

# RELEVANCE OF FISHER'S MODEL OF THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION: THE CASE OF MALAYSIA'S MEDIATION TO THE BANGSAMORO CONFLICTS

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## ABSTRACT

*With the widespread occurrence of violence and ethnic conflicts globally, many countries have increasingly found themselves in a situation where they have failed to address their internal conflicts without mediations from external entities. Thus, the objective of the study is to examine and analyze the effectiveness of Malaysia's model of third party intervention to the Bangsamoro conflicts. It concentrates on the strengths and weaknesses of the peace building model of third party intervention as pursued by Malaysia. This paper is divided into two parts. The first part discussed Malaysia's quiet diplomatic approach in dealing with the Bangsamoro conflict, while the second explained the inclusivity of Malaysia. In view of this study found that Malaysia's model is effective and workable. It may have some who were left out, but they were all consulted by both the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), as opposed to other processes such as the Organization of Islamic Country (OIC) mediated Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) - Moro Nation Liberation Front (MNLF) peace negotiations. Therefore, there is nothing that resembles the inclusivity of the GPH-MILF peace process that characterized the exclusivity of the GRP-MNLF peace process.*

**Key words:** Quiet Diplomacy, Exclusivity, GPH-MILF Peace Process, GRP-MNLF Peace Process, Inclusivity, Rambo Diplomacy, Third Party Intervention

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has been actively involved in the Bangsamoro conflict since late 1960s. As a third party mediator, it started when the then Philippine's President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo requested for Malaysia's assistance to facilitate the then GRP-MILF peace process (now GPH-MILF peace process) in 2001. At that point of time, initiatives to draw up a peace settlement between the disputed parties were stuck and cannot break impasse by themselves. As a result, the GPH specifically sought Malaysia's help so as to convince MILF to continue peace talks with Manila. Such formal request from Manila significantly recognized the role of Malaysia as a third party in facilitating the GPH-MILF peace process.

The Bangsamoro conflict represents a watershed moment in its history. The long protracted war and the tense relations between the GPH and the MILF was accompanied by the fundamental changes in Manila-Bangsamoro relations and Bangsamoro-international relations. In a domestic context of more or less four decades of conflict and its fallout since late 1960s, the international context of the changing nature and the roles of the international actors, the political space was created for lasting, just, but practical and acceptable political peace settlement in the region. In other words, the domestic and international contexts have provided the space and desire for a change in addressing the Bangsamoro question. Such change is rooted in the development and consolidation of democracy in general, as well as the growing acceptance of the minority groups' quest for self-determination by the majority or the dominant groups. This led to a series of the GPH-MILF talks to resolve the Bangsamoro conflict.

However, the GPH-MILF talks have so many ups and downs. Just three months after it was launched, Philippine's military and MILF forces figured in a bloody encounters in Maguindanao and North Cotabato. The skirmishes led to the crafting in Cagayan de Oro City in July 1997 of the Agreement on General Cessation of Hostilities. The first major conflict that questioned the quality of the ceasefire pact erupted in 2000 when the then President Joseph Estrada declared an all-out war against the MILF. His (Estrada) policy led to the fall of the MILF major camps in the Southern Philippines such as, Camp Busrah in Lanao del Sur and Camp Abu Bakr at the tri-boundary of Maguindanao's Matanog, Buldon and Barira towns.

The peace talks collapsed twice during the premiership of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. In 2001, the then President Macapagal-Arroyo sought the help of Malaysia to help revive the GPH-MILF talks as a third party facilitator as pointed out earlier. The talks bogged down later in 2003 resulted from the military takeover of the MILF's supposed last frontier, the Buliok Complex at the boundary of Pagalungan and Pikit, North Cotabato.

The last of these spates of hostilities erupted after the aborted Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD). The "supposed" basis for the GPH and MILF as to setting up Bangsamoro Homeland in the Southern Philippines, initiated by chief negotiators of both parties (GPH and MILF) at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 5th August 2008 was however junked by the Supreme Court of the Government of the Philippines for not being constitutional. This action by the Philippine's Supreme Court did not dissuade both Manila

and the MILF to continue their peace negotiations in search for a peaceful, just, lasting and acceptable political settlement on the Bangsamoro question. So, on the 15th of October 2012, both disputing parties signed the Framework of Agreement on Bangsamoro (FAB) which eventually led to the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB) on the 27th of March 2014 that would pave way for the establishment of the Bangsamoro government in the region.

The credits attributed to the successfully signed FAB and CAB should not be given only to the GPH and the MILF. In fact, credits should also be given to the third parties who have worked hard and committed in convincing GPH and MILF to proceed with their peace talks. The third parties involved are the International Contact Group. A group of nation-states such as Britain, Japan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia as well as international non-governmental organizations such as the Asia Foundation, Conciliation Resources, Muhammadiyah and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, and the Malaysia-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) which comprise the European Union, Japan, Norway, Brunei, Indonesia and Libya. However, out of these third parties involved in facilitating the peace process in the Bangsamoro Homeland, Malaysia has been hailed as an unsung hero (Franco, 2013) due to its long standing role as facilitator in the peace process.

However, the current President Rodrigo Roa Duterte administration seems to be making good on his campaign promises that he would once address the Bangsamoro question by passing the shelved BBL. Thus, on November 7, 2016, Philippine President Duterte signed an executive order that reconstituted an inclusive Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) that redrafted an inclusive new BBL. It was (BBL) received personally by President Duterte with the presence of MILF Chairman Murad Ebrahim, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III and House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez. Currently, the proposed law was certified by President Duterte as urgent bill and promised it would be passed by May 2018 at the time of the writing of this article.

With this development, this paper was aimed to compare peacebuilding model of third party to the Bangsamoro conflict, with particular focus between Malaysia and OIC. The article used the qualitative method. It also relied on the historical-analytical approach. This method allows the author to examine both the strengths and weaknesses of the peacebuilding models of both Malaysia and the OIC. The data were collected through archival and library research. Interviews with some experts and participants on the GPH-MILF peace process was also conducted. Thus, this article mainly highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the peace building models, both Malaysia and the OIC.

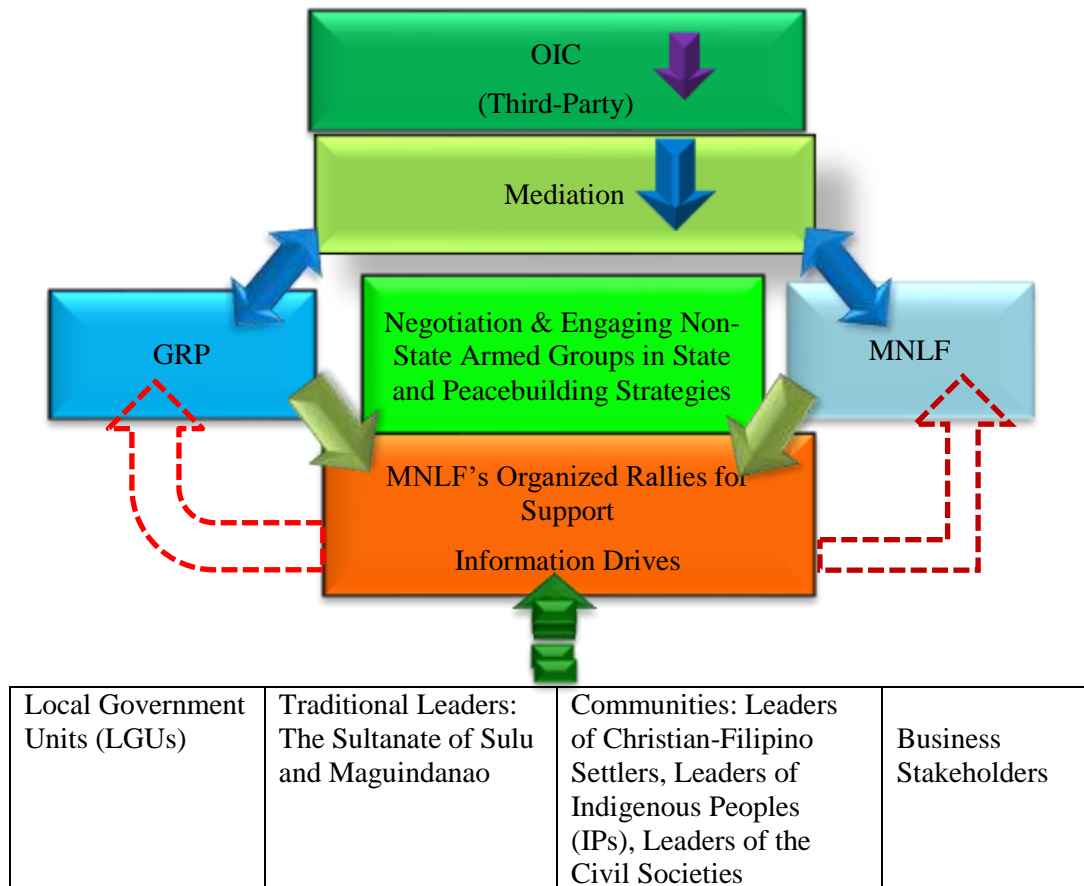
## **2. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS: MODEL OF THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION**

In most cases, especially those stronger actors (state actors), tend to reject third party intervention (as opposed weaker actors) because they perceived it as an intervention in their domestic affairs. This attitude, however, is changing as in recent years major violent conflicts occurred within the states rather than between states (Lingga, 2006; Harris & Reilly, 2003; Fisher, 2011). So, when disputants are stuck and could not overcome impending stalemate, third party intervention would become a necessary evil (Lingga, 2006). Conflicting parties, in most, if not all, societies and at all levels of social interactions. They have had access to external actors to whom they can turn to when they find they are unable to maintain their differences (Fisher, 2011) and it can be done by any actors (individuals, states, etc.) with resources and interest (Bercovitch and Gartner, 2009). Interestingly, early in 2006, Fisher already developed a sixfold typology of pacific interventions that he claimed are applicable at both domestic and international levels (Lingga, 2006).

## 2.1. Pre-Model of Third Party Intervention: OIC

### 2.1.1. Rambo Diplomacy

For its Rambo approach, the OIC led mediation often used open diplomacy in bringing two disputing parties to the negotiating table. Perhaps, more explicit use of pressure against Manila was in 1973 during the Benghazi meeting in Libya when the Pan-Islamic organization created the Quadripartite Ministerial Committee with the mandate of looking into the conditions of the Bangsamoro homeland. Members of the committee included Saudi Arabia, Libya, Senegal and Somalia.



**Figure 1** OIC’s Peacebuilding Model of Third-Party Intervention

Source: Modified by the author’s

Thus, the OIC usually or often applied pressure on both the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), more particularly, against the GRP to settle its dispute peacefully with the MNLF under Nur Misuari leadership. For instance, when the then Philippine’s President Ferdinand E. Marcos was reluctant to any sort of third party intervention, the OIC, more specifically the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Libya imposed an oil embargo against the Philippines in order to force the latter to negotiate with the MNLF. This “Rambo approach” was effective in forcing both conflicting parties, especially the GRP to negotiate with the MNLF so as to reach peaceful political settlement to the Bangsamoro problem. Evidence for this claim is the conclusion of the 1976 Tripoli agreement and the 1996 Jakarta Final Peace Agreement, which Vitug and Gloria claimed as success (Vitug and Gloria, 2000). This has been, however, where he reinforced his repudiation by quoting the then OIC Secretary General Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu as saying: Wtth regard to the Philippines, ten years have elapsed since the final peace agreement was

signed by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996. Regrettably, this peace agreement did not bring real peace. Disagreement on the interpretations of some provisions of the agreement led to the resumption of hostilities (Lingga, 2006).

Going back to OIC's Rambo approach and open diplomacy, this model forced the then Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos to appease the OIC by negotiating with the MNLF under Nur Misuari leadership and finally both conflicting parties signed the 1976 Tripoli agreement. This approach (OIC's applied pressure against both conflicting parties) worked especially against the GRP because oil was fundamental to the running of the Philippine economy and any disruption would have meant a steep decline in the country's GDP (Harris, 2005). This was echoed by Lingga when he argued that it was a clear signal from the Pan-Islamic organization directed against the administration of the then President Marcos that the former was not taking lightly the situation of the Bangsamoro in the Southern Philippines (Lingga, 2006). Indeed, such perceived pro-Bangsamoro policy was reinforced in MNLF's recognition as a sole Bangsamoro legitimate representative to the OIC- representing the Bangsamoro community, which angered GRP and many Christians-Filipino people. To further show their seriousness, in 1977, the OIC officially accorded the MNLF an observer status in the Pan-Islamic organization.

Based on the facts pointed out earlier, the author argued that OIC leadership as a third party mediator was preoccupied of reaching an agreement between the MNLF and the Philippine government by using their economic leverage (oil) and political bargaining power to force both conflicting parties to come into an agreement and negating conciliation and consultation which are crucial for a success (implementation) of any signed agreement. As a result, the 1976 Tripoli Agreement and the 1996 Jakarta Agreement were not only rejected by the Filipino people, but even both conflicting parties were not faithful to it. In this regard, the author strongly believed that the OIC intervention in the Mindanao conflict deserves the accolade for brokering the agreements, but it was unsuccessful in making parties to comply with the terms (Lingga, 2006).

In addition to the above, part of the problem of the GRP-MNLF peace agreements (the 1976 Tripoli and 1996 Jakarta GRP and MNLF peace agreements) were that after they were signed, a road map of implementation was not mapped out. Both the GRP and MNLF including the OIC as a mediator failed to discharge their responsibilities by ensuring a faithful implementation of those signed agreements between the GRP and the MNLF by not working out on the nitty-gritty of its implementation. This was a very tiresome job that both Manila and MNLF were supposed to do, but they failed. At this juncture, it has been argued that both disputing parties have to work out a tedious road map for its implementation, the 1976 Tripoli and 1996 Jakarta GRP and MNLF peace agreements, to ensure success that whatever agreement reached would solve the problem that fuelled the violent conflict (Lingga, 2006). Also, Malaysia seemed to have learned from this failure. As a result, Malaysia together with both the conflicting parties, the Government of the Philippine or GPH and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), came out with procedures and institutional structures in determining whether the GPH-MILF peace agreements are implemented or not.

### ***2.1.2. Quiet Diplomacy***

News of successful conclusion of a peace agreement in the Philippines is not uncommon. The OIC mediated GRP-MNLF peace process where both Government of the Republic of the Philippines GRP and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) twice signed peace agreements, the 1976 Tripoli Agreement (Libya) and the 1996 Jakarta FPA (Indonesia). So, Malaysia's success story on its role as mediator on the conclusion of the CAB between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation (MILF) is not

unusual. In addition to that, there are many success stories of disputing parties around the world that came into agreements such as the conclusion of the Indonesian government peace with GAM in Aceh, Colombian government peace agreement with Marxist rebels (FARC) and so on. However, what really caught the attentions of many pundits and, thereby generated much debate is not just Malaysia's success, but rather about Malaysia's unique model of settling disputes that worked in the Bangsamoro conflict. In this connection, Lingga explained that:

In relation to the above, Malaysia is known for quiet diplomacy. Its preference to "quiet diplomacy" is very much rooted from Malays' cultures characterized by some as one of the most feudalistic societies in the ASEAN region despite of its currently known modernity. Malaysia's mediators travelled to Manila to meet GPH peace panels and their principal. They listened and discussed with them issues pertaining to the GPH-MILF peace process. After securing positions of the GPH, then they travelled to Cotabato City, Philippines and did similar ways so as to get MILF positions. Apart from Malaysia, International Contact Group (ICG) also shuttled to both conflicting parties by assisting them through giving their expertise and sharing their experiences.

This process was very effective in identifying points of disagreement between Manila and the MILF where two conflicting parties were stuck in their formal negotiations. It was also aimed to lower tensions between GPH and the MILF and thereby encourage them to go back to the negotiating table. As Fisher argued in his work titled "Methods of Third-Party Intervention," that conciliation is appropriate where a trusted third party provides an informal communication link between parties to identify the issues, lowering tension and encouraging direct interaction, usually in the form of negotiations (Fisher, 2011). In fact, this approach (Malaysia's conciliation) was very crucial to the conclusion of both the FAB and CAB. This process continued throughout the GPH-MILF peace process.

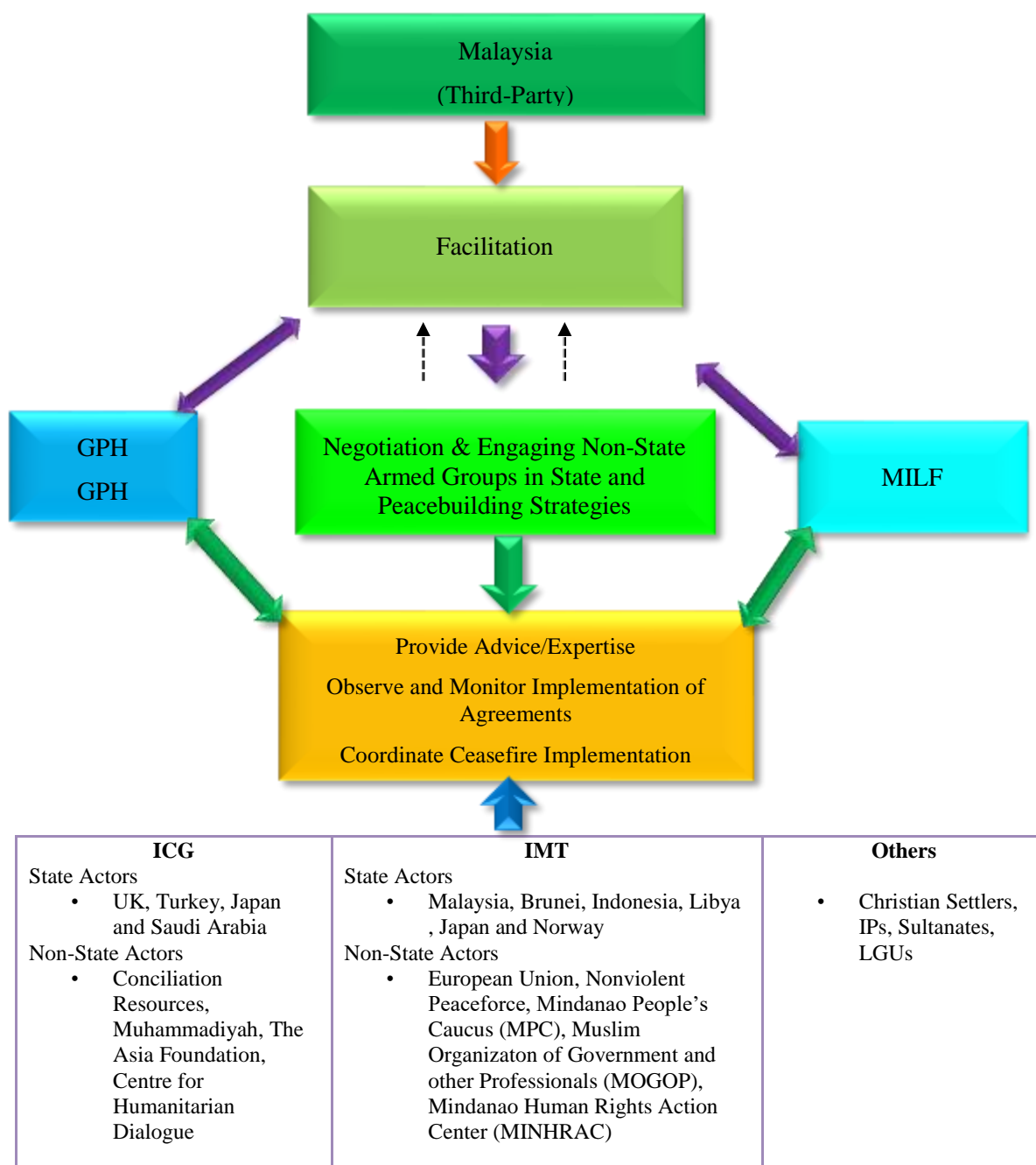
To ensure further its smooth process, Malaysia patiently waited the right time for both conflicting parties to discuss face-to-face. So, when Manila and the MILF agreed to meet and negotiate peace in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, it (Malaysia) did not just let them meet and discuss peace in one room. For instance, even though the GPH and the MILF peace panels were in one hotel somewhere in Malaysia's Capital, Kuala Lumpur, still Malaysia shuttled again from one room (GPH panel) to another room (MILF panel) to avoid untoward incidence. This approach was in line with the Fisher's description of a situation where two disputing parties usually maintain a respectful relationship... and are jointly concerned with achieving joint gain on objective interests, but they are hesitant to move into negotiations (Fisher, 2011). In a moment of deadlock where peace negotiations became stuck, Malaysia seemed it appropriately to applying *muafakat* (consensus, willingness to compromise) and *musyawarah* (consultation, dialogue, no public confrontation) model of third party intervention which are rooted on Malays' dispute settlement. So, Malaysia throughout the process worked hard to make sure that both conflicting parties willingly agreed to the talking points of the negotiations and were ready to meet their counterparts in a less combative mood. Malaysia creatively engaged both disputing parties, more specifically, when there was a deadlock in the peace talks. In this regard, Lingga revealed that:

Thus, Malaysia's quiet shuttled diplomacy was usually intense whenever the GPH and MILF's negotiations stuck as pointed out earlier. When the right came, Malaysia, invited both parties to sit at the negotiating table and discuss the agenda of the meeting. As what a MILF Roving Ambassador correctly described, when he said that Malaysia wanted to make sure that both parties were not only reading the same book, but at least the same page if not paragraph (Dawan, 2017). So, Malaysia's sound coordination was very instrumental in bringing disputing parties into the negotiating table with less risk of spoiling the GPH-MILF peace

process from its very start. Malaysia’s model of third party intervention, quiet diplomacy, helped to avoid confrontation between the GPH and the MILF peace panels.

**2.1.3. Inclusivity**

Perhaps, another interesting aspect of both Malaysia and OIC’s peacebuilding models was the issue of inclusivity versus exclusivity. For a better understanding of the issues surrounding the peace processes between the Manila and the Bangsamoro, this article briefly surveyed major issues and debates, not only the GPH-MILF peace process, but also the GRP-MNLF peace process. It specifically examined the conduct of both Malaysia and OIC’s peacebuilding third party intervention to the Bangsamoro conflicts. To begin with, the author looked at the model of Malaysia’s third party mediation and how it was applied to the GPH-MILF peace talks. In addition, to ensure the inclusiveness of the GPH-MILF peace process, Malaysia



**Figure 2** Malaysia’s Multi-Track Peacebuilding Model of Third-Party Intervention

Sources: Modified by the author’s



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Encouraged both conflicting parties to conduct intensive consultations among affected stakeholders in the Philippines while maintaining its Malays’ quiet diplomacy through *muafakat* and *musyawarah* as pointed out earlier. At this juncture, parallel processes, whereby leaders or representatives from Local Government Units (LGUs), traditional leaders, local civil societies and other stakeholders were given access to observe or even in some occasions were allowed to engage directly with the GPH, MILF and mediator at the negotiating in figure 2.

Recognizing the role that interested countries and INGOs can play in supporting the success of the GRP-MILF peace process (now GPH-MILF peace process), the Government of the Philippines, the MILF and Malaysia as a mediator, established institutional structures such as ICG, IMT and others (refer to diagram 3 below) that aimed to provide a more inclusive peace mechanism. In this regard, it is claimed that: “In Mindanao, diplomats and INGOs developed a strong sense of partnership, providing complementary expertise. For example, Japan focused on funding infrastructure projects, whilst the UK shared lessons from the Northern Ireland peace process. Conciliation Resources provided an analysis of draft documents from the peace panels and discussion papers on transition, normalization and the devolution of policing. TAF focused on strengthening governance. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) brought in high profile ‘eminent persons’ to input on topics such as power sharing and wealth sharing. Muhammadiyah brought its experience of providing health and education services in Indonesia” (Democratic Progress Institute, 2014).

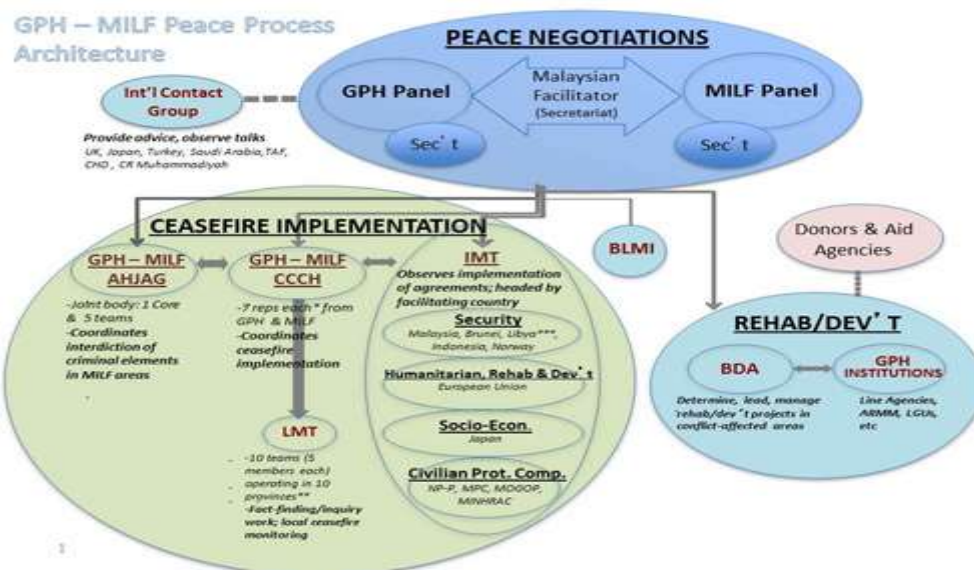
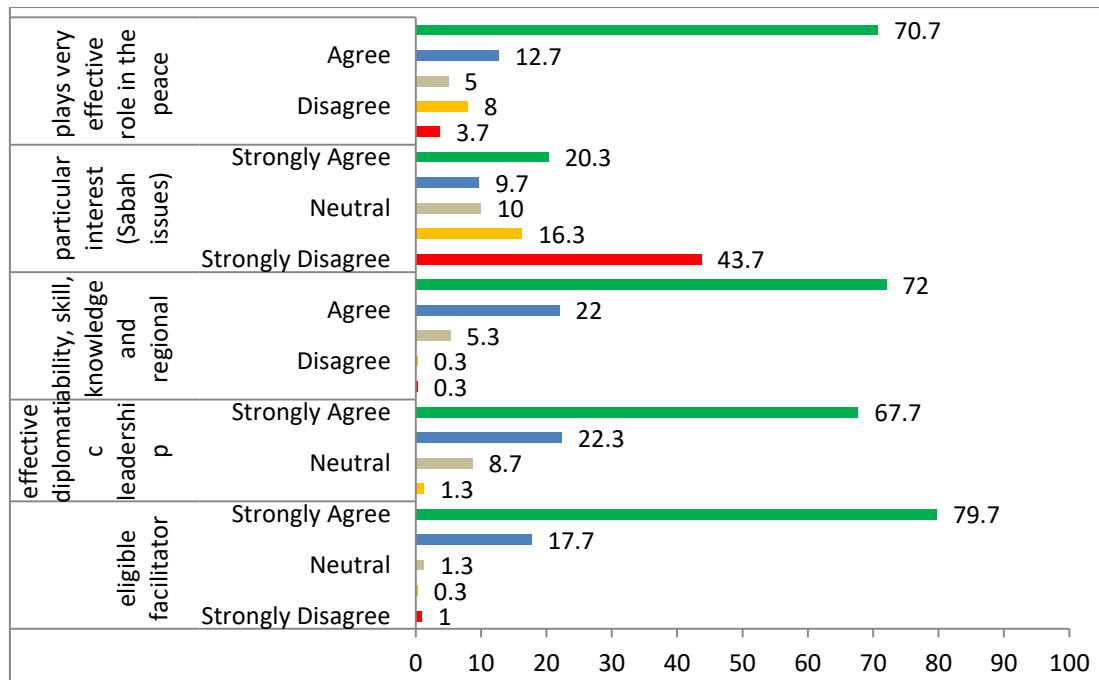


Figure 3 Institutional Architectures of the GPH-MILF Peace Process

Perhaps, Malaysia believed that this process can be a useful way of broadening inclusivity and gaining buy-in from the wider population, which consequently gained praise from the people of the region, especially the Bangsamoro community. This can be seen in a 2017 survey conducted in six mainly Bangsamoro villages in the Southern Philippines. The survey showed that 70.7 percent of the surveyed respondent’s strongly agreed that Malaysia played a very effective role in the GPH-MILF peace process (refer to figure 4).





**Figure 4** Survey Conducted in 2017 at three cities and three Villages in Mindanao

Source: Modified by the authors

The aim was to ensure wider acceptability, sustainability and success of the peace process. By doing so, it required more inclusive and wider engagement of those stakeholders of the GPH-MILF peace process. At this juncture, Lantong, Associate Professor at Cotabato Polytechnic State College (CPSC), argued that for the GPH-MILF peace process to succeed in those difficult process, everybody should be on board so as they would feel ownership of any outcome of it (Lantong 2017, Interview with the Author: Lingga, 2014). It seemed Malaysia learned lesson from the failure of the OIC led GRP-MILF peace process in the region. If we look back briefly multi-track Diplomacy as what OIC applied to the GRP-MNLF peace process, the elites have the monopoly of decision-making process with respect to negotiations. In most cases, these elites consist of prominent leaders who have leverage in the negotiation process. However, triangular relationships among GPH, MILF and Malaysia, GPH and MILF-plus other stakeholders was creatively designed to make it more inclusive as much as possible so as to ensure wider acceptability and success of the GPH-MILF peace process.

In order not to repeat history (exclusivity of the GRP-MNLF peace process), Malaysia and other teams of mediation form, particularly paid attention into bringing all communities at the grassroots level irrespective of their political affiliations were widely consulted to the activities of the GPH-MILF peace process so as to make the process more inclusive. To substantiate this claim, Diaz revealed that the GPH-MILF peace process records, that were submitted to the Philippine senate hearing which showed that even MNLF Chair Nur Misuari, the Sultanate of Sulu and other critics of the GPH-MILF peace process were consulted by MILF (Diaz, 2016). In addition to that, the 2017 BTC BBL draft submitted to the Office of the Philippine President and certified by President Duterte as urgent bill embodied inclusivity. For instance, other rival rebel groups, including MNLF were invited. Some were even appointed as members of the Bangsamoro Transitional Committee (BTC) as depicted in table 1.

**Table 1** An Expanded Composition of the 2017 BTC

	<b>GPH Appointees</b>	<b>MILF Appointees</b>
1.	Jose I. Lorena	Ghadzali Jaafar (Chairman)
2.	Maisara Dandamun-Latiph	Mohagher Iqbal
3.	Samira Gutoc-Tomawis	Firdausi Ismail Abbas
4.	Mussolini Sinsuat Lidasan	Abdulraof Abdul Macacua
5.	Susana Salvador-Anayatin	Ibrahim D. Ali
6.	Hussin Amin	Haron M. Abas
7.	Romeo Saliga	Raissa H. Jajurie
8.	Hatimil Hassan (MNLF)	Said M. Shiek
9.	Firdausi Ismail Y. Abbas (MNLF)	Melanio U. Ulama
10.	Omar Yasser C. Sema (MNLF)	Gafur M. Kanain

**Source:** The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, available online at: <https://peace.gov.ph/2017/02/opapp-announces-new-members-expanded-bangsamoro-transition-commission/>;

In fact, it showed that inclusivity is embodied in the BTC BBL draft, which assured the participation of other stakeholders by giving reserved seats to traditional leaders, IPs, settlers and others. The MILF also made it clear that Bangsamoro is not for MILF only, it is for everybody (Diaz, 2016). Indeed, such inclusivity of the GPH-MILF peace process was retained in the 2017 BTC BBL draft submitted to the office of President Duterte. Again, it has also retained in Senate Bill or SB 1717 filed on 28 February 2018 by Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri, chair of the Senate’s Subcommittee on BBL. 2018 SB1717 on BBL clearly stipulated the importance of inclusivity so that affected stakeholders would be left over.

In addition to the above, such inclusivity of the GPH-MILF peace process is nowhere to be found in the GRP-MNLF mediated by the OIC. In fact, some evidences suggested that some groups indicated their intentions to be part of the GRP-MNLF peace process, but they were categorically rejected by MNLF Chair Nur Misuari. In this regard, Diaz revealed that during the 20-year off-and-on GRP-MNLF negotiations, the MILF and all others were left out; neither were they consulted. In the Jakarta peace talk, according to a report, the MILF was interested to participate, but MNLF rejected it (Diaz, 2016). Based on the statements mentioned above, Diaz indicated that an exclusive characterization of the GRP-MNLF peace negotiations was the reason behind why the then Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos invited the MILF under the Sheikh Salamat Hashim leadership to negotiate with the Philippine government in 1996 right after the signing of the Final Peace Agreement between Philippine government and the MNLF under Misuari leadership (Diaz, 2016).

With this, it becomes imperative to recognize the efforts of both the GPH and MILF to make the process more inclusive as much as they can by reaching other stakeholders of the GPH-MILF peace process. This assertion was reinforced by Malaysia, when former Malaysian facilitator Dato’ Tengku Ab Ghafar Bin Tengku Muhammad for the GPH-MILF peace process described the negotiations between the Government of the Philippine (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as “one of the most inclusive negotiations” in the ASEAN world (Capistrano, 2007).

In fact, aside MNLF-Misuari, only the Tedurays in Maguindanao among the IPs in the country actually voiced their concerns on the provisions of the BBL. They fear of losing their economic, political and cultural benefits that were guaranteed in IPRA when Bangsamoro government would finally be established in the Bangsamoro homeland. The traditional leaders, including those from the Sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao have no known serious issues with GPH.

In addition to Malaysia, other actors such as states, IGOs, INGOs and NGOs were also involved in this constructive engagement towards middle-range groups through organizing peacebuilding activities. These activities included Providing advice and/or expertise, observing and monitoring the implementation of agreements, coordination of ceasefire implementation, establishment of Peace Zones, solidarity rallies and/or peace walks, grassroots Training, healing process and post-war trauma which later resulted in a positive peace structure and conducive environment that supported the peacebuilding process. Participants or actors involved in this constructive engagement can be categorized into several groups that would be discussed next.

First, is the International Contact Group (ICG). Since the end of the Cold War there has been a general pattern of a more diversified, and to some extent, more innovative and sophisticated form of peacebuilding models of third party intervention. Indeed, at present most of the peace processes involve some form of international mediation support structures, such as Contact Groups, Friends, Groups, Troikas or Quartets; have traditionally been composed of states and multilateral organizations. This was echoed by Fisher when argued that conflict transformation required conflicting parties to agree and eventually create political, economic and social structures that will engender positive peace with social justice in a longer-term (Fisher, 2011; Notter & Diamond, 1996). In the case of the GPH-MILF peace process, recurrent ceasefire violations led both panels of the GPH and the MILF and their principals to realize and thereby recognize the important role of support mechanism that would address the challenge of repeated ceasefire violations on the ground, mainly between AFP personnel and BIAF elements (MILF's military wing), that would potentially jeopardize the whole process. So, both parties to Malaysia's mediation, agreed to create support mechanism, the ICG, that would accompany and mobilize international support for the peace process" and to exert proper leverage and sustain the interest of the parties as well as maintain a level of comfort that restores mutual trust (See, 2009 Framework Agreement on the Formation of ICG).

Consequently, both conflicting parties agreed to form a contact group, International Contact Group or ICG, as a compromise to the MILF's eagerness to internationalize the peace talks and the Philippine government's aversion to external interference in domestic affairs, more specifically, on the issues of ceasefire violations. This group (ICG) consists of four states actors such as the United Kingdom, Turkey, Japan, Saudi Arabia and non-state actors such as Conciliation Resources, Muhammadiyah, the Asia Foundation and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. ICG, however, is the first ever hybrid International Contact Group, involving both states and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in the world. Its active involvement and substantial contributions to the success of the GPH-MILF peace process highlighted an increasingly crucial role of INGOs in future peace negotiations in the ASEAN region and beyond.

Though, ICG was the creation of the both the GPH and the MILF together with Malaysia as their mediator, but in several instances, ICG was able to influence both the GPH and MILF on how issues be resolved through giving their expertise and experience. The groups were given privileges by the GPH and MILF together with Malaysia as a mediator to participate during and observe the peace negotiations between the GPH and the MILF peace panels

(Dawan, 2017). For instance, during the talks, ICG members quietly observed and took notes, occasionally responded to requests from both disputing parties and the mediator to comment on issues where their expertise crucially needed. In addition to that, they were also usually briefed by one or both parties before and after of every negotiation. ICG members were aware of the most of the nitty-gritty of the GPH-MILF peace process because of those privileges given to them. In some occasion where negotiations stuck, the group met with Malaysian mediator and shuttled between both panels to identify common ground or other ways forward.

Similarly, the ICG's role was also instrumental in bridging gaps, not only between the GPH and the MILF, but also between the disputing parties and their mediator. For instance, when the Aquino III assumed the Philippine presidency, he (Aquino III) wanted Malaysia to be replaced by another country (Indonesia) and the MILF categorically rejected and said that it would only negotiate with the GPH through the facilitation of Malaysia. Philippines' has been long suspicious of Malaysia's motive on its active participation in the Bangsamoro conflict, but GPH has to swallow it because it is desperate to address the Bangsamoro problem which has for long dragged the country into political instability, economic poverty and cycles of an endless violent conflict between the government and rebel forces. GPH understood that without Malaysia's involvement peace would be elusive forever. In this context, GPH was forced to accept Malaysia's facilitation or mediation in addressing the Bangsamoro question. So, in those difficult times, ICG was proven to be instrumental in bridging gaps between Manila and Kuala Lumpur.

Going back to ICG mandated role on the GPH-MILF peace process that is offering their expertise. Occasionally, one or both parties asked the ICG to produce draft documents for the discussions, such as terms of reference for some of the implementation bodies. ICG activity was particularly intense when talks twice reached an impasse: firstly, in the second half of 2010 when the newly elected of the GPH requested that Malaysia to be replaced with another country; and second, between August and November 2011 when the parties were unable to agree on working drafts of the final agreement. ICG members shuttled back and forth between parties, offering advice and exploring options to break the deadlock.

Second, the International Monitoring Team (IMT) involving Malaysia, Japan and Brunei. The International Monitoring Team is a hybrid monitoring body that has internationals and locals, civilian and military, states, IGOs and INGOs working together for peace. It is a joint effort by Malaysia, Brunei, Norway and the European Union, with a civilian protection component composed of the Mindanao Human Rights Action Center, Mindanao People's Caucus, Muslim Organization of Government Employees, and Nonviolent Peaceforce (Herbolzheimer and Leslie, 2012). One major interesting development on the conduct of the GPH-MILF was the increasing involvement of the civil societies or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the peace negotiation between the GPH and the MILF. In contrast to the GRP-MNLF and even at the onset of the GPH-MILF where civil societies were not allowed or consulted on issues affecting them. The MNLF under Misuari leadership, for instance, never consulted genuinely stakeholders, especially civil societies (refer also to diagram 1). Indeed, even within MNLF hierarchy, many top leaders of the organization were left out, especially those who differed with Misuari's strategic goals and leadership style (Taya, 2009; Diaz, 2016).

So, back to the civil societies, they had in the past complained about their lack of input in the peace process. In contrast to the old conduct of peace negotiations, the GPH-MILF since 2012 has one striking difference, that is the extent to which the MILF has undertaken concerted and systematic efforts to engage with civil societies, including through a series of community consultations (South, 2017; refer also to figure 2). For instance, after a wide range of consultations and dialogues with hundreds of Bangsamoro civil society organizations

throughout the region, Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society or CBCS issued their positions on the current GPH-MILF peace process (Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, 2018). Perhaps, one thing that needs to be recognized as far as to the involvement of the civil societies is the increasingly active participation of women in the GPH-MILF peace process (Rood, 2013).

This was quite interesting where in the past that women were always in the back seat of the peace process previously, if they were not totally left out. However, the current GPH-MILF peace process has encouraged a wider participation of civil societies-including women's group. This approach is a new phenomenon which has generated much debate and interests in the Philippine's political discourse. No doubt that those women have been active even before, but the recognition of their (women) crucial roles in the peacebuilding and the seriousness of the disputing parties to get women on board are quite interesting (Herbolzheimer and Leslie, 2012).

### 3. CONCLUSION

In the light of the above analysis with the purpose to examine and analyze the effectiveness of Malaysia's model of third party intervention to the Bangsamoro conflicts. The study empirically found out that Malaysia's peacebuilding models of third party intervention in the Bangsamoro conflicts were more consultative, inclusive and successful than the other third parties involved in the mediation in the region. In fact, there is nothing that resembles the inclusivity of the GPH-MILF peace process that characterized exclusivity of other peace processes more specifically the OIC led GRP-MNLF negotiations. So, this study sheds light on why Malaysia's mediated GPH-MILF peace agreements seem to be succeeding, while others failed to address the Bangsamoro conflicts. The Malaysian mediation method stood out amongst others.

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