.

The occupational profile reveals that in Munai, farming is the predominant occupation (30%), followed by fishing (20%), unemployment (20%), and small business, government work, and other occupations each constituting 10%. In contrast, Kauswagan displays a more balanced distribution across farming, small business, unemployment, and government work (each 20%), with fishing and other occupations each representing 10%. This occupational diversity in Kauswagan could lead to a broader range of economic perspectives.

Educational attainment levels in both communities are similar, with the majority having completed high school (40% in Munai and 30% in Kauswagan). Both communities also have 20% of respondents with a college education. A small percentage of respondents in both areas have no formal education (10%) or have completed postgraduate studies (10%). These educational backgrounds can influence how respondents interpret and react to the conflict and its impacts.

The demographic data underscores the complex social fabric of Munai and Kauswagan, influencing how the conflict is experienced and perceived. For example, political narratives from Munai, such as the Bangsamoro forces' actions, might resonate more deeply with older respondents who have witnessed prolonged conflict phases. Economic anecdotes, reflecting hostage situations and loss of livelihoods, highlight the direct impact on agrarian and fishing communities. Socio-cultural stories illustrate the pervasive trauma and fear experienced, particularly among those with lower educational attainment who might have fewer resources to cope with psychological impacts. Legal narratives emphasize challenges in accessing justice and relief, painting government forces in a negative light.

Data Collection

The data collection process was carefully designed to be conflict-sensitive, ensuring respect and inclusivity while being culturally appropriate. Semi-structured interviews were at the core of this approach, chosen for their flexibility.

This method allowed interviewers to follow up on interesting points and explore topics in depth while providing a consistent framework. Open-ended questions were used to enable participants to express their views and recount their experiences in their own words, capturing the richness and complexity of their narratives. The questions focused on eliciting detailed stories about participants' experiences during the All-Out War and how these stories were shared within families and communities.

To further enhance trust and create a safe environment, informal listening sessions and Kapehan gatherings were conducted. These sessions were modeled after traditional Filipino informal gatherings where people come together over coffee to chat and share stories. This culturally familiar setting helped reduce anxiety and encouraged open communication. To make participants feel more comfortable and secure, no papers or recorders were used during these sessions. The presence of such tools could have made participants feel scrutinized or wary. Instead, the sessions felt more like natural conversations, allowing participants to speak freely. Interviewers engaged in active listening, giving full attention to the speaker and using verbal and non-verbal cues to show understanding and empathy. This approach helped build rapport and made participants feel valued and respected.

In addition to the interviews, the process involved reviewing local publications and community archives. This step was important for contextualizing the personal narratives within a broader historical and cultural framework. Reviewing these artifacts provided a deeper understanding of the historical context and community narratives that shaped participants' experiences, enriching the analysis of the personal stories shared during interviews. Moreover, these helped validate the personal narratives by cross-referencing them with documented events and widely recognized community stories, ensuring the reliability and accuracy of the collected data.

The identification of the interview schedule and the formulation of the questions were crucial steps that underwent a thorough process of examination, nomination, and analysis. This was done through a force-field analysis facilitated by Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao at Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT). This collaborative effort ensured that the questions were relevant, respectful, and sensitive to the participants' contexts.

To ensure that participants felt comfortable and safe during the interviews, two sets of data enumerators were employed. These enumerators were familiar with the localities of Munai and Kauswagan and could speak the local languages. This familiarity and linguistic capability were crucial in creating an environment where participants felt understood and at ease, encouraging them to share their stories openly. Furthermore, the data enumerators underwent a series of orientation and learning sessions on how to conduct the listening sessions. These training sessions equipped the enumerators with the necessary skills to facilitate discussions sensitively and effectively, focusing on active listening, empathy, and non-verbal communication techniques.

Sample questions from the interview guide included asking participants to describe their understanding of the events during the All-Out War in 2000, to share personal experiences related to the conflict, and to explain how these experiences were discussed within their family or community. These questions aimed to gather participants' perspectives on the conflict, highlight their personal interpretations and collective memories, and explore the transmission of conflict narratives within families and communities. This conflict-sensitive approach to data collection not only gathered rich and detailed data but also respected the participants' dignity and autonomy, making it a model for ethical and effective data collection in conflict-affected areas.

Sample Questions from Interview Guide:

1. Can you describe your understanding of the events that transpired during the All-Out War in 2000?
2. Did you personally experience any events related to the All-Out War 2000? If yes, please share your experiences and how they affected you.
3. How have these experiences been shared or discussed in your family or community?

Data Analysis

Data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data, providing an insightful narrative about the data set as a whole. Initial codes were generated by reading and re-reading the data, after which themes were developed based on the aggregation of these initial codes. This process was iterative, allowing for constant movement between the entire data set, coded extracts, and the analysis of the themes.

Key themes identified:

1. Enemy images in political narratives
2. Economic deprivation and its effects
3. Socio-cultural identity and conflict
4. Legal injustices and perceptions of oppression
5. Environmental impacts of conflict
6. Technological and infrastructure neglect

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional review board. All participants gave informed consent, and care was taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. Participants were also provided with support resources for any distress caused by recalling traumatic events during the interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Narrative Transmission

The narratives collected from Munai and Kauswagan reveal distinct patterns in the transmission of enemy images through storytelling, with significant implications for community dynamics and individual identities. The All-Out-War occurred in the year 2000, making the collection of conflict stories still highly relevant as it reflects the long-term impact of protracted conflict. The data show that these stories serve as potent vehicles for conveying accounts of historical injustices, human rights violations, marginalization, and other significant issues. The narratives collected are diverse and encompass the long-term political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal, and environmental impacts of the conflict in 2000. These aspects are thoroughly outlined in the results and discussion section of the paper, highlighting the extensive and multifaceted consequences of the All-Out-War.

In Munai, stories predominantly focus on government oppression and military brutality, often portraying the government forces as cruel and unjust. For example, one participant shared, "*Sa panahon sa gyera, grabe ang among kalisod. Ang mga sundalo, wala'y kaluoy,*" which translates to "During the war, our suffering was immense. The soldiers showed no mercy." Such narratives foster a deep-seated resentment towards state forces, reinforcing a collective memory of victimization and a desire for retribution. Another poignant example is, "*Gisunog nila ang among mga balay. Wala na'y nabilin para kanamo,*" meaning "They burned our houses. Nothing was left for us." This statement underscores the profound sense of loss and injustice experienced by the community.

In Kauswagan, narratives center around the violent incursions by the MILF and the resulting chaos and destruction. A participant recounted, "*Sa pagsulong sa MILF, wala na'y husto nga tulog ug kan-anan,*" or "During the MILF attack, there was no proper sleep and food."

These stories highlight the fear and instability caused by the attacks, emphasizing the need for security and protection. Another narrative, "*Gikuha as mga rebelde ang among mga baka,*" translates to "The rebels took our cows," illustrating the economic disruptions caused by the conflict. Such stories contribute to a complex view of state authority, oscillating between distrust and reliance, as residents seek protection while also critiquing government responses.

The collected narratives not only illustrate the immediate impacts of the conflict but also reveal how these stories are transmitted across generations. The process of storytelling within families and communities embeds perceptions of past grievances and enemies in younger generations, encoding powerful images of adversaries. For instance, a participant from Munai said, "*Ang akong anak nahimong PWD tungod sa kagubot,*" meaning "My child became a PWD because of the conflict." This narrative perpetuates a cycle of mistrust and animosity, as younger members of the community internalize these experiences of loss and suffering.

In Kauswagan, the focus on MILF attacks creates a different set of dynamics. One participant shared, "*Naguba ang among mga balay ug eskwelahan. Wa na mi kabalik sa normal nga kinabuhi,*" or "Our houses and schools were destroyed. We never returned to a normal life." These stories emphasize the disruption of daily life and the enduring challenges faced by the community. Perceptions of government failure or excessive response also contribute to a nuanced view of state authority, complicating efforts toward reconciliation and peacebuilding.

The collected anecdotes from Kauswagan and Munai provide a comprehensive view of the impact of the conflict on different aspects of life. These narratives are classified into political, economic, socio-cultural, legal, environmental, and technological categories, each illustrating how the conflict has shaped perceptions and identities within the communities.

Table 2. Categorized Anecdotes from Kauswagan and Munai with English Translations.

Category	Munai	Kauswagan
Political	"Gisunog nila ang among mga balay." ("They burned our houses.")	"Sa pagsulong sa MILF, wala na'y husto nga tulog ug kan-anan." ("During the MILF advance, we had no proper sleep and food.")
Economic	"Ang among mga tanom giwarak sa kagubot." ("Our crops were destroyed by the conflict.")	"Gikuha sa mga rebelde ang among mga baka." ("The rebels took our cows.")

Socio-cultural	"Nagikan mi sa among balay tungod sa kagubot." ("We left our house because of the conflict.")	"Ang among mga eskwelahan gipaakyat sa kagubot." ("Our schools were affected by the conflict.")
Legal	"Ang gobyerno wala nagtabang kanamo." ("The government did not help us.")	"Ang mga sundalo gipugngan ang among kalihukan." ("The soldiers restricted our movements.")
Environmental	"Ang kalibutan nadaot tungod sa kagubot." ("The environment was damaged because of the conflict.")	"Naguba ang among palibot sa gyera." ("Our surroundings were destroyed by the war.")
Technological	"Wala mi gamit tungod sa girera." ("We had no utilities because of the war.")	"Dili mi makagamit sa among mga gamit tungod sa kagubot." ("We could not use our equipment because of the conflict.")

For Munai, respondents noted that *"Gisunog nila ang among mga balay"* ("They burned our houses"), highlighting the direct violence and destruction inflicted upon their homes by conflict actors. This narrative emphasizes the community's aggression and lack of security during the conflict. In Kauswagan, the narrative *"Sa pagsulong sa MILF, wala na'y husto nga tulog ug kan-anan"* ("During the MILF advance, we had no proper sleep and food") underscores the disruption of daily life and basic needs due to the MILF's actions. The comparison shows that while Munai's narrative focuses on physical destruction, Kauswagan's narrative highlights the broader impact on living conditions.

In Munai, the economic impact is captured by *"Ang among mga tanom giwarak sa kagubot"* ("The conflict destroyed our crops"), indicating the destruction of livelihoods and food sources. In contrast, Kauswagan's respondents mentioned, *"Gikuha sa mga rebelde ang among mga baka"* ("The rebels took our cows"), pointing to the loss of livestock. Both narratives reveal significant economic disruption but through different means—crop destruction in Munai and livestock theft in Kauswagan.

Munai's narrative "*Nigikan mi sa among balay tungod sa kagubot*" ("We left our house because of the conflict") reflects forced displacement and its social implications. In Kauswagan, "*Ang among mga eskwelahan gipaakyatan sa kagubot*" ("Our schools were affected by the conflict") shows the disruption of education and community infrastructure. This contrast highlights how conflict affects social structures differently, with Munai experiencing more direct displacement and Kauswagan facing disruption in social institutions like schools.

The legal narratives differ significantly, with Munai respondents stating, "*Ang gobyerno wala nagtabang kanamo*" ("The government did not help us"), expressing a sense of abandonment and lack of governmental support. Kauswagan's narrative "*Ang mga sundalo gipugngan ang among kalihukan*" ("The soldiers restricted our movements") indicates restrictions and control by military forces. Though manifested differently, these narratives suggest a need for more legal protection and support.

Munai's environmental narrative "*Ang kalibutan nadaot tungod sa kagubot*" ("The environment was damaged because of the conflict") points to ecological destruction. Similarly, Kauswagan's "*Naguba ang among palibot sa gyera*" ("The war destroyed our surroundings") reflects environmental devastation. Both communities faced significant environmental impacts, underscoring the broader ecological consequences of conflict.

The technological impact is noted in Munai with "*Wala mi gamit tungod sa gyera*" ("We had no utilities because of the war"), indicating a loss of essential services and infrastructure. In Kauswagan, "*Dili mi makagamit sa among mga gamit tungod sa kagubot*" ("We could not use our equipment because of the conflict") highlights the functional disruption of available resources. Both narratives point to technological setbacks, but Munai focuses on a complete loss, while Kauswagan emphasizes usage disruption.

The findings from Munai and Kauswagan align with existing literature on conflict narratives, which often highlight how conflicts disrupt various aspects of life, including political stability, economic livelihoods, social structures, legal frameworks, environmental conditions, and technological infrastructure (Awonnatey & Ibrahim, 2023). However, these disruptions' specific experiences and expressions can vary significantly across different communities, as seen in the varied impacts on Munai and Kauswagan.

Studies on peace education in post-conflict societies, such as those reviewed by Bilali and Vollhardt (2015), emphasize the importance of understanding and deconstructing these narratives to promote reconciliation and peacebuilding. The narratives collected from Munai and Kauswagan reflect deeply entrenched perceptions and experiences that need to be addressed through targeted peace education programs to foster mutual understanding and trust (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013; Bar-Tal, 2011).

The collection of conflict stories from Munai and Kauswagan was specifically designed to uncover alternative truths from these two municipalities. The listening sessions revealed that Munai and Kauswagan have differing perceptions of conflict actors during the All-Out-War, particularly regarding the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines

(AFP). Munai residents may have unique perspectives and experiences that contrast with those of Kauswagan residents, highlighting the complexity and multifaceted nature of the conflict.

Understanding these diverse viewpoints is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, as part of the Bangsamoro Peace Process, truth-seeking mechanisms will be established to facilitate transitional justice mechanisms, with a particular focus on accountability, reconciliation, healing, and guarantee of non-recurrence of violence. These mechanisms must consider both dominant and alternative narratives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conflict. A round-table approach to historical analysis, which includes multiple perspectives, is essential to ensure that all voices are heard and validated.

Secondly, recognizing these alternative narratives can help address underlying issues and grievances that may persist within these communities. In acknowledging and addressing the different experiences and perceptions of conflict actors, it becomes possible to develop more effective and inclusive peacebuilding strategies.

Triggers, Accelerators, and Structural Causes of Enemy Images

The collected narratives reveal how specific stories serve as triggers, combining with accelerators and structural causes to form potent drivers of generation and transmission of enemy images. For instance, stories of government oppression and military brutality in Munai trigger deep-seated resentment and anger. These triggers, combined with accelerators such as historical grievances and systematic abuse, and structural causes like marginalization and lack of political representation, create a powerful combination driving individuals towards hate and possibly radicalization.

Table 3. Triggers, accelerators, and structural Causes of hatred and enemy images.

Triggers	Accelerators	Structural Causes
Government oppression	Historical grievances	Marginalization
Military brutality	Systematic abuse	Lack of political representation
Economic deprivation	Exposure to extremist propaganda	Weak rule of law

The table outlines three critical dimensions influencing conflict narratives: triggers, accelerators, and structural causes. These dimensions are not isolated, but often interact and reinforce each other. For instance, a trigger such as government oppression can act as an accelerator, intensifying existing structural causes like marginalization. Each dimension consists of specific factors that contribute to the perpetuation of conflict. Understanding these dimensions and their interplay helps comprehensively analyze the underlying causes of conflict and develop effective peacebuilding strategies.

Triggers such as government oppression and military brutality, which often provoke immediate and violent reactions from oppressed groups, are grave issues. Government oppression includes political repression, suppression of dissent, and human rights violations, which can ignite conflict as groups resist authoritarian measures. For instance, authoritarian regimes employing harsh control measures often lead to unrest and resistance, as documented by studies on various global conflicts (Goldberg & Ron, 2014). Military brutality, including excessive use of force and extrajudicial killings, directly antagonizes communities, fostering a sense of injustice and sparking retaliatory violence.

Accelerators like historical grievances and exposure to extremist propaganda play a significant role in intensifying conflicts. Historical grievances refer to long-standing issues, such as past injustices, land disputes, or ethnic tensions that have not been resolved. These grievances can be quickly reignited, acting as accelerators when new conflicts arise. Moreover, systematic abuse by authorities or dominant groups further fuels resentment and hatred, making it easier for extremist groups to exploit these sentiments through propaganda. Extremist propaganda capitalizes on existing discontent, often framing the conflict in terms of a struggle against a common enemy, thus accelerating the recruitment of individuals into violent extremist groups (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2015).

Structural causes include marginalization, lack of political representation, and a weak rule of law. Marginalization involves systematically excluding certain groups from political, economic, and social opportunities, creating a fertile ground for conflict. When communities feel sidelined and deprived of their rights, their grievances become deeply entrenched, leading to prolonged unrest. The lack of political representation exacerbates these feelings of exclusion, as affected groups have no legitimate platform to voice their concerns and seek redress. A weak rule of law also fails to protect citizens' rights and ensure justice, allowing abuses to go unpunished and perpetuating a cycle of violence and mistrust (Bruneau & Saxe, 2012).

Comparing these findings with existing literature, it is evident that these factors are universally significant in understanding conflict dynamics. However, the specific experiences and expressions of these triggers, accelerators, and structural causes can vary significantly across different communities, as seen in the varied impacts on Munai and Kauswagan. This underscores the potential for change through localized and context-specific peace education and conflict resolution approaches. Studies on peace education in post-conflict societies

emphasize addressing these underlying factors to promote reconciliation and peacebuilding effectively (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013). Understanding these dimensions helps comprehensively analyze the underlying causes of conflict and develop effective peacebuilding strategies. By addressing these issues, peace education programs can create awareness, facilitate mutual understanding, and promote human rights and non-violence values, ultimately contributing to a more peaceful and just society.

Conflict stories and violent extremism

Conflict stories play a significant role in shaping how people see themselves and their communities in the intricate web of societal narratives. The stories harvested describe suffering, injustice, and persecution, impacting how people from Munai and Kauswagan perceive their place in the world. When people in these communities continuously hear narratives portraying them as victims of historical, social, or political wrongs, they can develop what is known as a victim mentality. According to the literature, victim mentality is characterized by a persistent sense of being wronged, feelings of helplessness, and the belief that external forces rather than personal actions control one's life.

The psychological impact of conflict stories is profound. Theories such as social identity theory and learned helplessness suggest that constant exposure to these narratives leads to erosion of an individual's sense of agency and self-efficacy making them more vulnerable to external influences that promise empowerment or retribution. For example, the vulnerability created by victim mentality provides fertile ground for recruitment by violent extremist groups. These groups position themselves as protectors or avengers of the victimized group. They offer a sense of purpose, belonging, and empowerment to those who feel marginalized or oppressed. Violent extremist groups use several key strategies in their recruitment efforts. They exploit these stories highlighting the grievances and injustices people face, presenting violence as a legitimate means of redress. Participation in violent acts is portrayed as a way to reclaim power and dignity, sharply contrasting with the helplessness associated with victim mentality.

Several psychological and social factors make recruitment more effective. Individuals with a strong victim identity may find solidarity in extremist groups that share and amplify their sense of victimization. Extremist ideologies often provide simple, black-and-white answers to complex problems, reducing the cognitive dissonance experienced by individuals grappling with their victim status. The promise of contributing to a more significant cause or avenging past wrongs can give life meaning and direction, especially for those who feel their lives lack purpose.

The interplay between conflict stories, victim mentality, and recruitment into violent extremist groups underscores the crucial role of narrative in shaping individual and collective identities. Thus, addressing the complex issue of recruitment into violent extremist groups necessitates a comprehensive approach. This includes promoting narratives of resilience and empowerment, providing

psychological support for individuals with a victim mentality, and developing strategies to counteract extremist ideologies. Understanding these psychological mechanisms is crucial in creating more effective interventions to prevent the spread of violent extremism. The urgency and complexity of this issue underscore the need for a multifaceted approach.

Conflict Transformation Initiatives

As the Central Government of the Philippines and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) strive to implement localized normalization processes, these findings serve as a vital resource. By capturing more context-specific data, FGD participants ensured that interventions were not only relevant but also practical, addressing each community's unique needs and circumstances. The government and civil society's prompt utilization of these findings can significantly expedite peacebuilding.

The insights from this study are not just informative; they are empowering, providing a roadmap for designing and implementing future interventions to promote peace and address the root causes of conflict. A detailed understanding of local perceptions and experiences of conflict actors, gathered through listening sessions, underscores the crucial role that policymakers and practitioners play in incorporating diverse narratives into the peace process. This approach ensures that interventions are contextually appropriate and more likely to gain community support and participation.

To effectively address the triggers, accelerators, and structural causes identified, conflict transformation initiatives must be comprehensive and culturally sensitive. These initiatives aim to mitigate the impact of conflict narratives and promote reconciliation and community resilience.

1. Socio-cultural initiatives are particularly vital, focusing on fostering mutual understanding and respect among different groups. This can be achieved through community dialogues, peace education programs, and cultural exchange activities that bridge divides and build trust.
2. Specific socio-cultural recommendations include intergenerational dialogues, which bring together different generations to share their experiences and perspectives, and the writing of local History, which helps communities document and understand their shared past.
3. Conflict-sensitive journalism also plays a crucial role in shaping narratives and promoting a balanced and informed public discourse.
4. Economic recommendations are equally crucial. Ensuring financial stability and opportunities can help alleviate some grievances that fuel conflict. Programs that support local businesses improve access to

education and vocational training and create jobs, which can address economic deprivation and reduce the appeal of extremist narratives.

5. Additionally, compensation as a form of economic and financial reparation is essential. Providing monetary compensation for losses incurred due to conflict can help rebuild lives and restore economic stability. Implementing policies that ensure equitable distribution of resources and opportunities can address feelings of marginalization and exclusion.
6. Environmental recommendations are essential for rebuilding communities and providing a stable foundation for peace. This includes repairing damaged school buildings and offering reparations for the loss of houses. Restoring educational infrastructure facilitates learning and serves as a symbol of recovery and hope for the future.
7. Similarly, providing reparations for destroyed homes helps rebuild lives and fosters a sense of justice and healing.
8. Environmental conservation projects to restore damaged ecosystems and improve land use practices can also promote cooperation and mutual benefit among conflicting groups.
9. Incorporating educational contexts into the study provides valuable insights into how conflict narratives are constructed and disseminated within academic institutions. Analyzing the content and delivery of lessons, especially in subjects like History, is crucial for developing students' critical thinking skills. This approach helps students carefully evaluate binarized stories and understand the complexities of local History. As facilitators of this process, educators play a vital role in fostering an environment that encourages critical analysis and open discussion.
10. Teacher training programs should include components that address identifying and mitigating biases and stereotypes in teaching. Educators can become more aware of the potential impact of their narratives and take proactive steps to promote a more balanced and inclusive perspective. This holistic approach ensures that educational institutions contribute positively to constructing and disseminating narratives, ultimately supporting peacebuilding efforts and fostering a more nuanced understanding of History among students.
11. In the local context, the vertical transmission of 'enemy images,' referring to negative or hostile perceptions of certain groups or individuals, occurs

between parents and their children and from teachers to students, as teachers are considered second parents in the Philippines. Teachers' voices, opinions, and stories are often regarded as highly credible by their students, facilitating the vertical transmission of these negative perceptions. Therefore, educators must examine how formal and hidden curricula transmit biases, stereotypes, and these 'enemy images.'

12. Scalability is a significant challenge given the vast variations in conflict contexts from region to region. The diverse drivers of conflict, including triggers, accelerators, and structural causes, underscore the complexity of generalizability and its potential application to other conflict-affected areas. This underscores the crucial need for further studies to delve into these variations in detail, a research endeavor that holds immense importance for our collective understanding of conflict dynamics. Future studies should adopt a comprehensive approach by collecting data from diverse conflict-affected areas. This will enable the development of a framework that accommodates varying local contexts, creating tailored interventions sensitive to each region's unique dynamics.
13. Understanding how conflict stories permeate digital spaces is crucial, as digital conflict has become increasingly important. Examining the role of social media, news outlets, and other forms of media in constructing and disseminating these narratives can provide valuable insights.
14. Furthermore, using artificial intelligence in this analysis, primarily through natural language processing and sentiment analysis, can enhance our understanding of conflict stories, providing additional value through mood meters and identifying tipping points that lead to creative conflict resolution.
15. While the digital realm is a significant arena for conflict narratives, the value of small-circle dialogues in Lanao's interior off-grid communities should be considered. These dialogues, often conducted without technology and equipment, serve as safe spaces for sharing and discussing conflict stories. Their unique role in conflict resolution underscores the need for a balanced approach incorporating advanced technological tools and traditional, community-based methods. This comprehensive approach, which is critical to understanding and addressing conflict narratives in both digital and offline environments, should be a priority for policymakers, practitioners, educators, and researchers involved in conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This study delves into the role of narratives within the conflict-affected communities of Munai and Kauswagan in Lanao del Norte, focusing on how these narratives contribute to creating and transmitting enemy images against the government. By examining the mechanisms through which these enemy images are passed down from parents to children, the study provides critical insights into how these narratives shape social identities and potentially contribute to recruitment into violent extremist groups. Drawing on interdisciplinary theories such as narrative theory, social identity theory, collective memory, conflict transformation theory, and intergenerational transmission, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding narrative transmission, community dynamics, and conflict resolution.

The narratives revealed distinct patterns of enemy image transmission through storytelling, with significant implications for community dynamics and individual identities. In Munai, narratives predominantly focus on government oppression and military brutality, fostering deep-seated resentment and reinforcing a collective memory of victimization and a desire for retribution. Conversely, narratives from Kauswagan center around violent incursions by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the resulting chaos and destruction, highlighting the fear and instability caused by these attacks and the community's need for security and protection.

The study's findings underscore the pivotal role of conflict narratives in shaping the identities and perceptions of communities affected by the 2000 All-Out War. These narratives, when perpetuated over generations, contribute to a persistent cycle of mistrust and animosity. The study identifies key factors such as government oppression, military brutality, historical grievances, and economic deprivation as significant triggers, accelerators, and structural causes of violent extremism, thereby highlighting their importance in the context of conflict resolution.

The findings underscore the potential for positive change through comprehensive and culturally sensitive interventions. Through the promotion of mutual understanding and respect among different groups, providing economic stability, restoring educational and environmental infrastructure, and incorporating educational initiatives that foster critical thinking and empathy, we can effectively mitigate the impact of these conflict narratives and pave the way for a more peaceful and harmonious future.

To effectively address the complex dynamics of conflict narratives and promote sustainable peace, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Encouraging storytelling that emphasizes shared experiences and collective humanity can significantly reduce the divisiveness perpetuated by conflict narratives. Structured community dialogues should be initiated to foster mutual understanding and trust among different groups. These dialogues should ensure that marginalized voices are included and heard, helping to break down barriers and build a more comprehensive understanding of shared histories and challenges.
2. Supporting community-driven projects that foster mutual understanding and respect is of paramount importance. Intergenerational dialogues, for instance, can bridge the gap between past and present, allowing different generations to share their experiences and perspectives.
3. Documenting local histories helps communities preserve their collective memories and learn from them.
4. Encouraging responsible and conflict-sensitive journalism can also shape public discourse to promote balance and empathy. The key here is community involvement, as it ensures local ownership and participation in conflict resolution efforts.
5. Economic stability is not an insurmountable challenge. It is fundamental to addressing grievances that fuel conflict. Programs designed to support local enterprises, improve access to education and vocational training, and create job opportunities can alleviate economic deprivation.
6. Compensation for losses incurred during conflicts can help rebuild lives and restore financial stability, addressing feelings of marginalization and exclusion.
7. Restoring and improving infrastructure, particularly educational facilities is crucial for rebuilding communities and providing a stable foundation for peace. Reparations for destroyed homes and the restoration of educational infrastructure serve as symbols of recovery and hope.
8. Environmental conservation efforts, such as restoring damaged ecosystems and improving land use practices, can foster cooperation and mutual benefits among previously conflicting groups.
9. Educational initiatives that incorporate critical thinking and empathy into curricula are vital for helping students understand and analyze conflict narratives. Educators play a crucial role in fostering an environment that encourages open discussion and critical analysis.

10. Teacher training programs should include strategies to identify and mitigate biases and stereotypes, ensuring that educational institutions contribute positively to constructing and disseminating balanced narratives.
11. Understanding how conflict stories spread through social media and other online platforms in the digital age is increasingly important.
12. Utilizing advanced analytical tools like artificial intelligence and natural language processing can provide insights into these narratives and help identify points where intervention can prevent the escalation of conflicts.
13. Maintaining traditional, community-based dialogue methods, especially in areas with limited access to technology, remains essential for fostering safe spaces for sharing and resolving conflicts.
14. Further research is necessary to explore the variations in conflict dynamics across different regions. By collecting data from diverse conflict-affected areas, researchers can develop frameworks that accommodate local contexts, enabling the creation of tailored interventions that are sensitive to each region's unique needs.

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