



SELINUS UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**REVISITING THE BANGSAMORO SEPARATISM
IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES THROUGH
THE LENS OF HISTORY**

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ABSTRACT

The Bangsamoro Separatism in Southern Philippines has been for more than four decades a major political concern and a security distress for the Philippine government, exacting hefty a burden on the republic's political stability, socio-educational and economic resources, displacing thousands of families, destroying properties and hindered essential economic infrastructures and development opportunities in the Bangsamoro homeland.

“In over three decades of violent conflict, more than 100,000 people have been killed, about one million persons rendered homeless and destitute, and between 200,000 to 300,000 Filipino Muslims have been forced to seek refuge in Sabah.” David (2003)

An examination and enquiry into the principal grounds and origins of the Bangsamoro separatism clearly reveals an interdependent blend of diverse factors which in the 70s led to a broadly accepted communal perception in the minds of the Bangsamoro separatists that the Philippine government has been devoid of any sincere and serious policy towards taking care of the common welfare and interest of the Bangsamoro people especially in providing adequate remedies for their protection, safety, survival, prosperity and economic development. The Bangsamoro now felt the urge to finally embrace the imperative need for “separatism” through armed struggle as their most decisive and ultimate means to ensure their existence and survival as a people.

This Dissertation will explore, examine and analyze the surrounding issues underling the fundamental causes and origins of the Moro Separatism and the national government's efforts to resolve the Moro conflict in its Southern front.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

At the southern end of the Philippine Archipelago lies Mindanao, the second largest Island in the Philippines with a population of about 25 million as of 2018. The Muslim Filipinos or The Bangsamoro or the Moro People as they are ethnically known are the most dominant among the cultural minorities in Philippine society. They comprise about 11% of the nation's population. (NCMF Estimate (2012) They mostly live in Mindanao, but a great number of them are scattered and established in major cities of the country propelled by a desire to settle for a quiet and serene life, a calm and peaceful environment where they can educate their children, find their livelihood, found their trade and businesses and practice their crafts and professions.

Long before the advent of Spanish colonialism in this part of the world, Moro communities were already flourishing in Sulu and Mindanao, with some degree of refined political structures in the form of "Sultanates." The Sultanates were the dominant traditional political administrations in the Moro land which continued to exist during the colonial period and even after Philippine independence though, at present, with bare symbolic influence. Stern (2012).

The Moro Sultanate which find its roots and origin in the basic tenets of Islam espouses peace, justice and respect towards humanity. Violence, aggression and hostilities against neighbors without basis in Islam are contemptuous concepts for the Moros. Hence, peace reigns in Mindanao during the Moro sultanates.

The Moro experience with conflicts began only after the advent of colonialism and the hostile policies of the Central government of Manila.

In the late 1500s, Spanish Conquistadors took control of the Philippines and began a three-century campaign to rid the Philippines of Islam (**Ethan P. Hawley, 2014**) as they had rid Spain of the Moors. In 1898, America won the Spanish-American War and purchased the Philippines at a fire-sale price of \$20 million during the settlement. (**Treaty of Paris, 1898**)

As a result of both Spanish and American colonial period, the history of the Moros as a people was marked by a constant struggle for survival and resistance to foreign aggression. This has brought the Moros into conflict with the colonialists and the Philippines government for the last three hundred years. **Majul (1988)**.

At present, unlike their resistance during the colonial era, the current struggle of the Moros are founded along religious and nationalist liberation movements. Pioneer of these movements are the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) under the leadership of UP Political Science professor Nur Misuari and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) under Cairo-educated Udtadz Hashim Salamat.

In the 1970s, right after its core members had completed its military training in Malaysia under the backing of the Malaysian government (**Krizza Janica Mahinay 2020**), the Moro National Liberation Front had launched a simultaneous and violent confrontation with the Philippine Government that the Marcos administration of Manila, faced by the adverse effects of the Moro insurgency on the economy, its destructive effects on human lives and properties at the domestic front, and the external Muslim and Arab pressure to end the conflict, Marcos had to settle for a Peace Agreement in 1976 in

Tripoli, Libya with the Moro insurgents providing for Moro autonomy in Mindanao. (**Tripoli Agreement, 1976**) Few months after its signing, Misuari however backed off from the peace covenant blaming Marcos of treachery in the implementation thereof.

After the fall of Marcos, despite strong opposition from the MNLF for being violative of the terms of the 1976 Tripoli agreement, President Cory Aquino pursued her own version of Moro autonomy, the “Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.” (**R.A. 6734, 1989**)

On 2 September 1996, Philippine Government reached another peace agreement with the MNLF but the same failed to end the Moro insurgency because another powerful Moro insurgent group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was opposed to this peace covenant. (**Jakarta Accord, September 2, 1996**)

Following East Timor as a model, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, espoused the idea of a referendum among the Moros to finally determine their fate and destiny within this nation – either to settle for Empowered Autonomy, Separatism or Independence. The idea nonetheless was immediately turned down by the government and hence the MILF continues to assume leadership of the Moro people in their struggle for self-determination.

When President Joseph Estrada assumed power in 1998, he vowed to develop Mindanao as a food-basket for the country. The goal was to infuse investments into the region as an essential hallmark of his government. In March 20, 2000, however, President Estrada or Erap as he is known, reversed his policy and declared an “All-Out War” with the MILF.

In 2001, immediately after assuming office succeeding President Joseph Estrada in a People Power II, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared his policy to revive the abandoned peace process with Moro rebel forces particularly the MILF.

And as gesture of her government's sincerity to recognize basic rights of the Muslims, two of Islam's most important celebrations were declared national holidays in the Philippines. Arroyo signed a law declaring *Eid'l Fitr* (Festival of Breaking Fast) a national holiday. **Republic Act No. 9177, November 13 (2002)**. Seven years later, *Eid'l Adha* (Feast of Sacrifice), which was only a regional holiday in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), was declared a national holiday. **Republic Act No. 9849, December 11 (2009)**.

For the Moro people, including this researcher, this policy is not just a political gesture of President Gloria's administration. It shows to the Moros that they have had their piece in this country, a right step for national unity and understanding though the Peace talks with the MILF have never produced concrete result following the decision of the Philippine Supreme Court declaring the 2008 Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) with the Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA) administration unconstitutional (**G.R. 183951, 2008**)

In 2010, Benigno Aquino III was elected president of the Republic of the Philippines and made peace in the south a key part of his platform which promised a more transparent, consultative peace process with the MILF. Under Aquino III's government, two important agreements were signed. - The 2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro designed primarily to put an end to the centuries-old Moro conflict in Mindanao.

In April 2013, the Bangsamoro Transition Commission was created with the responsibility to make a draft on the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) which would serve as the basis of a new Bangsamoro political entity. However, the Bangsamoro Basic Law failed to pass during the Aquino administration due the Mamasapano incident. (**Oplan Exodus, 2015**)

In 2016, upon Duterte's victory in the presidential election, he made on his campaign promise to push the process forward and in November 2016 signed a Executive Order which provides for the establishment of a new Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) to draft a bill on the Bangsamoro Basic Law. The BBL then was enacted into law as The Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) Republic Act No. **11054**, also known as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). It was finally **signed** into law by President **Rodrigo Roa Duterte** on July 26, 2018 and has been **ratified** by **majority** of the people in the Bangsamoro called for the purpose through a plebiscite on January 21, 2019. RA 11054 then gave birth to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao or the BARMM.

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This Dissertation on "Revisiting the Bangsamoro Separatism through the Lens of History" seeks to explore and revisit the historical foundation of the Bangsamoro Separatism in Southern Philippines and how the Philippine Government adopted, as a consequence, appropriate policies and measures to address the conflict.

Specifically, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How did the Bangsamoro separatism in Southern Philippines evolve and what are its major and fundamental causes?
2. How did the Spanish and American Colonialism contribute to the rise and growth of the Bangsamoro Separatism?
3. How did the Philippine government respond to the rise of the Bangsamoro separatism in Southern Philippines from the Marcos regime, Cory Aquino Government, Ramos Administration, Estrada Government, down to the GMA administration, the Aquino and the present Duterte Government especially in terms of each President's specific policies and programs in an attempt to finally resolve the Bangsamoro Separatism in Southern Philippines?
4. And finally, this research also seeks to revisit the contribution of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) particularly with relevance to the indispensable roles of some of its prominent members like Libya, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Malaysia in their vital contribution to finding a workable and sustainable political solution to the Bangsamoro Separatism in Southern Philippines.

C. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research is intended to cover the entire period of the Bangsamoro separatism especially with the emergence of the **Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)** and the **Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)** from the Marcos regime down to the current incumbent President Duterte Administration. However, in order to provide a fair and balanced account of the historical roots and origins of the Moro separatism in Mindanao, this study deems it right and proper to include a brief historical background of the Moro People, their beliefs and traditions, the arrival of Islam in the Philippines, and the Moro experiences and wars with the colonialists during the Spanish and the American hegemony in the Philippines down to the commonwealth period and the during the early Philippine Independence.

In this study, particular highlights have also been made on the political implications of the successes and failures of various peace agreements signed by the Philippine government and the Bangsamoro separatists or insurgents in an attempt to resolve through peaceful means the Moro separatism in Southern Philippines such as the 1976 GRP-MNLF Tripoli Agreement, the 1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement, the 2008 MOA-AD under the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the Bangsamoro Basic Law under the Aquino Government and the Bangsamoro Organic Law under the present incumbency of President Duterte.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As every piece of information or knowledge has its relevance to human understanding and development, this study is intended to be relevant and significant to the following, to wit:

- 1. Philippine Government Officials.** The findings in this study will be of great help to government officials particularly to the members of the Government Peace Panel in examining the historical roots and causes of the Moro separatism and the emergence of the contemporary Bangsamoro armed separatists - the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) under the leadership of U.P. Prof. Nur Misuari and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front under the leadership of the late Cairo-educated Hashim Salamat. This study may also help government officials enhance their basic understanding on an amalgam of social, educational, economic and political dimensions of the Moro separatist problem which are indispensably vital and necessary for the adoption of appropriate government policies aimed at peacefully resolving the Moro conflict in Mindanao and of addressing the general grievances of the Bangsamoro people.
- 2. MNLF and MILF leadership.** This study may also serve as an important document on which the MNLF and MILF may gain insight on how they should overcome their policy differences with the National government and hammer out common ground especially in achieving a more workable and sustainable peace accord with the Philippine government that will be beneficial not only to the Bangsamoro people, but also to the entire nation.

This study may also of great help to both the MNLF and MILF organizations to finally redefine and attune their conception of ‘armed-struggle’ as a means to meet certain political objectives which can be politically feasible and workable for the genuine protection of the general welfare and interest of the Bangsamoro people.

3. **Students.** This study also seeks to provide the students an in-depth analysis of the underlying causes of the Moro separatism in an attempt to enhance their basic understanding of the history of the Moro people, their cultures, beliefs and traditions, their way of life and their incessant yearning for self-determination, with an honest desire to promote national respect and understanding as a means to attain national unity of the Filipino people, Muslim, Christians and Lumads alike.
4. **Researchers.** This study could also be of good help to those researchers who desire to undertake similar studies on the broad subject of Moro separatism. The findings in this study and its comprehensive analysis of government policies toward a peaceful resolution of the Moro conflict in Mindanao as well as substantive ideas and thoughts shared by authors and experts on the subject of Moro separatism may also provide useful information for would-be researchers.
5. **The Moro People and the Filipino Nation.** And finally, this study seeks to promote among its readers within the Moro communities and among broader representation of the Filipino readers the importance and relevance of a peaceful settlement of the Moro insurgency in Mindanao as a vital and indispensable requisite in our country’s desire for continuing modernization and development effort to ensure its political stability, sustain its economic growth, encourage

foreign investment, propel trade and commercial activities, and improve infrastructures and tourism development not only in the areas affected by the Moro conflict but throughout the country.

CHAPTER II.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The Bangsamoro separatism is unquestionably one of the most intricate and obstinate strategic security challenges facing the national government for past for decades.

This dissertation entitled, “Revisiting the Bangsamoro Separatism through the Lens of History” finds its theoretical framework and historical foundation from the broad spectrum of government policies, constitutional principles and historical facts underpinning Moro Nationalism and their collective right to self-determination, on one hand, and the principles of presidential or executive powers to negotiate and settle for peace with the Moro Separatists, on the other.

A. RISE OF MORO NATIONALISM

When the United States, after having exercised jurisdiction and control over the Philippines and its people for the past 48 years following the treaty of Paris in December 10, 1898, has finally decided to grant the Philippines and its people their needed independence despite stern communal opposition and disagreement from the Bangsamoro people, men in Manila who were nearly Christians had become the direct beneficiaries of a new republic controlling virtually all the attributes of a modern sovereign State.

They have concluded that since the Bangsamoro found Christianity unbecoming, it proved Moros were patently inept and incompetent of self-government.

“NOW, THEREFORE, I, HARRY S. TRUMAN, President of the United States of America, acting under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the aforesaid act of Congress.....do hereby recognize the independence of the Philippines as a separate and self-governing nation.” HARRY S. TRUMAN (Philippine Independence, July 4, 1946)

Nur Misuari, Chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front, believes this declaration merging an already independent Moro people with a government dominated by the Christian Filipinos of Luzons as an act of injustice and which legitimizes the Moros’ armed struggle for self-determination. Misuari believed that “*the Bangsa Moro people and their national homeland have never been genuinely a part of the Philippine government and territory. And any attempt to make them an integral part of the Filipino people is simply fool-hardy.*” (Stern quoting Misuari (1975).

B. RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Moreover, turning now to the more specific category of indigenous peoples, this term has been used, in scholarship as well as international, regional, and state practices, to refer to groups with distinct cultures, histories, and connections to land (spiritual and otherwise) that have been forcibly incorporated into a larger governing society. Both the MNLF and the MILF claimed that Bangsamoro People qualify as indigenous cultural communities.

The framers of the 1987 Constitution, looking back to the long destitution of our less fortunate brothers, fittingly saw the historic opportunity to actualize the ideals of people empowerment and social justice, and to reach out particularly to the marginalized sectors of society, including the indigenous peoples. They incorporated in the

fundamental law several provisions recognizing and protecting the rights and interests of the indigenous peoples, to wit:

“The State recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous peoples within the framework of national unity and development.”(**Art. II, Sec. 22, 1987 Philippine constitution**)

“The State, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and national development policies and programs, shall protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being.

The Congress shall give the highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequalities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good.” (**Art. XIII, Sec, 1, Ibid**).

C. RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

And finally, the Philippine government policies toward a peaceful settlement of the Moro insurgency in Mindanao can also be premised on a long evolving political concept dealing with the “right to self-determination” of peoples “to freely determine their political status, and to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” The UN General Assembly in a resolution provides that “*all peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*” (**General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), New York City, 14 December 1960**)

At present, the **Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)** believes that the Moro inhabitants qualify as a people who hold the right to self-determination because they have a common historical tradition and religious affinity and share many cultural practices.

The recognition of the Bangsamoro right to self-determination was acknowledged by no less than Secretary Silvestre C. Afable Jr., Chairman of the Government Peace Negotiating Panel in the talks with the MILF, in his letter to Mohagher Iqbal, Chairman of the MILF Peace Negotiating Panel, dated November 9, 2006, which stated that the GRP would like to explore with the MILF in the next round of talks, *“the grant of self-determination and self-rule to the Bangsamoro people based on an Organic Charter to be drafted by representatives of the Bangsamoro people.”* **Linga (2007)**.

D. GOVERNMENT POWER TO SETTLE FOR PEACE

In this dissertation, the following policies and principles constitute an elemental configuration of our theoretical framework from which the government derives its power to settle for peace with the Moro separatists.

Unquestionably, under our presidential system of government, this power to **“engage in peace settlement”** with rebellious forces including the Moro Separatists lies theoretically and constitutionally in the executive branch. This power has been confirmed by the no less than the Supreme Court, the highest court of the land in 2008 when it ruled, to wit: *“The President’s power to conduct peace negotiations with rebel forces is impliedly included in her powers as the Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief. As Chief Executive, the President has the general responsibility to promote public peace, and as Commander-in-Chief, she has the more specific duty to prevent*

and suppress rebellion and lawless violence.” (Province of North Cotabato v. GRP Peace Panel on Ancestral Domain, G.R. No. 183591, Oct. 14, 2008).

Outlining details of this theoretical framework from which the President derives its “authority to wage peace” is founded on Executive Order No. 3, Section 5(c), which states that there shall be established “*Government Peace Negotiating Panels for negotiations with different rebel groups to be appointed by the President as her official emissaries to conduct negotiations, dialogues, and face-to-face discussions with rebel groups.*” (Executive Order No. 3, Feb. 28, 2001).

Under Section 4 (a-f) of the same Executive Order, the government, as part of its essential policy objectives of addressing the Moro insurgency problem in Mindanao has also adopted a comprehensive peace plan referred to as “the paths to peace” which shall include (1) the pursuit of social, economic and political reforms that will address the roots of the armed conflict; (2) consensus-building and empowerment for peace; (3) peaceful, negotiated settlement with the different rebel groups; (4) programs for reconciliation, reintegration into mainstream society and rehabilitation; (5) addressing the concerns arising from continuing armed hostilities; (6) and building and nurturing a climate conducive to peace.

Indeed, as the experience of nations which have similarly gone through internal armed conflict will show, “**peace**” is seldom and rarely attained by the power of brute force or by simply pursuing a destructive military option. Oftentimes, changes as far-reaching as a fundamental reconfiguration of the nation’s over-all policy structures are required. For peacemakers, certainly, the “attainment of peace” has to be on top of this reconfiguration.

A general policy of peace as incorporated in the 1987 Philippine constitution is admittedly not as express and direct as it could be in relation to finding a peaceful solution to the Moro insurgency in Mindanao. But at least, at first, the very preamble of the 1987 Philippine constitution had made mention of the collective aspirations of the Filipino people, to “*build a just and humane society...under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and **peace.***” (**Preamble, 1987 Philippine Constitution.**)

Certainly, while the preamble is not an integral part of the constitution, yet its true office has impliedly given the government an indirect grant of authority and power to initiate, negotiate and conclude with the Moro insurgents a peaceful solution to the Moro insurgency in Mindanao.

Another principle that justifies government efforts in waging peace with the Moros is found in Art. II, Sec. 2 of the 1987 Philippine constitution “*renouncing war as an instrument of national policy.....and adheres to the policy of **peace**, equality, justice, freedom, cooperation, and amity with all nations.*” Although this rule may sound primarily relevant and germane to the country’s conduct of its foreign relations, it is beyond man’s logic why the country could not apply the same precept in its attempt to address its own internal conflict particularly in dealing with its own indigenous or insurgent citizens.

And finally, Art. II, Section 5 of the 1987 Philippine constitution underpins government policy of “*maintaining peace and order*” as vital and essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy.

This principle fortifies the idea that “negotiating for peace” with the Moro insurgents strengthens government’s ability to carry out one of its basic functions as a state to maintain peace and order, which is an indispensable component of any stable democracy, like the Philippines. Certainly, no democratic government can keep up its democratic ideals and legitimacy, including the maintenance of peace and order, when it fundamentally fails, either for neglect, apathy or inability, to bring its rebellious citizens to the mainstream of society.

E. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Political theorist, John Rawls, in his Theory of Justice, said that the first virtue of any social institution is justice. **Rawls (1971)**. According to Rawls, “Justice will not triumph in a community where there are social and economic inequalities.” “Each person has equal rights to the whole system of liberties.” For Rawls, a just and well-ordered society which guarantees “the self-respect and the dignity of the individual” requires that the social primary goods, such as liberation, opportunity, wealth, power, and income are to be distributed equitably.

Laboring under Rawls’ notion of justice, the government must not only continue to diffuse wealth and political power for the common good, it must also work out and formulate among others social measures, ways and means for the elimination of poverty, religious discrimination and continuing marginalization of the Moro people. For the government’s continuing peaceful engagement with the Moros demonstrates to the highest degree its commitment to the noblest call of justice and political equality by, at least, diffusing political power and eventually granting the Bangsamoro People a

meaningful political autonomy, with “*freedom to chart their own destiny and shape their future with minimum intervention from central authorities.*” (**Limbona v. Mangelin, GR No. 80391 February 28, 1989**)

F. HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

History tells us the Moro Insurgency dates back to the Spanish and American presence in the country. The Bangsamoro people valiantly resisted both Spanish and American hegemony. After the Philippines gained its independence from the United States in 1946, hostilities ignited again starting in the 1960s when the government started to commit violent atrocities against Filipino Muslims

This research which sets forth the rampart of vital and indispensable reasoning to settle for peace with the Moro separatists requires a deeper analysis of various historical facts and government policies through **historical, documentary and descriptive** method using both **primary and secondary sources** in a sustained effort to finally put an end to the centuries-old Moro conflict in Southern Philippines

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF INQUIRY

This chapter deals with research procedures made by the author concerning research design, the instruments used, and the steps taken in carrying out this dissertation.

A. METHOD OF RESEARCH USED

To begin with, the researcher has made use of the historical method which serves an appropriate means to make this study possible. **Fraenkel and Wallen (1993)** defined this method as the systematic collection and evaluation of data to describe, explain and thereby understand actions or event that occurred sometime in the past. For **Calderon and Gonzales (2011)**, historical method of research is a process of collecting data about events that occurred, and then making an interpretative narrative about or critical inquiry into the whole truth of the events. Historical research describes what occurred in the past and then makes a critical inquiry into the truth of what occurred.

Descriptive method was likewise used in this study. **Manuel and Medel (1976)** define descriptive research thus: Descriptive research describes what is. It involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition or processes of phenomena. The descriptive method may likewise study factors or current conditions about the nature of a group of individuals or a class of event which may involve induction, classification, analysis, enumeration or measurement.

Certainly, these methods have helped the researcher conduct his study. Using historical with the support of descriptive methods, the researcher was able to examine and evaluate existing facts and events occurred with the help of some available relevant and

substantive documents and papers on the broad subject of Moro Separatism in Mindanao. And finally, **documentary analysis** has also been used in this study. **Sevilla (1984)** describes documentary analysis as that involves the gathering of information by examining records and documents and is often referred to as content analysis. A **content analysis** as pointed out by **Calderon and Gonzales** deals with documentary materials that are already existing and available. Since content analysis deals with documentary materials, content analysis and documentary analysis are one and the same thing.

In a nutshell, because of its historical leaning, the researcher has made use of the historical, documentary and descriptive method of research in the conduct of this study.

B. INSTRUMENTS USED

In this study, the researcher has not availed of specific tools and instruments for data collection such as Questionnaire, Observation and Interview. This study has relied heavily on historical method of research through online libraries, eJournals, eBooks, ProQuest libraries and Google Scholar Online Search and other feasible means of collecting or gathering data through primary and secondary sources.

As articulated by **Calderon and Gonzales**, historical research requires “choosing and defining the problem, collecting the data and critically analyzing the data.” In this dissertation, first, we defined the problem as clearly shown in the statement of the problem. Then, we proceeded with the collection of data from both primary and secondary sources through online library or through the internet. And finally, we started validating or criticizing the data through external and internal criticism.

External criticism is used to determine the authenticity or genuineness of a historical document. Considered are the factors that may have influenced the production of the document such as authorship, time, place, purpose, circumstances or composition, and what part of the document is true to the original. **Good and Scates (1972)**. **Internal criticism**, according to **Calderon and Gonzales**, is the process of determining the true meaning and value of statements contained in a document. For **Castillo and Caluntad (2011)**, internal criticism refers to evaluating the contents of the documents. It is the assessment of the accuracy of the statements contained in the documents.

In this dissertation , we assert that all the data that we have collected for this research have been subjected to both external and internal criticisms to determine , first, their authenticity or genuineness and second, to determine truthfulness and veracity of the statements therein .

C. DATA GATHERING PROCEDURES

Data are what researcher is searching for and which are subjected to analysis and interpretation so that inferences, principles, or generalization are drawn. The application of newly discovered facts and principles to remedy unsatisfactory conditions becomes the basis of human progress and the improvement of the quality of human life.

Data gathered in this dissertation are those collected from both primary and secondary sources; primary sources include documents in their original forms such as the Philippine constitution, laws, orders, presidential decrees, judicial decisions, treaties and specific agreements such as the 1976 GRP-MNLF Tripoli Agreement, the 1996 GRP-

MNLF Final Peace Agreement, and the 2008 MOA-AD; and secondary sources such as those gathered from books, encyclopedias, journals, magazines, newspapers, and other publications, unpublished master thesis and other studies. Secondary source includes also those information which have been accessed through the internet.

As a means of collecting data, the author has adopted, pursuant to the health protocol requirement of the government prohibiting the opening of conventional places of knowledge and information like library, the researcher mostly used data and information provided for by the electronic e-libraries and internet sources. And in pursuance thereof, the researcher has taken advantage of the following e-facilities and electronic sources, to wit:

- a. Online libraries
- b. eJournals
- c. eBooks
- d. ProQuest Libraries
- e. Google Scholar <https://scholar.google.com/>
- f. YourOnlineBookstore@Amazon.com <https://www.amazon.com/>
- g. UN Treaty Collection <http://treaties.un.org>
- h. Naval Postgraduate School <https://nps.edu>
- i. Official Gazette or the Official Journal of the Republic of the Philippines.
<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>
- j. Supreme Court of the Philippines <https://sc.judiciary.gov.ph>
- k. Senate of the Philippines <https://www.senate.gov.ph>
- l. House of Representatives <https://www.congress.gov.ph>

- m. Office of Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process at <https://peace.gov.ph>
- n. National Library of the Philippines <http://web.nlp.gov.ph>
- o. University of the Philippines Main Library <http://mainlib.upd.edu.ph>
- p. Asian Center University of the Philippines Diliman <http://ac.upd.edu.ph>

D. STATISTICAL DATA

In this thesis, there has been no statistical treatment of data used. Historical, documentary and descriptive analysis have been used in analyzing government policies toward a peaceful resolution of the Moro insurgency in Mindanao. Stated differently, the thesis has been subjected to historical, descriptive and documentary or content analysis method in order to verify five principal questions as mentioned in the statement of the problem earlier mentioned in chapter one of this work.

CHAPTER IV

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

The Bangsamoro separatism has been for decades a perennial political and security concern for the Philippine government. In this chapter, an assessment of available literatures, research materials, written articles, published and unpublished works of scholars and researchers and other documents on the broad subject of Bangsamoro separatism has been made. Evaluation of their significance and correlation in addressing the Bangsamoro Separatism in Mindanao has also been highlighted. This includes local and foreign literature and studies done on the subject.

I. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURES

A. FOREIGN AUTHORS

One of the earlier historical literatures on the broad subject of Moro Separatism in the Southern Philippines could be traced all the way to the works of **Chester I. Hunt (1955)**. Hunt revealed that in the 50s, Moro rebellion or the idea of separatism could well be attributed to the Bangsamoro peoples' *feeling of alienation* from the Filipino nation as a whole. Hunt also believed that "land issues have been the most fundamental Muslim concern and important factor fueling the conflict."

Another dominant reflection that could help explain the origin of the Moro separatism was **Jacques Bertrand's (2000)** observation who, in a few words, asserts that "the Muslim grievances could be traced back several centuries to the Spanish conquest of

the Philippines. The Muslims have been fighting to protect their territory and identity against a foreign power and domination.”

For **James Francis Warren (1998)**, a Professor Emeritus of History and Southeast Asian Studies at Murdoch University, he holds the view that while the antagonism between Muslims and Christians dates back to Spanish colonization from 1565 to 1898, and U.S. colonial domination from 1898 to 1946, the present conflict is not religious as usually construed, but fundamentally political and economic in terms of the division of social labor and its satisfaction of developing human needs.

Warren argues that, “it was the Spaniards who, trying to establish theocratic rule over the islands by conquering and converting the indigenous communities, established the boundary between the “Infidels” (Muslims) and the civilized (Christians). Ethnic difference, of course, legitimized the violent exploitation of the natives and theft of their lands and resources. Such pacification failed, even though it disrupted the progress of the Sulu Zone commercial network and statecraft based on piracy and control of slave manpower.”

Meanwhile **Harber (1998)** “argues that the centuries old conflict between the Bangsamoro people and the ruling government, both colonial and independent, is predominantly the result of the politicization of the Moro identity first upon by the colonial practices of the Spanish and Americans, and ultimately by the new Independent Philippine government.

On the other hand, **Wernstedt and Simkins (1965)** both have also observed that the increasing migration by Christians into the Southern Philippines has produced considerable social unrest. Land ownership became a source of tension. The Muslims

viewed the lands in their areas as traditional and ancestral property owned by them for centuries which has now easily grabbed through deceitful migration by the Christian settlers. This policy of continued influx of Christian settlers into the Moroland was shared by **Syed Serjul Islam (1998)** who contends that migration of Christian settlers into Mindanao “led to the beginning of ‘legalized land grabbing’ in the Moroland.”

Whereas, **McKenna (1998)**, a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alabama saw the Muslim Bangsamoro struggle not only in the frame of ethno-nationalism, but also poverty and underdevelopment as the underlying causes for the Muslim Bangsamoro agitation. He points out that government policies which created inherent disadvantages among poor and educated Moros when it came to acquiring title to their own lands as a contributory factor to the Moro insurgency.

McKenna opined that the Moros, confused by new regulations and daunted by expensive processing fees, lost title to lands they had occupied for generations. While Christians built roads between their new settlements, policies left Muslim communities isolated. In some areas, Christians could buy 16 hectares, but Muslims could only buy eight(8) hectares. Christian communities received crop loans and other favors, such that by 1971, the Philippine Senate Committee on National Minorities reported that up to that point there were no irrigation projects in any municipality of Mindanao where Muslims were a majority.

McKenna further observes that “The Bureau of lands recognized land rights on the basis of priority of claims filed, not precisely of occupation. This led to Christians obtaining legal title to lands already occupied and under cultivation by Muslims. Muslims astonishingly became “squatters” on their own lands, and were wither given small

amounts of money to vacate, or if they resisted, Christians gained possession by force, most often applied by the Philippine Constabulary on the presumption of enforcing legal property rights. As a result, landless Muslim families gathered in slum areas near cities, where they struggled to eke out as subsistence lifestyle.

Many scholars also espouse various arguments on the origins of the Moro separatism. **Collier (2003)** in his book, *“Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy,”* believes that history is an important factor in determining the risk of war or insurgency.” He also advances the idea that the level of literacy and population growth also matters in determining the risk of conflict. **Collier** also points out that ethnic and religious composition are relevant in predicting conflict between warring groups.

Some years ago **Stern (2012)**, an authorized biographer of the MNLF leader Nur Misuari, highlights the growing gap in socio-economic levels between Muslims and Christians Filipinos along with the news of the Jabidah Massacre, the continuing atrocities of the Christians death squad against Muslim villagers and the declaration of martial law as an amalgam of legitimate Moro grievances that eventually helped galvanized Nur Misuari and his MNLF insurgents into action against the government in the 70s. **Stern** observes “that although in Manila life resembled San Francisco or New York, in many respects the Moro areas remained untouched by modernity. Thus, the existing reality - the vast human gaps between Sulu and Manila, struck Misuari as unjust, and thus, according to the Qur’an must be combated.”

Stern further believes “the Jabidah incident” also captured the attention of the International Muslim community on the plights of their Moro brethren in Mindanao. He

wrote: *“Particularly irritated by the incident was Malaysia. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, saw the incident as an aborted military invasion of Sabah which also required a covert military operation of their own. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, invoking his own secret plan, dusted off his shelf an existing plan for retaliation against the Philippines. He allowed his country in the early 70s to be a training ground for MNLF insurgents, supporting them with logistics, funds and arms.”*

Murshed (2002), however, asserts that insurgency is created by any or a combination of factors such as ethnicity, religion, region or social class. To him, the triggering elements for violent insurgency are competition over economic opportunities and political and civil rights. **Murshed** maintains that the struggle over the possession of land is a condition for violence or insurgency. He also recognizes the critical role played by external countries in conflict.

Meanwhile, **Musgrave (1997)** believes that insurgency is also permissible by virtue of the oppression theory when part of a population suffers gross oppression. Under these circumstances secession is permitted primarily to prevent the abuse of human rights. **Buchanan (2003)** shares this idea by espousing his remedial rights theory of secession which adheres to the principle that separation would be acceptable if there are systematic violations of human rights or unjust annexation of territories.

Notwithstanding several peace agreements entered into between the Moro Separatists and the Philippine government and the grant of Bangsamoro political autonomy, yet the Moro conflict still persists only until some years ago following the enactment of the Bangsamoro Organic law under the Duterte Administration. Some

foreign scholars have shared and offered their observations on the continuing peace process in Mindanao.

Gurr (1993) commenting on the failure of the failures of the peace agreement entered into between the MNLF and the Ramos administration in 1996, he contended that “The MNLF settled for autonomy instead of genuine independence and signed a peace covenant with the Ramos administration in 1996. Still treated as an alien bloc, the MNLF now appears hostages to the precincts of four garrison provinces of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. In effect, the real purpose of OIC-supervised negotiations worked according to formula: “[L]imited autonomy agreements tend to undermine the political cohesion of the communal group [Bangsa Moro] and reduce its fighting capacity.”

Peter Chalk (1997) examines the significant reactions of the extremist groups regarding the 1996 peace accord, citing that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) vigorously reject the peace process for two reasons - “failure to respect the letter of the Tripoli Agreement, and failure to include provision for a fully independent Islamic state. On other hand, the extreme Christians consider the peace agreement as an unacceptable concession.”

McKenna (2003) also criticizes the peace agreement for not providing adequate local political power and resources. Hence, poverty alleviation, employment and the provisions for basic services were barely addressed.

B. LOCAL AUTHORS

Reading through voluminous literatures on the broad issue of Moro separatism, the following are some of the few observations offered by Filipino scholars and researchers on the subject.

Foremost among equals is a known and well-respected Muslim scholar, **Majul (1988)** who has held the view that during the Commonwealth period, Mindanao was considered a “land of promise,” intended for resettlement by Christian settlers under government encouragement.

For Majul, “The U.S. policy of integration and assimilation of the Moros into the mainstream of society through mass education, jurisprudence and “free enterprise” led to the obsolescence of datu power and sultanate authority. But it was the government-sponsored migration of Christian, Chinese, and other settlers—accelerated by President Ramon Magsaysay’s resettlement of former Huk rebels in the fifties—that exacerbated the land disputes raging throughout the entire period of U.S. colonial rule. Unknown to most Moros, the Torrens land title registration system nullified the traditional communal land system, resulting in numerous protests, among them the 1926 Alangkat uprising led by Datu Maporo and the 1950 Kamlon insurrection in Jolo. Despite the influx of Christian settlers, the Moro provinces remained impoverished, with the lowest literacy rate and the highest unemployment in the whole country.

According to Majul, the Philippine Government, after the country’s independence in 1946, continued colonial policies and programs. The feelings of marginalization and insecurity developed among Muslims. The Moros owned most of the land in Mindanao before colonization but this decreased tremendously in the 60s up to the present.

For Majul, the Moros have been one of the most brutalized victims of colonial domination and religious chauvinism in world history. When the United States annexed the Philippines in 1898, it had to suppress open and covert native opposition up to 1915. Unable to subdue the Moros by military violence alone, the US negotiated tactical compromises with the local datus, coaxing their support with “education trips” and other concessions.

This view was shared by **Noble (1981)** who states that the Muslim separatism had centuries old historical roots, but was also propelled by a specific grievance accumulated during the 1960’s, particularly the influx of Christian settlers into Mindanao which disturbed both the traditional socio-economic patterns and the political system in Moroland.

Jubair (1999), a leading Moro scholar, holds the same sentiments as to the roots of the Moro insurgency. Jubair believes that the conflict in Mindanao is the second longest running conflict in the world, second only to the conflict between North and South Sudan, which can be dated back to the 10th century.

This conflict started in 1578 when the Spaniards, after conquering all the islands in Luzons and the Visayas in just eleven years, deliberately and without provocation attacked the Moros in Sulu whose Sultanate had been sovereign since the 14th century.

Jubair holds an astounding observation as to the Role of the United States of America in the origin of the Moro insurgency in Mindanao. He wrote: “What sealed the fate of the Moros and their homeland was the US “illegally and immoral” annexation of Mindanao and Sulu to the territory of the Philippines in their granting of independence in 1946. This is the primary root of the conflict now raging in Mindanao and Sulu.”

Meanwhile **Costello (2003)** identifies four elements that influence the Moro separatist movement. *“The first is the fear among the Muslims that their religious, cultural, and political institutions will decline or perish by conceived assimilation into a Catholic dominated nation. The second is the bitterness over in-migration of the Christians from Luzon and Visayas. The transmigration has dual implications: Muslims have been dislocated in what they considered ancient and communal land which has changed the demography of the island and thus reducing the proportion of the Muslim population to a minority status in their homeland. The third is the frustration over the failure of the central government to introduce decent development in the area. The fourth is the embedded practice of warlordism, banditry, and blood feuds.”*

Paraphrasing Costello’s four elements, it clearly shows that the insurgency in the Southern Philippines is an amalgam of different factors, such as general underdevelopment of the region, unequal distribution of income, and the inadequate effort of the government to integrate the Moros into the political institutions of the nation. The socio-economic inequity is also evident in the possession of the land, where state policies and programs favor Christian settlers. The migratory policy of previous administration reduced the Moro population from about 75% from the turn of the century to 25% in the late 1960s and in the 1990 to about 18%.(Ibid)

Quimpo (2001), writing his powerful and scholarly objective observation on the emergence of the Moro insurgency, argues that the central government’s neglect of the Moro welfare, and its failure to provide the Moros their basic needs or at least to uplift their socio-economic conditions to be on par with the Christian majority contributed to emergence of Moro conflict.

In a comparative analysis on the subject of insurgency in South East Asia, scholar like **W. K. Che Man (1990)** made a powerful observation about the struggle of the Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand for self-determination. Che Man opined that *“Muslim protagonists (Moros and Malays) in the conflict will continue to resist “government policies of assimilation and bureaucratic exploitation or maltreatment.”*

Meanwhile, **Bishop Orlando V. Quevedo (2003)** a renowned Christian peacemaker contends that the major cause of the conflict is injustice. He proceeded to pinpoint in particular: injustice to Moro identity, injustice to Moro political sovereignty; and injustice to Moro integral development. He concluded that: *“It is this just and fundamental Moro aspiration for freedom that must be at the heart of all political negotiations for a lasting peace.”*

Magdalena (1997) sees the conflict in Mindanao as more of a cultural and political issue. The conflict in Mindanao began as an ethnic problem associated with nation-building. He says that as a result of colonial rule, the north-south divide became apparent. Colonial imposition abolished the old social institutions like the feudal system based on the sultanate. The ethnic resurgence in Mindanao signified Muslim resistance to the government agenda of “integration” which the Muslims perceive as absorption into the dominant Christian community.

Ferrer (1997) The implication of this GRP-MILF peace negotiations and the Mindanao peace process is the imperative of broadening, in terms not only of constitutional discourse but also peoples’ participation. As already mentioned, among the weaknesses of the GRP-MNLF peace negotiations were the substantial exclusion of civil

society and the consequent lack of public support. This notwithstanding a vibrant community of non-government organizations, people's organizations, and peace organizations in Mindanao and the Philippines.

Former Congressman **Mastura (1984)**, a renowned Muslim leader challenged the United States to rectify what it has done to the Moro people. He said, to wit: *“Unfortunately for the US, it cannot escape responsibility for the troubled history of Mindanao, for it was precisely the US, nearly a century ago as the colonial master of the Philippines, that lumped the Moro areas in Mindanao together with the Filipino nation. It did not need to do so after having already won the peace and establishing the Moro Province “allowing for a considerable de facto autonomy for Mindanao and Sulu.”*

II. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

A. FOREIGN STUDIES

The Moro insurgency in Mindanao is becoming increasingly complex, and untangling the knots for a greater understanding of the problem is a very challenging task for both researchers and scholars. The following are related studies made on the broad subject of Moro insurgency and how it's being peacefully resolved through adoption of appropriate policies by the Philippine government.

Fowler (1985) in his thesis on the Moro Problem: A Historical Perspective narrates that *“for over 400 years the Muslim people of the southern Philippines have been at war. They have resisted the Spanish occupation of their ancestral homelands, the American colonial presence, and the current Christian government.”*

To understand what motivates the Moro people to such conflict, it is necessary to study their history, religion, and the ethnic fabric which makes up their various regional groups. The fundamentals of their religion require a homogenous Islamic government. In the Philippines this would require separation, or at least total autonomy for the Muslim areas. This has never been allowed by the Christian government which has perpetuated the cause of the Moro insurgency. Conflict will surely continue as long as Christian authority is imposed upon the Moro people.

East (2006) in a research presentation on the MNLF states that the geographic areas in the southern Philippines where there is a significant if not a majority presence of Muslims are marked by a high incidence of poverty and social exclusion; Thus he argues that the continuing war, the persistence of poverty and landlessness, and the emergence of entrepreneurs in violence are mere symptoms of something that has not yet been sufficiently addressed by a succession of Philippine governments or even by mainstream Moro revolutionary organizations.

By way of recommendations towards achieving peace in Mindanao, **East** puts forward the following propositions:

- a. First, the eradication of poverty in the southern Philippines can offer poor Muslim households a workable alternative to joining the armed rebellion and the ranks of entrepreneurs in violence;*
- b. Second, this process of poverty eradication must go beyond the current policy prescriptions of the central state and confront the issues of poverty and social exclusion from historical, social justice, and redistributive land reform perspectives;*

- c. *Third, in the context of agrarian societies like the southern Philippines, broad-based social development can only be achieved if there is a redistribution of productive assets, especially land. Land is central to the rural poor household's capacity to construct and maintain a sustainable livelihood;*
- d. *Fourth, policy discussions about the issue of ancestral domain of Muslim Filipinos must be intertwined with the issue of redistributive land reform and the ancestral domain claims of other indigenous communities (Lumads);*
- e. *And fifth, redistributive land reform and respect for indigenous claims over ancestral domains, as repeatedly emphasized by scholars, are a necessary but not sufficient requirement for broad-based social development. Equally important is a comprehensive package of support services to enable the rural poor to sustain their livelihoods.*

Meanwhile Researcher **Wall (2006)** made an astonishing finding relating to the supply and entry of arms to insurgents as an indispensable factor in perpetuating insurgents' ability to mount sustainable conflict. He states that the supply of arms or military equipment not only play a significant role in all internal conflicts throughout the world, but they are of particular concern right through Asia, where civil wars have tended to last longer than those in any other region. Wall asserts that insurgent groups are able to secure both financially and militarily from both internal and external sources, and this supply, use and accumulation of arms by insurgent groups have affected internal conflict.

B. LOCAL STUDIES

Allan R. Luga (2002) states that the results of his research indicate that the bases for the continued Muslim insurgency in Mindanao can be traced to all aspects of the historical development of the Muslim society in Mindanao, namely: the political, economic, socio-cultural, religious, and psychological aspects which evolved since Spanish colonial times.

Specifically, the Spanish colonial policy of Hispanization and Christianization resulted in several bloody Muslim raids and it also started the religious animosity and intolerance between Christian and Muslim Filipinos which considered in totality, for the basic root causes of the centuries-old Muslim problem. For the Muslims, the preservation of the Islamic and their cultural heritage against foreign or local Christian domination is their most sacred duty and are willing to die for its defense if necessary.

These root causes according to **Luga** were later aggravated by the equally counterproductive American and Philippine governments' policies of Muslim pacification, assimilation, and integration programs. These programs were considered by the Muslims as a challenge to their religion and culture and therefore offered a serious threat to their existence. They felt that the economic development and governance brought to their land benefited only the Christians and made them a second-class Filipinos in their own homeland and the migration of Christian settlers resulted in their losing their ancestral lands.

Aquino (2009) reveals that during the centuries predating colonization in the Philippines, the Muslims emerged as a dominant ethno-religious group in Mindanao and Sulu. They existed as sovereign and independent states and established their own system

of government through the sultanates, which during those periods was the most advanced in the Philippines. They had also established diplomatic and trade relations with neighboring states. However, the coming of colonization in the 16th century threatened the Muslims' domination and distinct identity. Since then, the Muslims in Mindanao have waged their struggles of resistance against foreign domination, first Spain, for more than three centuries, and then the United States, for another four decades.

The assertion of Muslim self-determination and independence in Mindanao was widely manifested in the struggles during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Confronted by the more superior American colonial forces in the early 1900s, the Moros were ultimately pacified and placed under colonial control. American colonial laws and policies particularly on land ownership and migration disregarded the Muslim traditional and customary laws practiced for centuries. When the Americans granted Philippine independence in 1946, Mindanao was made part of the new republic despite earlier objections from the Muslims. Under the postcolonial Philippine government, discriminatory American laws and policies towards the Moros were adopted.

Meanwhile, **De los Santos (1978)** lists the various causes of the Moro insurgency encompassing political, socio-economic and cultural issues. These are: “disgruntled politicians, pushed by their lust of power; ambitious people who saw the movement as a vehicle for the launching of successful careers; displaced farmers who wanted to get their lands back from the Christian settlers; victims of army and police abuses who regarded the movement as an instrument of revenge; religious leaders who welcomed the movement as a chance to construct an Islamic theocratic state; idealistic students who were moved by a social duty; impatient and adventurous young men who wanted to test their fighting

prowess; and others who joined because their friends and relatives were members of the movement. The leadership of the movement was initially provided by two groups- students and intellectuals, and the disgruntled politicians.”

Cojuanco (1989) points to a number of factors as the root cause of the Moro insurgency and see the conflict in terms of “poverty,” economic deprivation, lack of political participation, inadequate or poor delivery of health and social services, lack of infrastructure and minority-majority relations.”

Caculitan,(2005) argues that The prospects for a sustainable peace between the GRP and the Moro insurgents is further enhanced by the international attention it is getting from concerned countries and intergovernmental institutions that have various levels of involvement, such as Malaysia, the United States, Libya, the OIC, and the World Bank. For Malaysia, it has been responsible for assisting the peace panel in tackling the three substantive agendas of security, rehabilitation, and ancestral domain. Caculitan contends that Malaysia will continue to actively support in the peaceful resolution of the conflict because it has clearly identified Mindanao as crucial to its own security and socio-economic concerns. It prefers to have a stable Mindanao neighbor because only then can it minimize the influx of Moros to Sabah, which affects in the demographics and tight competition for economic opportunities. Furthermore, a secured Mindanao environment will help prevent piracy and lawless elements from staging criminal activities in Malaysian territories, such as the case of the kidnapping of tourists in Sipadan, Malaysia in 2000.

In a workshop on conflict resolution and peace-building mechanisms for public administration in Philippine public administration and governance, **Prof. Ricote (2005)**

finds that “the conflict in Mindanao has largely been concentrated in the Muslim-majority areas of central and southwestern Mindanao, and that resistance to central control and resentment at the increasing number of Christian settlers, as well as the logging and mining activities, which had become important sources of export earnings, was at first organized under the aegis of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) formed in the late 1960s, and until the 1990s largely accepted as representing the interests of Mindanao’s Muslim population. Despite the formation of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in 1989, and the formal acceptance of the 1996 peace accord between the Government and the MNLF, the armed conflict continued.”

Successive Philippine political administrations starting from then President Ferdinand Marcos have attempted to forge a negotiated peace settlement of the conflict with the Moro rebels realizing that a purely military solution to the problem was not feasible. **Schiavo-Campo (2005)**.

Indeed, the peace problem in the country is certainly here to stay and the challenges are getting more and more insurmountable. But the gains have so far been reasonable enough to continue with the journey hopefully towards a lasting peace, in the near horizon.

III.SYNTHESIS OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

As we synthesize our related literature and studies with this work's findings, we humbly observe the following similarities and dissimilarities. In hindsight, we find that Hunt, Bertrand, Warren, Paul Collier, Jubair and Mastura's thoughts and insights on the historical dimension of the Moro insurgency have had similar bearings on our findings that the Moro separatism in Mindanao could trace its historical foundation in both Spanish and American colonialism and by centuries of Moros' preservation of them identify as distinct and separate nation.

Hunt reveals that Moro insurgency resulted from a feeling Moro alienation from the Filipino nation. Bertrand argues of Moros resistance against foreign power to protect their territory and identity. Warren talks about Muslim -Christian antagonism which dates back to Spanish and American colonization. Meanwhile, Paul Collier and Noble both believe that the Moro insurgency had centuries old historical roots. Whereas, Jubair and Mastura both scoff at the United States of America for having sealed the Moros and their fate when it (the U.S.) illegally annexed Mindanao and Sulu to the territory of the Philippines when it granted its independence in 1946.

A semblance of similarity has also been centered on Land Migration. Syed Serjul Islam, Mckenna, Murshed, Noble, Costello and Majul;s ideas on Land migration and continuous influx of Christian settlers into Mindanao clearly have parallel comparison with this thesis' observation of government induced migration of Christian settlers into Mindanao as having tremendous and enormous impact on the demographic situation in the South.

Syed Serjul Islam speaks of Christian migration into Mindanao as the beginning of 'legalized land grabbing' in the Moroland which according to both Noble and Costello disturbed the traditional socio-economic patterns and the political system of the Moros. Meanwhile, McKenna points out to government policies which created inherent disadvantages among poor and uneducated Moros when it came to acquiring title to their own lands as a contributory factor to the Moro insurgency, For Majul on the other hand, Mindanao became a "land of promise," intended for resettlement by Christian settlers under government encouragement. This Murshed believed served as a determinant factor for fueling Moro agitation.

And finally, an image of resemblance also exists on the issue of poverty, underdevelopment and failure of the national government to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the Moros as major factors in the rise of the Moro insurgency. Both this thesis and such scholars as McKenna, Fearon and Laitin, Costello and Quimpo have shown that sheer poverty, general underdevelopment of the Moro communities, and continuing failure of the national government to uplift the living standards and welfare of the Moro people constitute among the fundamental and principal causes of the Moro insurgency problem in Mindanao.

McKenna saw poverty and underdevelopment as the underlying causes for the Muslim Bangsamoro agitation. Paul Collier points to the level of literacy and population growth as determinant factor in the risk of conflict. Whereas, Costello, Fearon and Laitin and Stern saw the growing gap in socio-economic levels - income, resources and access to public services and employment between the Muslims and Christians as vital variables propelling conflict.

However, a point of dissimilarities has also been noted. Contrary to our observation concerning the historical dimension, Land migration, poverty, underdevelopment and government failure to uplift the living standard of the Moro people as among the fundamental and principal causes of the Moro insurgency. In this thesis we find that Musgrave's oppression theory, Buchanan's idea of human rights, Caculittan's thoughts on Moro insurgents' international support, Paul Collier's ethnic and religious composition, Quevedo's idea of injustice and Wall's entry and supply of arms to the Moro insurgents clearly show that the aforementioned scholars have held contrary and dissimilar views as to what really are the origins and causes of the Moro insurgency problem in Mindanao.

Musgrave points out that the insurgency is permissible when part of a population suffers gross oppression. Buchanan adheres to the principle that separation would be acceptable if there are systematic violations of human rights or unjust annexation of territories. Paul Collier points to ethnic and religious composition as a relevant factor in predicting conflict between warring groups. Whereas, Bishop Orlando V. Quevedo contends that the major cause of the conflict is injustice -injustice to Moro identity, injustice to Moro political sovereignty; and injustice to Moro integral development. Quevedo contends that *"It is this just and fundamental Moro aspiration for freedom that must be at the heart of all political negotiations for a lasting peace."*

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of available literature, documents and relevant materials in order to verify and answer the following questions:

1. How did the Moro separatism evolve and what are the principal and fundamental causes of the Moro separatism?
2. How did the Spanish and American Colonialism contribute to the rise of the Moro separatism?
3. How did the Philippine government respond to the rise of the Bangsamoro separatism in Southern Philippines from the Marcos regime, Cory Aquino Government, Ramos Administration, Estrada Government, down to the GMA administration, the Aquino and the present Duterte Government especially in terms of each President's specific policies and programs in an attempt to finally resolve the Bangsamoro Separatism in Southern Philippines?
4. And finally, how did the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and few of its prominent members Libya and Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Malaysia contribute to the finding of a peaceful solution to the Moro separatism in Mindanao?

1. How did the Moro insurgency evolve and what are the principal and fundamental causes of the Moro insurgency?

(a) The Evolution of the Moro Armed Separatists

This study reveals that the Moro **Separatists** – the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) evolved initially as a reaction to an amalgam of Bangsamoro grievances which were eventually spurred and ignited by the Jabidah massacre on March 18, 1968 *Glenda M. Gloria* (2018) of Bangsamoro army recruits by men in uniform; and the Manalili incident, the atrocities of the Christian Death Squad (Ilaga) *Mckenna* (1988) believed to be answerable for a number of despicably loathsome and wickedly horrible violence against Bangsamoro villagers in the 70s; and the declaration of Martial law in September 21, 1972 by President Marcos.

By origin, the MNLF leadership started with three prominent Moro student activists - Nur Misuari, Abul Khayer Alonto and Hashim Salamat. Nur Misuari, chairman of the central committee, is a former political science instructor at the University of the Philippines. Abdul Khar Alonto, the vice-chairman of the central committee and a co-founder of the MNLF, was a former law student at San Beda College in Manila, and was elected vice mayor of Marawi City in 1971. *David (2003)* Another famous MNLF leader was the late Hashim Salamat, who later broke away from the Front and later founded the **Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)**.

The MILF started first as the New MNLF Leadership in September 1977 in contrast to the MNLF led by Nur Misuari. While the MILF was officially founded in 1984, its origins were in a group led by MNLF Central Committee Member Hashim

Salamat that left the MNLF shortly after the collapse of the GRP-MNLF 1976 Tripoli Agreement in 1977. The MILF calls for an Independent Bangsamoro State. It claims to have 120,000 men (six divisions) regular Islamic Armed Forces of which more than 80% are well armed. **Gershman J. (2001).**

In 1996, after the signing of the GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement, the MILF believed the 1996 peace covenant did not end the Moro separatism or insurgency problem; instead, it paved the way for the “**demobilization**” of the MNLF. The MILF contended that the MNLF does not have the monopoly of articulating the aspirations of the Bangsamoro people. **Jubair (1999)**

The MILF leader Hashim Salamat supports the view that the most civilized and practical way to solve the Bangsamoro problem in Mindanao is through a negotiated political settlement of the conflict.

Jubair further asserts that the MILF does not seek to topple the Philippine government and change its system. It merely seeks to secure a space in Mindanao for the Bangsamoro people where they will be free to exercise self-governance.

(b) Principal and Fundamental Causes of the Moro Insurgency

With centuries of Moro dreadful experiences with both the Spaniards and Americans, the hostile government of Manila during the Commonwealth and the early Philippine independence, along with the influx of government-induced Christian settlers into Mindanao, the Moros had been intensely distressed and increasingly alarmed over the dilution of their political power by making them a minority in what they felt was their own homeland.

By the end of the 1960s, the amalgam of Muslim grievances grew into a full-fledged organized separatist movement. The following are among the principal and fundamental factors that finally triggered the evolution of a full grown Moro separatism in Southern Philippines – centuries of historical preservation of the Moros of their ethnic identity as a nation; Land issues and migration of Christian Settlers into Mindanao; the Jabidah massacre in March 1968; the founding of the Christian Death Squad (Ilaga) and the declaration of Martial Law.

i. Centuries of historical preservation of the Moro Identity

As earlier defined, the terms “Muslims” and “Bangsamoro or Moro” have been used interchangeably. The former refers to a universal religious identity, while the latter denotes a political identity distinct to the Islamized peoples of Mindanao. The Spaniards originally used the term for peoples of Mindanao who shared the religion of the Moors who had once subdued Spain. “Moro” was used in the same derogatory way as the term ‘Indio’ for Filipinos whom they converted to Christianity. However, with the self-assertive attitude expressed by the MNLF in the early 70s, the Moro term gained positive connotations among the Muslim youth. It expressed distinctiveness as a people who had resisted foreign domination. Used together with a Malay word, Bangsa (nation) as in ‘Bangsamoro’ or ‘Bangsa Moro’, it indicates a nationality distinct from that of the majority Filipinos. **San Juan (2008)**.

The Muslim Filipinos or Moros are geographically concentrated in the southern part of the Philippines in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. They had their own established distinctive cultural, social and political institutions called Sultanates.

Before the arrival of the Spaniards in the 15th century, Islam had already flourished in the Moro land via trade routes that emanated from Arabia overland through Central Asia and then overseas to India, China and thence into Southeast Asia.. **Glang (1969)**

In this thesis, we observe that Islam serves as an indelible and galvanizing factor in generating an ideological bond, a sense of ethnic “Moro identity” that differentiates the Moros from the Christianized inhabitants of Luzon and Visayas. The Moros have consistently guarded, defended and preserved their “ethnic identity” for centuries even in the face of persistent foreign subjugation. Thus, Islam emerged as a rallying religious, political, and historical strength that enabled the Moros to violently resist the Spanish and American conquest and later the hostile government of Manila.

One of the earlier literatures which supported this view was **Hunt (1955)** who attributed the “Moro rebellion as a feeling of alienation by the Moros from the Filipino nation.”

This notion tends to support our finding that the Moro insurgency in Mindanao, has its roots, first and foremost, in ethnic resurgence or Moro nationalism, the centuries of preservation by the Moros of their identify as a people separate and distinct from the rest of their Filipino Christian brothers. This finding is significant because it is this Moro resurgence which caused the Moros to resist Spanish and American conquest and, after Philippine independence, to the government agenda of “Filipinization or integration” because of their collective apprehension from being eventually absorbed into the dominant Christian community, and fear ultimately of losing their “ethnic identity” in the process.

ii. Land Issues and Christian Migration into Mindanao

History shows that The United States was able to colonize the southern Philippines in two decades whereas the Spaniards failed to do so in three centuries and one of the successes could be attributed to the “demographic model of colonization.” **Ahmad (2000).**

Under American resettlement program, Christian inhabitants from Luzon and Visayas were encouraged to migrate to Mindanao and Sulu and the government declared the entire country public land, including those considered by the Moros as their ancestral lands.

To put this in spirit, several laws were passed which wiped out Moro communal and ancestral lands, and provided for less and less lands for the Muslims.

The Land Registration Act required the registration of all lands occupied by any person, group or corporation. Most Moros lost their communal lands as a result. Most Moros were bound only by traditions and customary laws, and refused to obtain land titles either out of either ignorance or a sense of resistance. **Act No. 496, Nov. 6 (1902)**

Likewise, Acts 2254 and 2280 of 1913, created agricultural colonies (seven in Cotabato and one each in Lanao and Basilan) and encouraged Filipino migrants from the north to settle in the so-called public lands in Mindanao and Sulu and by 1930, some 17 agricultural communities had been created. **Ahmad (2000).**

Public Land Act 2874 (1919) was clearly inequitable in that the Christian Filipino settler was awarded a twenty-four-hectare lot, while a Moro was allowed only ten

hectares. Aside from this discrimination, most Muslim Filipinos refused to register their ancestral lands. **Jubair (1999)**.

American Land and the Migration Policies as contributory factors to the the Moro insurgency in Mindanao have been underpinned by the following authors:

Wernstedt and Simkins (1965) contend that the increasing migration by Christians into the Southern Philippines has produced considerable social unrest. Land ownership became a source of tension.. The Muslims viewed the lands in their areas as traditional and ancestral property owned by them for centuries which has now easily grabbed through deceitful migration by the Christian settlers. **Syed Serjul Islam (1998)** contends that migration of Christian settlers into Mindanao “led to the beginning of ‘legalized land grabbing’ in the Moroland.”

Whereas, **McKenna (1998) believes that** “The Moros, confused by new regulations and daunted by expensive processing fees, Muslims lost title to lands they had occupied for generations.” **McKenna** further observes that “the Bureau of lands recognized land rights on the basis of priority of claims filed, not precisely of occupation. This led to Christians obtaining legal title to lands already occupied and under cultivation by Muslims. Muslims astonishingly became “squatters” on their own lands. **(Ibid)**.

Meanwhile, **Majul (1988)** contends that during the Commonwealth period, Mindanao was considered a “land of promise,” intended for resettlement by Christian settlers under government encouragement.

Clearly, this thesis finds that United States’ Land and the Migration Policies which continued even up to the early Philippine Independence have had tremendous impact on a broad spectrum of Moro grievances which in the 60s and 70s served as major

factors in the emergence of Moro insurgency in Mindanao. Because through massive migration of Christian settlers from Luzon and Visayas into Mindanao under the support and acquiescence of the Manila-based government, the Moros, who owned most of the land in Mindanao before colonization, not only lost their lands to the new settlers, they finally found themselves a 'Minority' in a land considered by them as their own, ruled and dominated by them for centuries.

iii. The Jbidah Massacre

The formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1966 which incorporated Sabah as one of its thirteen states generated a territorial dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia. **Samad and Abubakar, (1992).**

When Marcos came to power as President in 1965, he planned the groundwork in regaining Sabah as part of Philippine territory. Marcos allegedly planned a sneak attack to conquer North Borneo.

In 1967, under the cloud of complete secrecy, Muslim trainees from Sulu were recruited by the government for specialized training to take back Sabah. Unmasked by a mutiny before this force could attack Sabah, the government fearing the negative impact of the leakage of the clandestine plan, Marcos in March 18, 1968 allegedly ordered the killing of his own Filipino Muslim soldiers in a desperate effort to hide his plan from Malaysia, his powerful nearest neighbor. **Stern (2012)**

However, Jibin Arola, the lone survivor, claimed that the Muslim Trainees were killed. They were ordered shot because they refused to follow orders to attack Sabah.”

Like an earthquake, news of the Jabidah Massacre spread fast across the Philippines, the herald of a crisis that was to shake the Filipino way of life to its foundation. Enraged by the Jabidah Massacre, the Moros were furious claiming the incident as an act of genocide against the Moro people. Datu Udtog Matalam, one of the most prominent Moro leaders, in response, founded the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM). Matalam accused the government of pursuing the “systematic extermination” of the Muslims.

In this dissertation, we observe that the Jabidah incident sparked two major political effects. First, the Muslims were infuriated at the Marcos regime for its stumpy regard for Moro lives. The Moros felt that the Marcos regime was on a clandestine genocidal campaign against the Moro people. And the desire to secede from the Republic of the Philippines in order to establish a separate Bangsamoro republic capable of protecting the Moros from government onslaught became a tempting option.

Second, the Malaysian government was enraged by Marcos’ plan to take Sabah by clandestine action. For Malaysia, a covert military action of their own had to be hatched. Malaysia had to train the first Batch of the **Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)**, the idea was to create a surrogate army to avoid the appearance of war with the Philippines. Malaysia intended these men to destabilize the already fragile society in Mindanao and Sulu where the rebellion or insurgency would force the Philippine government, at a minimum, to concentrate its forces on a national disturbance and divert them from further efforts to regain the State of Sabah. **Stern (2012)**.

iv. Christian Death Squad

As earlier defined, “Ilaga” or otherwise known as Christian Death Squad is a Christian militia organized by Christian local politicians determined to expand their zones of control by displacing Moro inhabitants. Herman Lopez, the first cousin of Ferdinand Marcos’ mother, was the brain of the Ilaga Christian paramilitary groups whose goals were : (1) grabbing lands from the Moro villagers; (2) destabilization of Muslim communities, and (3) reducing unity of Communist and Muslim rebels. The Ilaga put fear into the hearts of Moros by killing, carving out ears, ripping out eyeballs, and carving crosses on the corpses.

“Then came the ruthless Ilagas and their allies, the anti-Moro ideology, martial law and a protracted war that would plague several generations. They describe a gradual descent into hell, incessant enforced displacements, the loss of their homes and lands, and severed ties with their ancestral homeland. They speak of humiliation and fear, of going into hiding, of making themselves invisible. They also speak, with evident difficulty, of lost opportunities: some say that had it not been for what befell them, they would now have an education or even perhaps be wealthy. What becomes clear from their accounts is that the goal of these atrocities was not just to kill but also to dehumanise them to make them an ‘other’, to grind them down to a sub-human level; which is why women and children in particular, were specifically targeted as victims.”
(Peace is for Everyone (2016)

The Ilaga had been blamed for killing innocent Moro civilians and burning hundreds of individual homes of Moro villagers in Central Mindanao. Misuari believed Marcos was clandestinely behind the founding of the Ilaga armed bands purportedly responsible for horrible atrocities against innocent Moro villagers in the 70s. **Misuari (1975).**

In this dissertation, we observe that the “Ilaga” atrocities against innocent Moro inhabitants had greatly contributed to the emergence of the contemporary Moro insurgency movement. First, the presence of the Ilaga justifies MNLF’s call for armed struggle to defend themselves from both the government and the Ilagas. Second, it garnered general support to the MNLF. And third, the Ilaga’s continuing carnage in the Moro communities had captured Islamic nations’ sympathy for the Moros.

The Muslim world were gravely distressed over reports of ‘genocide’ and a series of military and Christian paramilitary mayhem and violence against Muslims in Mindanao. **Levtzion (1979)**.

In a strongly worded resolution, the Organization of Islamic conference registered its “serious concern for the plight of the Muslims living in the Philippines,” and asked the Philippine Government “to guarantee the safety and property of their Muslim brethren in the Philippines.” **OIC Resolution No. 12, Third Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference, Jedah, K.S.A. (1972)**.

v. The Declaration of Martial Law

On 21 September 1971, Ferdinand Marcos placed the entire country under Martial Law.(Proclamation No. 1081, September 21, 1972) He accused the Moros of instigating rebellion in Mindanao with Christian vigilantes exacerbating the peace and security problems in the region and also asserted that lawlessness was perpetrated by Philippine Communists. **Cheong (1999)**.

In Mindanao, a great number of Moros including Misuari interpreted it as a hoax perpetrated to destroy their Muslim faith. President Marcos decreed the immediate

surrender of firearms. This imposition drew sharp resistance for it would be tantamount to capitulation and removal of an important status symbol of the Moros. Moreover, the Moros feared that their unarmed communities would be defenseless against government-backed Ilagas.

The Moros, feeling threatened by the political development in Manila, were left with the option of resuming armed confrontation with the government. As pointed out by **Stern (2012)**, almost immediately, the MNLF under Misuari readied for battle with government forces. This time, the gang-style war of the Ilaga against Muslim defenders shifted to an entirely different phase – the revolt of modern guerrilla warfare. Misuari's new phase had ideological concepts absent in pre-Martial law fighting. Especially, the MNLF's fight was not directed against Christian vigilantes, but against government itself. With the ferocity and precision of their warfare, the Moro insurgents made it clear that their revolt was not simply another cyclic outbreak of violence reminiscent of outbreaks during the past four centuries, but that Misuari personified and represented a historic watershed, something vastly greater in scale and more portentous in its implications than anything that had gone before.

In this dissertation, we observe that Martial law and the controversies that preceded it did not in themselves cause the Moro insurgency, just as fuel alone does not make a fire. For the MNLF leadership, Martial law served as a galvanizing factor which made the spark that set-off the roaring conflagration that nearly consumed Mindanao. Clearly, its sustaining oxygen arose from the fervent and collective desire and aspirations of the Moro people – especially the mood of hope inherent in Misuari's novel idea of a Bangsamoro Nation, with notions of independence, freedom, and massive wealth. It was

his belief that his people deserved to be free that activated him and eventually led the Moro insurgency.

2. How did the Spanish and American Colonialism contribute to the rise of the Muslim insurgency?

(a) The Spanish Colonialism (1521-1898)

In March 1521, the Spaniards under Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese, landed in Philippine soils. **Agoncillo and Alfonso (1966)** The Spaniards, under Magellan, baptized the chieftain along with several hundred other natives in Cebu.

Magellan later wished to subdue the nearby Island of Mactan, whose chieftain named Lapulapu was hostile to the Spaniards. And in a battle between Lapulapu and Magellan, the latter was killed. The Moros claimed this encounter as a first triumph in their struggle against foreign invaders.

However, succeeding Spanish expeditions to the Philippines lead to the establishment of the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Philippines. When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines, Islam was already developed among the people of the Southern Philippines. Nevertheless, in other places of the archipelago, like Manila, Southern Luzon and in the Visayan Islands, Islam was either unknown or still in its early stages of development. **Luga (2002)**.

By means of the sword and the cross, the Spaniards accomplished the colonization of Luzon and the Visayas islands and converted the natives to the Christian faith, but similar attempts to establish Christianity in the Southern Philippines met stiff and bloody encounters from the Moros.

In their determination to conquer the Moros. The Spaniards enlisted the natives they previously conquered and Christianized, thus, the converts were made to fight the Moros for the glory of Spain and Christianity. Thus, for 333 years, the Spaniards and the Moros have been in constant war until 1898.

In this thesis, we observe that Spanish hegemony in the Philippines have had significant contribution to the Moro insurgency in Mindanao, to wit :

Firstly, the Moro insurgency was an outcome of centuries of Moro resistance to foreign subjugation including the Spaniards.. The Moro people are not a conquering nation, they never cruised foreign lands for conquest, but they also have natural inclination for independence, freedom and liberty. Resistance to Spanish colonialism therefore was a by-product of their natural predisposition as a people to resist any foreign invaders of their homeland.

Secondly, Spanish intrusion into the once peaceful Moro communities was seen as a challenge to both their traditional political power (the Moro Sultanates), and their religion.

Thirdly, because of the fall and conversion of the inhabitants in Luzon and Visayas into Christianity, the Moros felt the need to defend their religion from being easily crushed by the Spaniards.

Fourthly, the employment by the Spaniards of Christian converts from Luzon and Visayas in their continuous hostility against the Moros in Mindanao had created deep-rooted animosity between the Moros and the newly Christian converts of Luzon and Visayas.

And finally, when the Spaniard ceded the Philippines for \$20 Million dollars to the Americans in 1898, including Mindanao. The Moros claimed their inclusion was a mistake for they had never surrendered nor had been subjugated by the Spaniards in their more than 333 years of bloody encounters.

This finding on the extent of Spanish impact on the Moro insurgency in Mindanao has been significantly underscored by the following authors.

Bertrand (2000), briefly asserts that “the Muslim grievances could be traced back several centuries since the Spanish conquest of the Philippines. The Muslims have been fighting to protect their territory and identity against a foreign power and domination.” **Warren (1998)** also contends that “It was the Spaniards who, trying to establish theocratic rule over the islands by conquering and converting the indigenous communities, established the boundary between the “Infidels” (Muslims) and the civilized (Christians). Ethnic difference, of course, legitimized the violent exploitation of the natives (Moros) and theft of their lands and resources.” **Jubair (2007)**, a leading Moro scholar, holds the same sentiments believing that the Moro insurgency in Mindanao started in 1578 when the Spaniards, after conquering all the islands in Luzons and the Visayas in just eleven years, deliberately and without provocation attacked the Moros in Sulu and Mindanao. (Jubair, p. 61) **Luga (2002)** also asserts that as a result of continued Spanish colonial policy of Hispanization and Christianization of the whole country including those territories under absolute Moro control, the history of the Moros as a people was marked by a constant struggle for survival and resistance to

foreign aggression. This has brought the Moros into conflict with Spain for more than three centuries of bloody Spanish and Moro wars.

For Luga, the use of Filipino Christian converts by the Spaniards to fight the Muslims for the glory of Spain and Christianity has ignited the ember of religious animosity and intolerance between Filipino Christians and Muslim Filipinos, considered to be a major factor to the origin and root of the centuries-old Moro conflict. For the Muslims, the preservation of the Islamic and their cultural heritage against foreign or local Christian domination is their most sacred duty and are willing to die for its defense if necessary.

(b) The American Colonial Era. (1898-1946)

Under the Treaty of Paris which was signed on December 10, 1898, at the end of the Spanish-American War, the Spaniards ceded the entire Spanish colonies, Cuba, Puerto Rico, parts of the West Indies, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States for twenty million dollars. **(Butler, 1902).**

In the Philippines, the Americans inherited the Moro problem from Spain. Like its predecessors, the United States pursued the policy of total control over the region and annexed Mindanao to the Philippine central government.

American Indirect and Direct Rule

The early Muslim-American contact and military occupation in the Moroland began on May 1899 and the Americans found the Moros still in control of their lands. In August 1899, after reaching an agreement with Jamalul Kiram II, the Sultan acknowledged the sovereignty of the United States over the Sulu archipelago and its

dependencies and agreed to suppress piracy. The United States pledged to respect the authority of the Sultan and his clan leaders, the *datus*, and not to interfere in the prevailing Moros' practice of their religion and their customs. **Glazer (1941)**.

Initially, the Moros and the Americans were quite comfortable with the new found relations. The Americans did not interfere with the *datu* system and religious matters. **Majul (1988)**. However, when more American troops poured into Mindanao to occupy ports in the region. This aroused the Moro's insecurity concerning their practice of religion and way of life.

Soon enough the uneasiness and suspicion exploded into violence. Some *datus* rose up and attacked American soldiers.

The Muslim hostility was interpreted as a challenge to American sovereignty. As a result, the American governance shifted from noninterference to direct rule with the establishment of the Moro Province. Jubair (2007). The new policy of direct rule was envisioned to prepare for the integration of the Moros into a modern political body. The American policy of direct rule unwittingly transgressed the social structure, customs and laws by which the Moros had lived for centuries. The Americans vigorously carried out the policy of "Filipinization" to integrate the Muslims into national life.

In 1916, the legislative power over the Moroland was absorbed by the Philippine legislature as provided in the Jones regulation. **Jones Law, August 29 (1916)**. Under the Jones Law, the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes took over jurisdiction from the abolished Department of Mindanao and Sulu, and this new arrangement placed the Moroland under the direct control of a Manila-based bureau for the first time.

“Provisions for a bureau for non-Christians.—There is hereby established a bureau, to be known as the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, which said bureau shall be embraced in one of the executive departments to be designated by the Governor-General, and shall have general supervision over the public affairs of the inhabitants of the territory represented in the Legislature by appointive senators and representatives.” **Sec. 22 (C) Jones Law (1916).**

This dissertation contends that American “indirect and direct rule” of the Moros as a factor in the emergence of Moro Insurgency in Mindanao as been lucidly exemplified by the following scholars:

Majul (1988) argues that the Moros had been one of the most brutalized victims of colonial domination and religious chauvinism in world history. When the United States annexed the Philippines in 1898, it had to suppress open and covert native opposition up to 1915. Unable to subdue the Moros by military violence alone, the US negotiated tactical compromises with the local datus, coaxing their support with “education trips” and other concessions. On the other hand, **Jubair (1999)** holding an astounding observation of US’ role in an upcoming Moro insurgency, believes that primary root of the conflict now raging in Mindanao and Sulu, was an outcome of US’ illegal and immoral annexation of Mindanao and Sulu to the territory of the Philippines after its grant of independence in 1946.

Former congressman **Michael Mastura (1984)**, a renowned Muslim leader, clearly resonates Jubair’s view asserting that the United States cannot escape responsibility for the troubled history of Mindanao, for it was precisely the US, nearly a century ago as the colonial master of the Philippines, that lumped the Moro areas in

Mindanao together with the Filipino nation. It did not need to do so after having already won the peace and establishing the Moro Province “allowing for a considerable de facto autonomy for Mindanao and Sulu.” Meanwhile, **Allan R. Luga (2002) believes that these** root causes of the Moro insurgency problem were later aggravated by the equally counterproductive American and Philippine governments’ policies of Muslim pacification, assimilation, and integration programs. These programs were considered by the Muslims as a challenge to their religion and culture and therefore offered a serious threat to their existence. They felt that the economic development and governance brought to their land benefited only the Christians and made them a second-class Filipinos in their own homeland and the migration of Christian settlers resulted in their losing their ancestral lands.

Opposition to Annexation

In the 1920s, the Insular Government appointed all Filipino Christians as governors of Sulu, Cotabato and Lanao to replace the existing Americans. These appointments sent a wrong signal to the Moros for they interpreted Filipinization to actually mean “Christianization” of the bureaucracy in the Moroland. **Jubair (1999).**

Already, the Moros were distrustful, uneasy, and perhaps fearful of the Christian Filipinos because they fought together with the Spaniards for such a long time. Christian Filipinos vigorously pursued the assimilation and Filipinization programs in the Moroland that meant, from the Muslim Filipino’s point of view, “being ruled by their enemies.” **Bertrand (2000).**

For fear of being lumped together with their Christian counterparts in Luzon and Visayas, this thesis observe that when the issue of Philippine Independence was in the offing, Moro leaders showed their intense opposition to be incorporated under the new Philippine republic. They say: “We are independent for 500 years. Even Spain failed to conquer us. If the U.S. quits the Philippines and the Filipinos attempt to govern us, we will fight.” (available at [www.moroinfo.com.ph], accessed 3 pm. 11 July 2021)

On June 9, 1921, the Moros of Sulu declared their intention to remain part of the United States instead of being annexed in the independent Philippine nation. (available at [www.mindanao.com.ph], accessed 4pm. 23 July 2021)

In a “**Declaration of Rights and Purposes**” signed by Moro leaders, it says: “In the event that the United States grants independence to the Philippine Islands without provision our retention under the American flag it is our firm intention and resolve to declare ourselves an Independent constitutional sultanate to be known to world as Moro Nation. It is the duty of the congress of the United States to make provision at once, for the security and protection promised to us when we surrendered our arms to the United States Army. This promise is just as sacred as any alleged promises you may have made the Christian Filipinos. Have left us defenseless, and it is your duty to protect us or return to us the weapons you took from and which we freely gave you, relying on your promises.” **Abas (1972)**.

On March 18,1935, Lanao datus and leaders strongly declared in a Manifesto and pleaded with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to exclude Mindanao and Sulu in the grant of independence to the Filipinos. Part of it reads: “...because we have learned that the United States is going to give the Philippines independence... we want to tell you that the

Philippines ... is populated by two peoples with two different religious practices and traditions. The Christian Filipinos occupy the islands of Luzon and the Visayas. The Moros (Muslims) predominate in the islands of Mindanao and Sulu. With regard to the forthcoming independence we foresee that the condition we and our children will be characterized by unrest, sufferings and misery...We do not want to be included in the Philippine Independence (for) once an independent Philippines is launched there will be trouble between us and the Christian Filipinos because from time immemorial these two peoples have not lived harmoniously. Our practices, laws and decisions of our Moro leaders should be respected... Our religion should not be curtailed anyway... All our practices which are incidental to religion of Islam should be respected because these things are what a Muslim desires to live for ... Our religion is no more, our lives are no score.” **Silva (1974)**.

However, the Americans did not accede to the request of suzerainty because, at this time, the Christian Nationalist Filipinos had established a better relationship with the Americans. The Christian Filipinos readily embraced the American educational system, adopted the government administration and established valuable business relations and partnerships. Thus, the Moroland drifted further under the control of the Philippine legislature, instead of remaining an American responsibility (**Harber (1998)**).

The historical dimension of the origins and roots of the Moro insurgency has been adequately summarized by **Fowler (1985)** in his analysis, to wit: “For over 400 years the Muslim people of the southern Philippines have been at war. They have resisted the Spanish occupation of their ancestral homelands, the American colonial presence, and the current Christian government. To understand what motivates the Moro people to such

conflict, it is necessary to study their history, religion, and the ethnic fabric which makes up their various regional groups. The fundamentals of their religion require a homogenous Islamic government.”

3. How did the Philippine government respond to the rise of the Moro Separatism in Mindanao from the Marcos regime down to the incumbent Duterte Administration.

During the Commonwealth period from 1935-1941 and during the early Philippine Independence from 1946-1965, this study finds no significant policies that had been adopted by the Philippine government providing adequate social services, addressing poverty issues, creating jobs, uplifting the standard of living and improved the quality of life of the Moro people save with the creation of the **Commission on National Integration** in 1957.

The **Commission on National Integration (CNI)** was created to effectuate the economic social, moral and political advancement of non-Christian Filipinos and to render real, complete and permanent the integration of all said minorities into the body politic. **Republic Act. 1888, June 22 (1957).**

The CNI focused on granting scholarships to Muslims and other minorities to study in colleges and universities. Beginning with 109 CNI scholars in 1958, the number increased to 1,210 scholars in 1967. While political maneuvering ensured that many of the CNI scholarships went to the children of the Datus, the scholarship program

also represented the first opportunity for considerable numbers of non-elite Muslims to attend universities. **McKenna (1998)**.

This Dissertation observes however that while the government believed that with the acquired learning and skills the scholars would bring socio-economic improvement upon their return to their respective communities, what actually transpired was that their education brought awareness of their Islamic identity making the educated vocal in their aspiration.

As observed by Mckenna, Much of this scholars' political education was gained outside university lecture halls from observing and participating in campus political activism. They also experienced firsthand the magnitude of popular anti-Muslim bias in the national capital and, after the election of Ferdinand Marcos as president of the Philippines in 1965, witnessed an increasing antagonism toward Muslims by the same Christian-dominated state that had provided them scholarships.

In March 18, 1968 the "Jabidah Massacre" came to light which had a galvanizing effect on the Muslim student community in Manila. Throughout the year, Muslim students demonstrated against the Jabidah killings. The Jabidah protests transformed one campus activist in particular into a Muslim separatist. Nur Misuari was a Tausug from Sulu and the son of a very poor family. Supported by a CNI scholarship, he had graduated from the University of the Philippines and by 1968 was teaching there in the Department of Political Science. In 1967 he helped to found the Muslim Nationalist League and became editor of its official publication, the *Philippine Muslim News*. Misuari has stated that it was the Jabidah protests that inspired his political career and motivated his rise to the leadership of the Muslim separatist movement. **Majul (1985)**.

In a 1968 editorial in the official organ of the Muslim Nationalist League, he wrote: "Separatism is a costly and painful process and few ordinary mortals are prepared to pay the price." Significantly, Misuari has redirected the revolutionary rhetoric of the Muslim student movement towards the goal of Moro nationalism.

Beginning with the 60s and 70s, Islamic consciousness had gained foothold in the Philippines as more Moros came in contact with other Muslims from Islamic countries who were either guests, visitors, or foreign students in the country or members of the diplomatic corps representing their respective nations in the Philippines. A great number of rich Moro families also took the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca and returned with greater enthusiasm for the universal Islamic brotherhood and greater religious zeal.

The Islamic nations gravely aware of the plights of their Moro brethren in the Philippines offered significant number of scholarship grants to hundreds of Moros to study in Islamic theological centers in the Arab States. These resulted in a heightened sense of Islamic awareness and universal Islamic brotherhood with Muslims around the world. This development eventually gave the Moros a sense of Islamic identity, pride and dignity and a stimulus to preserve and safeguard their Moro identity with collective resolve, fortitude and determination.

A. THE MARCOS YEARS (1976-1986)

The 60s marked the emergence of contemporary modern Moro separatism that had embroiled the Philippine government and the Moro separatists for decades, into a protracted war which brought forth untold agony and suffering not only to both

government soldiers and the MNLF fighters, but also to civilians living in the area of conflict.

Confronting the harsh effects of the Moro separatism, Marcos at first adopted a “total war” policy against the MNLF deploying more than half of the AFP in Mindanao and Sulu. During the height of the conflict in the 70s, the Moro rebels tied up over 50 battalions of the AFP from 1972-76. Mercado (1984).

The full force of the destructive military strength of the Marcos regime had been employed to strangle, contain and destroy the MNLF’s advancing fighters. But Marcos’s instrument of violence had neither weakened nor trimmed down the will and fortitude of the Moro insurgents.

The Islamic nations, worried about the condition of their Moro brethren, had to call upon Marcos to stop all actions that resulted to the killing of innocent Moros, the destruction of their property and places of worship. They also pressed upon the Philippine government “to find political and peaceful resolution through negotiation with Muslim Rebels, in order to arrive at a just solution to the Moro insurgency problem. (Che Man (1990).

In the middle of the 70s, Marcos bearing the burden of an excruciating military campaign in Mindanao and the pressures from the powerful Organization of Islamic Conference to end his war with their Moro brethren, and worried about the possibility of an oil embargo against the Philippines by the Arab nations, of the kind that created endless gas lines in America which lasted from October 1973 to March 1974, posing a major threat to the U.S. economy because of its support of Israel, Marcos had to attune his military crusade against the Moros to a gesture of peace, reassuring the Islamic

nations that the Philippine government intends to address the Moro insurgency through peaceful settlement. And finally, in an attempt to conclude peace with the Moro insurgents. The Marcos regime signed the Tripoli Agreement on December 23, 1976 with the MNLF providing for the establishment of an autonomous region in the Southern Philippines composed of the Provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato and Palawan. Tripoli Agreement, December 23 (1976).

However, the jubilation for peace was short-lived because within a few months after signing the accord, both parties began accusing each other of infringements. The MNLF insisted that the 13 provinces at once be proclaimed a single autonomous unit. Marcos, however, maintained that certain “constitutional processes” had to be satisfied, including the conduct of a plebiscite in affected areas.

Nevertheless, on 17 April 1977, a referendum on autonomy was held, with an overwhelming majority rejecting the merger of Region 9 and 10 into one autonomous region. The MNLF protested the conduct of the poll exercise. Subsequently, the Tripoli Agreement ended in deadlock amid mutual disagreements. Mercado (1984).

The Marcos administration, realizing the futile utility of war as a means to crush the Moro insurgents, Marcos had change his policy from using brute force to a gesture of peace in an attempt either superficially or in substance to, at least, mitigate the general grievances of the Moro people.

To start with, Marcos created a Presidential Task Force for the Reconstruction of Mindanao tasked to rebuild areas destroyed by the conflict particularly during the height

of the Moro insurgency in the 70s. Gutierrez' (2000). He also created the Southern Philippines Development Administration to serve as the specific agency of the Government responsible for the implementation of development projects in Southern Philippines in order to foster and accelerate balanced growth in the region within the context of national plans and policies. Presidential Decree No. 1703, amending P.D. No. 690, December 14 (1960). The SPDA which took over government programs for the Muslims later became the Ministry of Muslim Affairs. (Available at [www.chanrobles.com.ph], accessed 4 pm. 24, July 2021).

In 1973, the Philippine Amanah Bank was also as created to provide financial assistance to Muslim entrepreneurs on generous terms, and to provide, among others, reasonable medium and long-term credit facilities to the people of the Muslim-dominated provinces of Cotabato, South Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Sulu, Basilan, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Palawan. (Available at [www.al-amanahbank.com.ph], accessed 4pm. 23 August 2021)

In the same year, Marcos also created the UP Institute of Islamic Studies on November 22, 1973 by Presidential Decree 342, as a part of the Philippine Center for Advanced Studies (PCAS). Following the Abolition of PCAS on July 9, 1979 by virtue of Executive Order No. 543 issued by the President of the Philippines, the Institute was re-established as a separate unit of the University.

In 1975, in an attempt to win the friendship of the Arab Nations, Marcos made a well-planned diplomatic initiative by supporting the Palestinian cause in order not to disrupt the supply of oil in the Philippines and to exert influence on the Arab nations by stopping foreign aid to the Muslim rebels in Mindanao. Wurfel (1974). At home, key

rebel leaders were also offered amnesty and other socio-economic incentives. Gutierrez (2000).

In 1976, in anticipation of a state visit by Libya's President Muammar al-Gaddafi, Marcos constructed under the supervision of former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos the Masjid al-Dahab (or The Golden Mosque) in the predominantly Muslim section of the Quiapo district in Manila. The Mosque is considered to be the largest Mosque in Metro Manila. Although, Gaddafi's visit was cancelled, the Mosque served as a gesture of Marcos' policy to accommodate the religious needs of the Muslims. (Available at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/http://google.com.ph. Accessed 9 am, July 28, 2021).

In 1977, The Code of Philippine Muslim Personal Law was also promulgated pursuant to the 1976 Tripoli Agreement which stipulates that Muslim in specified areas of autonomy were to be given the right to set up their own courts that would implement Shari'ah laws. (Presidential Decree 1083, February 4, 1977).

Clearly, the law which established Shariah courts in Major Muslim Areas, was a conciliatory measure that acknowledged personal normative obligations without seriously undermining Philippine civil law, though the MNLF strongly objected to the Marcos version of its actual implementation. ("Religion and Politics" available at [suite101.com], accessed August 15, 2021),

Marcos regime also expanded Muslim appointees to government positions; Arabic instruction was also allowed in some public schools in predominantly Muslim provinces, university scholarships for Muslims were also expanded. Wurfel (1988).

But as to the extent of how these Marcos initiatives have had significant impact on the upliftment of the living standard and of promoting the general welfare of the

Moros is yet to be proven. There were no significant data that could support a favorable finding in this regard because the Moro areas remained during Marcos era and until today at the bottom of the poorest provinces in the country. In fact, as of June 21, 2011, the National Statistical Coordination Board or NSCB lists four of the provinces of the ARMM as among the Top-10 of the poorest provinces in the Philippines. (Available at [www.bukisa.com.ph.], accessed 10 am, September 1, 2021).

In fairness however, Marcos deserved recognition for being the first president of the Republic to embark on a mixture of non-military solutions to address the Moro insurgency in Mindanao realizing that sheer military power and violence to crush the Moro insurgents was absolutely a costly adventure and enormously painful to both the economy and the political order. Thus, Marcos realized the need for a new paradigm in addressing the Moro insurgency incorporating non-military components including the grant of Moro autonomy to the Moros in order to finally conclude a comprehensive and permanent peace in Mindanao.

B. THE CORY AQUINO REGIME (1986-1992)

On February 1986, President Corazon C. Aquino came to power on the wave of anti-Marcos protests triggered by the assassination of her husband, former Senator Benigno Aquino, the political archrival of Marcos.

Under Aquino government, talks with Nur Misuari began. The 1987 constitution contained language providing for the creation of an autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao only by an act of Congress, and only to become effective upon approval of the people in a plebiscite. (Art. X, Sec. 15, 1987 Philippine Constitution). Misuari, on the

other hand, believed the Tripoli Agreement of 1976 contained the solution and that further legislation and voting was a distraction. Though believer in democracy when fairly implemented, Misuari held no confidence in the Philippine process, particularly in a plebiscite. (Stern, p.95). With pressure from the OIC, the MNLF abandoned its aim of total independence for Muslim regions and accepted the offer of autonomy. **Far Eastern Economic Review Asia Yearbook (1989)**. However, by mid-1987, the MNLF abandoned the negotiations as both parties could not agree on the territorial scope of the autonomy and its implementation. Misuari went into exile and the negotiations eventually collapsed. **May (1990)**.

In Misuari's view, the 1987 constitution's provision on Muslim Autonomy had been engineered to fail, simply because the majority of the people of the Philippines would never vote to grant autonomy to the 13 provinces as covered by the 1976 Tripoli Agreement. **Stern (2012)**.

Setting aside Misuari then, the Philippine government pushed ahead with plans for Muslim autonomy without the MNLF's cooperation. Pursuant to the 1987 constitution which provided for the creation of a Regional Autonomy for Muslim Mindanao, The autonomy law R.A. 6734 providing for the Creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was passed by the Philippine Congress and on 19 November 1989, a plebiscite was held and as expected, only four provinces with no cities voted to join in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao. **Timberman (1990)**. Thus, the ARMM then under Aquino administration consisted only of the of four (4) Provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. After the formation of the ARMM with Zackaria Candao of Central Mindanao as the first ARMM Governor (1990-1993). With

the Aquino government as unwilling as Marcos had been to implement the Tripoli Agreement.

Misuari took stock of his situation. In his letter to Cesar Majul from Islamabad in October 1988, Misuari expressed that the *“MNLF, however, remains committed to the OIC and the ‘International Agreement’ signed in Tripoli Libya in December 1976. But the Aquino government has treacherously closed all avenues to peace and autonomy and the MNLF is left with no other options but to pursue the path of self-determination and independence, unless Manila recoils gracefully from its arrogant and warlike posture.”*

Stern (2012)

C. THE RAMOS ADMINISTRATION (1992 – 1998)

When Ramos was elected President of the Philippines, motivated by his desire to catch up with our prosperous ASEAN neighbors, envisioned an economic growth path and development for the Philippines. He wanted to transform the Philippines into a “Newly-Industrialized Country.” This vision requires the inflow of foreign investment and political stability. For Ramos, the attainment of peace in the country is vital and essential for his government’s vision of social prosperity and economic development.

After meticulous thinking, Ramos set out five priority items in his first State of the Nation Address, with one of them “Peace and Security” so sorely lacking under previous administrations. Ramos said, to wit:

“Peace and security are the first urgent problem. For as long as instability and uncertainty characterize our common life, we shall not make any headway. This is why in my inaugural address I immediately raised the issue of amnesty to enable rebels to re-

enter civil society as law-abiding citizens. Our goal must be to attain a just, comprehensive, peaceful and lasting resolution of the internal armed conflict that has cost the nation and our people so dearly. This effort must go hand in hand with the thrust of my government to institute basic reforms to root out the causes of rebellion. After lengthy consultations within the government and the private sector, I am now prepared to take the following steps. First, I am submitting to Congress today an amnesty proclamation that will cover some 4,500 former rebels — 2,100 former members of the CPP-NPA and 2,400 former members of the MNLF — who have already applied for amnesty under Executive Order no. 350, promulgated on March 13, 1989, as well as those who may still wish to apply for amnesty under this Executive Order. I ask for immediate Congressional concurrence. This grant of amnesty is the initial step in a comprehensive peace and unification process that shall address the problem of bringing back all other rebels to the fold of the law. I therefore invite both chambers of Congress to join the Executive in constituting a National Unification Commission, that will include representatives of the private sector. This commission will undertake extensive consultations with concerned sectors of society, including rebel groups, in order to formulate a viable amnesty program and the process that will lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.” (“Ramos First State of the Nation Address,” July 27, 1992 available at [<http://www.gov.ph>], accessed, 10 am, August 2, 2021)

Essentially, Ramos had to negotiate with the communists, the military rebels and the Moro insurgents because without peace and security, the success of the government’s vision would be uncertain. Moved by his apprehension and actual experience with the

brutality, rage and viciousness of the Moro insurgency in Mindanao, President Ramos was determined to pursue peace with the Moros.

As Misuari had been saying for many years, Ramos also concluded that unless the government reached peace with the MNLF, the nation would stagnate. Strong enough because of 30 years in the military, Ramos recognized peace must be achieved with Misuari to stop the financial hemorrhage and societal strain relentlessly inflicted on all the people. For Ramos, in war few men prosper – mostly arms merchants and generals. President Ramos is determined to wage peace with the Moros and intends to attain a final solution to the problem that will accord honor to all sides, promote mutual respect, and serve the highest interest of the people, especially the poor and powerless. During the negotiation, at first, Misuari asserts that the area of coverage of autonomy under the Tripoli Agreement is unalterable and should be unconditionally implemented, a sine qua non for the peace process to move forward. Iribani (2006)

To appease Misuari, Ramos expressed his commitment to do everything possible to move the negotiations to a higher level consistent with Philippine national sovereignty and territorial integrity under the Constitution, he then came up with an idea to create an entirely new kind of transitional structure that offered a mechanisms to merge the Tripoli Agreement of 13 provinces into Bangsamoro control, but would not be outside the Constitution.

In September 2, 1996, convinced of Ramos' sincerity, after more than two decades of war, the Philippine Government and the Moro National Liberation Front finally signed the historic Peace Agreement.

These arrangements are to be achieved in two phases. Phase One (I) is the extendible transitional period of three years starting with the issuance of an executive order. Executive Order No. 371 (1996) establishing the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZPAD), the Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development under the Office of the President, and related structures and mechanisms. (1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement, paras, 1,3-20). With the MNLF, especially its Chairman Nur Misuari the necessary exposure and chance to prove itself in the SZPAD consisting of 13 provinces which represent its historical claim for a Bangsamoro homeland. This peace and development approach was meant to prepare the ground for a new autonomous region with presumably expanded powers and territory subject to specified Philippine constitutional processes. **Bernas (1999).**

Phase Two (II) refers to the establishment of a new regional autonomous government which involves congressional action on a new organic act incorporating the Peace agreement on the substance of the autonomy (to replace or improve that of the existing ARMM) and then a plebiscite thereon to determine the final territory. (Executive Order 371), paras, 2, 21-152 (1996). Substantively, the Peace agreement represents a Moro Autonomy very much integrated into the Philippine political, military, educational, economic and judicial mainstream.

Outside the peace agreement but part of the whole peace package, the GRP offered and the MNLF accepted a political alliance with the Ramos ruling party LAKAS. Thus, on 11 September 1996, with government support, Nur Misuari ran unopposed and was elected governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Similarly, a total of 5,200 MNLF elements have been integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines,

while 1,250 members have been absorbed in the Philippine National Police. Rodil (2000).

The idea was to enable the MNLF led by Misuari to gain control of over the existing ARMM through its 1996 elections for a term of three years, almost coterminous with that of the SPCPD and for the MNLF-led ARMM to be the politico-governmental entity at the core of peace and development efforts to be promoted and coordinated by the SPCPD in the SZOPAD. Soliman Santos, Jr. (2001).

To the surprise of many, the Ramos administration did not stop its peace efforts with the MNLF, it also vehemently pursued negotiations with the MILF. On July 1997, a cessation of hostilities was forged between the government and the MILF though the ceasefire was marred by several violations on both sides. At this time, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had become the biggest threat to national security.

Under the Ramos administration, the holding of peace talks with the MILF, even after the conclusion of a final peace agreement with the MNLF, is significant on several counts. First, it shows the commitment of the GRP, especially during the Ramos administration, to seek and pursue peace or negotiated political settlements with the different rebel groups (the wind changed under the Estrada administration), Secondly, it shows that the MILF is a rebel force to reckon with, and corollarilly that the MNLF is not necessarily the sole representative of the Bangsamoro people. And thirdly, it shows that the Moro problem has not yet been fully solved and that, for the MILF, the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement is not the final solution.

The tenure of President Fidel Ramos saw economic recovery and a steady improvement in security conditions after it signed a Peace Agreement with the MNLF

and brought the MILF to the negotiation table. But the strong hand and commitment of Ramos would not last enough years to fulfill the entire covenants of the Final Peace Agreement with the MNLF. He was succeeded by his vice-President in a landslide victory in the presidential election of 1998.

D. THE ESTRADA GOVERNMENT (1998 – 2001)

After the May 1998 elections, the new-elect President Estrada continued its commitment “to pursue talks on the substantive issues of the Mindanao conflict.” **Quimpo (2000)**. At first, Estrada had to work with Misuari and vowed to respect the government’s commitment to the peace process concluded under the Ramos administration because Estrada believes Peace is a crucial and indispensable requisite to the country’s economic growth and development. “In his state of the nation address, popularly called "SONA", president Erap highlighted his vision for Mindanao: The first is to restore and maintain peace in Mindanao—because without peace, there can be no development; The second is to develop Mindanao—because without development, there can be no peace; The third is to continue seeking peace talks with the MILF within the framework of the Constitution—because a peace agreed upon in good faith is preferable to a peace enforced by force of arms; And the fourth is to continue with the implementation of the peace agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front, or MNLF—because that is our commitment to our countrymen and to the international community. (Available at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/http://google.com.] accessed, 2 pm. August 1, 2021)

But this promising Misuari-Estrada joint effort vanished in the mayhem created by the new emerging Hashim Salamat's Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

In Salamat's opinion, the Ramos-Misuari agreement never touched the core of the Bangsamoro Problem- which is the illegal and immoral usurpation of their ancestral homeland and the barbarous usurpation of their legitimate rights to freedom and self-determination.

At this time Ustadz Salamat appeared to be a serious contender for the entire Moro Leadership after Misuari entered into the mainstream of Philippine society, with his thousands of MILF fighters operating in big and small zones of independent camps, led to numerous encounters between the MILF and government forces. On 10 January 2000, the Moro rebels occupied the Talayaan Municipal Hall in Maguindanao and likewise, on 16 March 2000 the MILF occupied the Kauswagan Town Hall in Lanao del Norte. That on March 20, 2000, riled and infuriated by the death of his godson, 1st Lt. Don Alfonso Javier in a military encounter with MILF insurgents, then Philippine President Joseph Estrada declared an "All-Out War" with the MILF." **May (1990).**

On July 2000, the AFP overran 50 MILF camps including the MILF biggest Camps Bushra and Abubakar. However, contrary to expectations, the MILF did not fight in positional warfare to defend the camps, but abandoned the area and disbanded into small groups of guerillas and dispersed to the countryside. **Wolters (2002).**

The military offensive against the MILF exacted a heavy toll on the personnel and resources of the government as well as on the inhabitants of the areas directly affected.

The instability in Mindanao has seriously affected the economy and adversely impacted foreign investment. The tourism industry has significantly declined as has the Philippine

currency. The stock market has suffered bitterly as some investors lost confidence and pulled out their ventures not only in the Southern Philippines but from the rest of the country, former-President Fidel Ramos assailed Estrada's purely military approach as folly, "if you capture the camps, they will just break into small units and take the war to the cities." (**"The Uneasy and Costly Road to Peace in Mindanao" Philippine Daily Inquirer, 11 May 2000**)

In the last quarter of year 2000, the Estrada administration was busy defending the president from plunder charges. He was forced to resign following massive demonstrations on 20 January 2001.

E. The GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO ADMINISTRATION (2001-2010)

In 2001, immediately after assuming office, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo reversed the all-out war policy of her predecessor by adopting an all-out peace policy and started establishing contacts with the MILF for the possible restarting of the abandoned peace process with the Moro rebel forces particularly the MILF. And as gesture of her government's sincerity to recognize basic rights of the Muslims, two of Islam's most important celebrations were declared national holidays in the Philippines. Arroyo signed a law declaring *Eid'l Fitr* (Festival of Breaking Fast) a national holiday. **Republic Act No. 9177, November 13 (2002)**. Seven years later, *Eid'l Adha* (Feast of Sacrifice), which was only a regional holiday in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), was declared a national holiday. **Republic Act No. 9849, December 11 (2009)**.

Eid'l Fitr, also called *Hari Raya Puasa* by Muslim locals, is an Islamic celebration that marks the end of Ramadan when Muslims around the world fast from

dawn to sunset for a whole month. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islamic faith. **Eid’l Adha**, on the other hand, commemorates the total submission of the Prophet Abraham and his first-born son Ishmael to the will of God. Also called *Hari Raya Haji* by Muslim locals, **Eid’l Adha** celebrations start at the end of Hajj, the annual pilgrimage of Muslims from around the world to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. (**Available at [halalguide.com.ph], accessed 3 pm July 23, 2021**).

For the Moro people, including this researcher, this policy is not just a political gesture of the GMA administration. It shows to the Moros that they have had their piece in this country, a right step for national unity and understanding. Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand and Singapore call this gesture as a reflection of a matured democracy which upholds multiracialism and religious accommodation as an important image of nation building, political scholars call it “unity in diversity.”

With facilitation of the Malaysian government, the two parties agreed on March 24, 2001 to sign and the Agreement on the General Framework for the Resumption of Peace Talks Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. They agreed among other things, to resume the peace talks immediately, to honor , respect and implement all past agreements, and to undertake relief and rehabilitation of evacuees. **Jubair (1999)**.

As observed by Jubair, the MILF, as a sign of its commitment to negotiate for peace, had agreed to put aside its demands for independence in order to achieve progress on the rehabilitation of war-ravaged areas, the implementation of previous agreements forged by the MILF and government, and economic development for Mindanao.

In a twist of development, Nur Misuari, head of the MNLF and Governor of ARMM, complained that the Philippine government, through the Erap and the GMA administration, had overlooked its obligation to honor its commitment to the 1996 GRP-MNLF Final peace process. Frustrated by the government indifference, some of his group, reverted to armed struggle. Due to political differences, some MNLF leaders formed the Executive Council of 15 and stripped Nur Misuari of the chairmanship of the MNLF.

On November 19, 2001, Misuari accused the government of orchestrating the MNLF 15 Council takeover and accused the Arroyo government of betrayal of its commitment to the peace process. Misuari, who was not seeking reelection that year, said the November ARMM elections violated the peace accord as he was not consulted about the process. (**Available at [www.inquirer.net], accessed 3pm, July 6, 2021**) When his loyal followers attacked the Army Brigade headquarters in Jolo, Sulu in November 2001 in an attempt to stop the ARMM elections, Misuari was charged of rebellion. Misuari fled to Malaysia but was eventually arrested and deported to the Philippines in January 2002. He was eventually detained, put under house arrest and finally acquitted of rebellion charges on December 3, 2009 by Judge Winlove Dumayas of Makati RTC Branch 59 for lack of evidence. **Corvera (2002).**

The disastrous experience of Nur Misuari consolidated the MILF's leadership of the Moro secessionist movement. Muslim support shifted to the MILF after their dissatisfaction from the failure of the MNLF leadership to deliver the reforms needed to ameliorate the living conditions and improve the economic conditions of the Moro people. (Abuza, 2003) However, the MNLF under Nur Misuari remains until now the

sole representative of the Bangsamoro people with observer status at the powerful Organization of Islamic Conference now Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

During 2002, GRP-MILF signed a ceasefire and resumed peace talks. Hashim Salamat, the MILF chief, renounced terrorism, a key government condition for resuming long-stalled peace talks. Salamat added that terrorism is anathema to the teachings of Islam. **Bong Fabe and Mayen Jaymalin (2003).**

In effect, this dissertation found that although the Arroyo Administration has been optimistic that a peace agreement with the MILF could be signed before she steps down from Office, Peace agreement with the rebel group has not been reached after the Supreme Court shot down the signing of a GRP-MILF memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MO-AD) in August 2008 on the ground that some of its provisions could not be reconciled with the Philippine Constitution, this was followed by a flare-up of hostilities between government forces and the MILF that resulted into the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in central Mindanao.

F. BENIGNO AQUINO III (2010-2016)

In 2010, Benigno Aquino III was elected president of the Republic of the Philippines and made peace in the south a key part of his government policy which promised a more transparent, consultative peace process with the MILF. Aquino envisioned a new Mindanao free from strife and where people achieve their fullest potential.” (The devil is in the details, 2012)

In July 15, 2010, Aquino had named Marvic Leonen, then Dean of the University of the Philippines' College of Law, as chair of the government peace panel that would negotiate with the MILF. (Santos and Bueza, 2014) Aquino had projected that within his six-year term, a peace agreement would be signed with the MILF and the tripartite review of the implementation of the Framework for Peace Agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which was started under the Arroyo administration, would be completed. (Arguillas, 2021)

When the Government and the MILF peace panels were facing difficulties in getting off the ground, Aquino flew to Narita, Japan on August 4, 2011 to meet with Murad, the MILF Chairman, and the MILF Central Committee. (Arguillas, 2021) There, Aquino openly and honestly talked with Murad on how the government and the MILF could finally conclude a more feasible, doable and viable peace agreement during his term.

In effect, in October 15, 2012, the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) had reached a *framework agreement* that would give birth to a new autonomous political entity whose name “symbolizes and honors the struggles of our forebears in Mindanao” and “celebrates the history and character of that part of our nation.” (Santos and Bueza, 2014) “That name will be Bangsamoro,” Aquino said, “Finally, we have achieved peace, a peace that will serve as the foundation of our dreams for Bangsamoro, for Mindanao, and for the entire Filipino nation.” (MindaNews, 2012)

At the signing of the FAB in Malacanang on October 15, 2012, MILF chair Al Haj Murad Ebrahim said the FAB was the “most important document in the chapter of our history, a landmark document that restores to our people their Bangsamoro identity and

their homeland, their right to govern themselves and the power to forge their destiny and their future with their very own hands.” (MindaNews, 2012)

In December 2012, **Executive Order 120** (E.O No 120, 2012) established “the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC), a body authorized to draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) for the new Bangsamoro political entity.” (Primer on the Bangsamoro Transition and the Bangsamoro Basis Law, 2014) After being constituted formally as a body, the BTC embarked on public consultations across Mindanao. Thereafter the BTC was able to conclude the final document known as the Bangsamoro Basil Law Draft. (Angela Casauay, 2014) The BBL’s draft then was submitted to the Congress for its enactment in September 2014. However, while the BBL was being tabled for deliberation, the Mamasapano Tragedy took place on January 25, 2015 in Maguindanao, leaving 66 persons dead: 44 from the Special Action Forces (SAF) of the Philippine National Police, 17 members of the MILF’s Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces and five civilians. (The Mamasapano Report,2015)

“Before dawn of January 25,2015 in Bgy. Tukalanipao, Mamasapano, two units of the SAF entered a Moro Islamic Liberation Front territory to allegedly serve a warrant of arrest on Abdhir. Despite a ceasefire being in place between the Philippine government and the Moro rebels, no coordination was made regarding the operations and the entry of heavily armed government troops into MILF territory thus resulting in a very high casualty rate among the SAF troopers.” (The Mamasapano Report,2015)

As a consequence, therefore, no Bangsamoro Basic Law was passed under the Aquino administration. In effect, this dissertation found that (1) “two important agreements were signed under Aquino’s watch. The 2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. These

documents taken together were designed primarily to put an end to the centuries-old Moro conflict in Mindanao and the creation of a Bangsamoro Autonomous Government in Mindanao (BARMM).

And (2) despite Aquino's sincerity to make peace with the MILF, the Bangsamoro Basic Law has never been enacted by the Philippine Congress during the remaining term of his administration because of the Mamasapano incident.

And finally, (3) although Republic Act 11054 or the Organic Law for the BARMM, popularly referred to as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), was passed by Congress under the Duterte administration in 2018 and the BARMM was established in early 2019. Murad, the Chairman of the MILF, admits however that the Bangsamoro people should "forever be grateful to the Aquino administration's efforts in revitalizing the peace talks and in laying the groundwork for lasting peace in Mindanao during his term." (Pnoy Legacy, 2021)

J. PRESIDENT RODRIGO DUTERTE (2016 to date)

In the 2016 Philippine presidential election, correctly sensing the people's hunger for change, the tough-talking mayor of Davao presented himself as a "man of the masses. His crass politics has provided the vocabulary to capture the public's brewing anger against the unfulfilled promise of elite democracy." (Curato, 2017)

The enduring and ever-growing disparity between the rich and the poor, and the continuing concentration of wealth and political power in the hands of the mighty and powerful Filipino political elites paved the way for Duterte's presidency.

In the southern front, following the failure of the enactment of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), during President Aquino's tenure, the election of Rodrigo R. Duterte as the President of the Philippines in 2016 has been welcomed as a renewed opportunity to conclude a final peace agreement between the national government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front at resolving the centuries-old Moro Conflict and the creation of a genuine and a meaningful Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

After years of starts-stops and derailment of peace agreements, the Philippines is today poised to make a peace breakthrough in strife-torn Muslim-dominated Mindanao in southern Philippines. The potential game changer is President-elect Rodrigo Duterte who has promised to break the past deadlocks in favor of a new federalism with a peace agreement with the Muslims in the south. **(Bilveer Singh, 2016)**

Rodrigo Duterte, is strategically positioned to break the impasse in the Mindanao peace process that has dogged the security of the country for decades. Peace has continued to defy the region due to Muslims' historical grievances and distrust of the colonial powers in the past and of the Catholic-dominated administrations in Manila since 1947. **(Singh, 2016)**

Under the Benigno Aquino III administration, despite his sincerity and earnest effort to finally conclude the Mindanao peace process with the Bangsamoro separatists, Congress did not proceed with the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law due mainly to the "Mamasapano tragedy" which, in effect, has created a political environment not conducive for a favorable congressional action for the passage of the BBL in anticipation of the forthcoming national elections in 2016. This made according to Bilveer Singh, the BBL into a "political football" to gain votes. (Singh, Ibid)

Why is there hope under Duterte? According to **Singh (2016)** “Duterte enters office with a powerful mandate which had given him strong legitimacy to undertake change. With a powerful political will and political capital, he is in a position to break the intractable logjam in the south and deliver peace to the nation, something he has promised to do.”

Singh further stressed that in the presidential campaign, “Duterte was the only candidate from Mindanao. He was also the only one who met MILF leaders at their camp, talked of passing the BBL, spoke of the need to address Muslim grievances and the importance of peace in Mindanao for the whole of Philippines. The core of his policy to bring stability is to create a federal system with the BBL as a keystone that can be applied nationwide.”

And finally, Singh believed that “after decades of missed opportunities, Filipinos have elected a man who is a deliverer. More important is that what Duterte has to do is not driven by rhetoric but the right thing to do. A failure to deliver the peace can lead to dire consequences. The MILF may be forced to take up arms again and the other armed groups will lose what little incentives there are to make peace with Manila. Such a situation can also provide IS with a golden opportunity to establish its base in Mindanao to threaten the Philippines and the wider Southeast Asian region. This will only worsen the state of radicalization and terrorism in the Philippines and Southeast Asia as a whole. Hence, re-starting the peace process is vital for national and regional peace and stability. Duterte has a golden opportunity to deliver peace to the south and to the Philippines, something he has promised to do and something that he is also in a position to deliver.

Thus this dissertation believes that (1) Duterte's victory in the 2016 presidential election has been a golden opportunity for the Peace Process in the Mindanao as he finally made true and walked the talk on his campaign promise to push the Mindanao process forward; (2) that as an emblem of his pledge and commitment to the peace process, he signed an Executive Order which provides for the establishment of a new Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) to draft the bill on the BBL. The BBL then was enacted into law as The Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) or "Republic Act No. 11054, also known as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)."

(3) That because of Duterte's integrity in his commitment to the peace process, Act No. 11054 finally gave birth to the Bangsamoro Government in Muslim Mindanao or the BARMM.

A historical summary of the struggle of the Bangsamoro for self-determination could be well be understood in the words of Denis Fowler when he said :

"For over 400 years the Muslim people of the southern Philippines have been at war. They have resisted the Spanish occupation of their ancestral homelands, the American colonial presence, and the current Christian government. To understand what motivates the Moro people to such conflict, it is necessary to study their history, religion, and the ethnic fabric which makes up their various regional groups. The fundamentals of their religion require a homogenous Islamic government." **Fowler (1985)**

4. And finally, how did the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and few of its prominent members Libya and Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Malaysia

contribute to the finding of a peaceful solution to the Moro insurgency in Mindanao?

When repression of Moro Muslims made news in the late 1960s and the 70s, many Islamic countries were alarmed about the plight of the Moro people. As reports of violence swelled, they began to believe that the Moros were being persecuted.

Col. Muammar Qaddafi warned that Libya “will be compelled to shoulder its responsibilities towards the four million Muslims in the Philippines.” **Ruben G. Domingo (1995)** His ambassador to the UN insisted that the world body intervene to stop the senseless killings of Muslim Filipinos.

The prospects of peace in the southern Philippines became firmly linked to the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) particularly few of its rich and prominent members – Libya and Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia.

OIC’s interest in the peaceful settlement of the Moro insurgency springs partly from its mandates as a pan-Islamic organization which promotes Islamic solidarity and peaceful settlement of disputes. The OIC is of the opinion that peaceful settlement of the dispute will be to the best interest of the Muslims in South Philippines. It was the OIC which persuaded Misuari to settle for Autonomy rather separatism or independence.

Libya’s support and intervention in the Moro insurgency was primarily inspired by its commitment to Islamic brotherhood and the Qur’anic obligation to relieve the persecution of their Moro brethren. Libya chaired the **Quadripartite Ministerial Commission** (including Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Somalia) tasked to discuss the

problem with the Philippine government in a resolution at the 4th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in Benghazi in 1973 (Resolution No. 4, “The Problem of the Muslims in the Philippines”, OIC, 4th ICFM, Benghazi, 24-26 March 1973). Libya also sponsored the 1976 Tripoli Agreement which became the main reference for further negotiations between Moro insurgents and the Philippine Government as Libyan Ambassador to the Philippines Rajab Azzarouq described his role in the 1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace agreement as “to innovate a framework that would secure peace and to have Libya absolved from this historic burden bestowed upon Tripoli as Chairman of the . **Quadripartite Ministerial Committee** of the OIC in charge of resolving the conflict.” **Azzarouq (1998)**. While Libya was the main foreign supporter of the MNLF, the Philippine government caught up in terms of developing bilateral relations of mutual benefit to both countries. Libyan interest in Philippine relations springs from its continuous need of Filipino manpower. Libya needs uninterrupted supply of Engineers, Doctors, Nurses and other skilled Filipino workers which, in return, the Philippines badly needs for its people.

Saudi Arabia also played a mediating role in the Mindanao conflict since 1973 and provided both funds and sanctuary to different secessionist groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Bangsa Moro Islamic Liberation Organization (BMILO). In 1980, when the Marcos regime failed to satisfactorily implement the 1976 Tripoli agreement in good faith, Saudi Arabia temporarily halted its oil supply to the Philippines-an effective tool for pressuring Manila to abide by the accord, as about 40 percent of the Philippine’s oil requirement came from the Kingdom. **Che Man (1990)**. Unlike many conventional revolutionary movements, the MNLF Central Committee

operated outside Mindanao. The primary function of the leaders was cultivating foreign support. It left the task of fighting and organizing to local leaders. It was a significant accomplishment of the Central Committee that the rebel organization continued to receive funds and other logistic support from Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia and to obtain the recognition of the OIC.

Indonesia considers the Philippines as a good friend, a good ally and a good neighbor. It has been actively playing role in the Philippine peace process. In fact, It was Indonesia which brokered the 1996 GRP-MNLF final peace agreement under the auspices of the OIC. At present Indonesia has been part of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) which is tasked to monitor the ceasefire and the implementation of other agreements between the MILF and the Philippine government in the areas affected by the Moro insurgency in Mindanao.

Similarly, Indonesia has been beset with the same rebellion problem in the Aceh province, the **Free Aceh Movement** and the Philippines has been fully supportive of Indonesia's policy in the Aceh Province. Likewise, the Philippines has been a member of the Aceh Monitoring Mission, led by the European Union to monitor the implementation of various aspects of the peace agreement concluded between the Free Aceh Movement and the Government of Indonesia in August 2005.

Malaysia. In 1966, the formation of the Federation of Malaysia which incorporated Sabah as one of its thirteen states generated a territorial dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia. **Samad and Abubakar (1992).**

When Marcos came to power as President in 1965, he planned the groundwork in regaining Sabah as part of Philippine territory. Marcos allegedly planned a sneak attack

to conquer North Borneo. In 1967, under the cloud of complete secrecy, Muslim trainees from Sulu were recruited by the government for specialized training to take back Sabah. Unmasked by a mutiny before this force could attack Sabah, the government fearing the negative impact of the leakage of the clandestine plan, Marcos in March 18, 1968 allegedly ordered the killing of his own Filipino Muslim soldiers in a desperate effort to hide his plan from Malaysia, his powerful nearest neighbor. **Stern (2012)**.

In this dissertation, we observe that **Malaysia's** role in the Moro insurgency springs from two tracks; firstly, as Malaysia's commitment to religious fraternity and being a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference and a member of the ASEAN; and secondly, in response to the Philippines' secret military plan to invade the state of Sabah in the late 1960s

At the federal level, the government of Malaysia aided the Muslim movement as a means to exert influence on Manila to abandon its Sabah claim. At the state level, **Tun Datu Mustapha Harun**, the chief Minister of Sabah, purportedly consented to the MNLF sanctuary and armed assistance in terms of training, supply, and communications purposes. (**Che Man, 138-39**). In 1969, the first batch of 90 young Moros sailed to North Borneo for military training.

At the OIC level, it was the Malaysian **Tunku Abdull Rahman** as OIC Secretary-General who was instrumental in placing the plight of the Moro people on the OIC agenda starting with the 3rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in Jeddah in 1972. (**OIC, 3rd ICFM**)

Officially, the Malaysian Government had adopted the facade of non-interference in the domestic affairs of the Philippines, but it did not stop **Tun Mustapha** from

providing support to the Moro secessionists, perhaps fearing that Sabah would secede from the federation. **Astri Suhkre and Lela Garner Noble (1977).**

In recent years, Malaysia's involvement in the Mindanao peace process started when President Arroyo sought the assistance of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad to convince the MILF to resume the stalled negotiations caused by Erap's all-out-war in year 2000. **Lingga (2007).**

For nine years have passed **however** after the start of the GRP-MILF peace talks under its facilitation and leading the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao, no significant political covenant has been concluded by the parties save the ceasefire now in place and holding.

It is then imperative that Malaysia should remind the GRP and the MILF on the importance of a road map to peace, that the urge and need to conclude a comprehensive final peace settlement of the Moro separatism in Mindanao has been long overdue and a policy of workable peace therefore must be of paramount consideration to both parties in their quest for a permanent and lasting peace in Mindanao.

VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before the advent of the Spaniards in the 15th century, the Moro or Bangsamoro had their own established distinctive cultural, social and political institutions - the “Moro Sultanates.” Under Spanish hegemony, the Spaniards started converting the natives from Luzon and Visayas into Christianity. However, similar attempts against the Bangsamoro were met with stiff resistance.

Under American rule beginning in 1898, and during the commonwealth period from 1935-1941 and even during the early Philippine independence from 1946-1965, the policy of “Feminization” and “Land Migration” into the Moroland had resulted to a complete marginalization of the Moro people making them eventually a minority in their own homeland.

In 1968, finding a common cause following the Jabidah Incident and an amalgam of deep Moro grievances, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) evolved calling for separatism or independence. In 1976, compelled by the detrimental effects of the smoldering Moro insurgency on the domestic economy and by Arab pressure, Marcos signed a Peace Agreement with the MNLF in Tripoli, Libya providing for a Moro Political Autonomy in Southern Philippines. The pact later failed because Misuari blamed Marcos of betrayal. And in 1996, Ramos and the MNLF leadership sealed a similar Peace covenant. Nonetheless, despite these peace agreements, yet the Moro separatism still persists. When President Estrada took over the Philippine presidency, riled and infuriated by the death of his godson, 1st Lt. Don Alfonso Javier in a military encounter

with MILF insurgents, then Philippine President Joseph Estrada declared an “All-Out War” with the MILF.” **May (1990).**

Former-President Fidel Ramos assailed Estrada’s purely military approach as folly, “if you capture the camps, they will just break into small units and take the war to the cities.” (“The Uneasy and Costly Road to Peace in Mindanao” Philippine Daily Inquirer, 11 May 2000)

In the last quarter of year 2000, the Estrada administration was busy defending the president from plunder charges. He was forced to resign following massive demonstrations on 20 January 2001.

Under Gloria Macapagal Arroyo administration, despite her decision to make peace with the MILF, the Supreme Court shot down the signing of a GRP-MILF memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MO-AD) in August 2008 on the ground that some of its provisions could not be reconciled with the Philippine Constitution.

In 2010, Benigno Aquino III was elected president of the Republic of the Philippines and made peace in the south an integral part of his government policy which promised a more transparent, consultative peace process with the MILF. However, due to the Mamasapano incident, the Bangsamoro Basic Law designed to implement the final peace process with the MILF was never passed under the Aquino administration.

Republic Act 11054 or the Organic Law for the BARMM, popularly referred to as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), was passed by Congress under the current Duterte administration in 2018 and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was established in early 2019.

This dissertation on “Revisiting the Bangsamoro Separatism in Southern Philippines through the Lens of History” involves an analysis on how the Philippine government adopts policies and measures in an attempt to finally resolve the Bangsamoro separatism.

SUMMARY OF ITS FINDINGS

Based on available documents and relevant materials, analyzed through historical, documentary and descriptive method. This dissertation revealed the following significant findings, to wit:

1. That the Moro separatists – the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) evolved initially as a reaction to an amalgam of Moro grievances which were eventually spurred and ignited by the Jabidah massacre and the Manalili incident, the atrocities of the Christian Death Squad (Ilaga) against Moro communities, and the declaration of Martial law in September 21, 1972 by President Marcos.
2. The MNLF and the MILF both served as a solidifying force and a collective voice of the Bangsamoro’ grievances and their long-held aspiration for self-determination, defending the Bangsamoro people from both the onslaught of government forces and the extremely horrifyingly mayhems and carnage of the Christian Armed militias against Muslim villagers.
3. In the 70s to 80s, the MNLF provided the sole leadership of the Bangsamoro People in their collective struggle for self-determination, but lately following the

1996 GRP-MNLF Final peace agreement, the MILF emerged as a serious contender for the Moro leadership both at the local and international scene.

4. The principal and fundamental causes of the Moro insurgency revealed a mixture of varied factors, among which are - centuries of historical preservation by the Moros of their “ethnic identity” as a nation, Moro dreadful experiences with imperialist Spain and American hegemony, Manila hostile policies against the Moro people, the 1968 Jabidah massacre, government-induced migration of Christian settlers into the Moroland, the rise of the Christian Death Squads (Ilaga), abolition of the Moro sultanates, Inadequate Moro Political representation in the government, sheer poverty and general underdevelopment of the Moro communities, and continuing failure of the national government to continuously uplift the living standards and welfare of the Moro people.
5. Resistance to Spanish and American colonialism was an outcome of Moro natural predisposition to resist foreign subjugation. Spanish and American hegemony was interpreted by the Moros as a challenge to their traditional political power (the Moro Sultanates) and to their religion.
6. Islam emerged as a rallying religious, political, and historical strength that enabled the Moros to violently resist the Spanish and American conquest and later the hostile government of Manila.
7. **President Marcos** emerged as the first president of the Republic to embark on a mixture of non-military solutions to address the Moro insurgency in Mindanao realizing that sheer military power and violence to crush the Moro insurgents was absolutely costly and painful to both the economy and the political order.

8. The President **Cory Aquino** regime did not espouse any significant socio-cultural and/or economic policy particularly intended for the Moros. Cory had her policy set on the establishment of the Autonomous Region in Muslim in Mindanao.
9. The President Ramos presidency highlighted one significant policy towards addressing the social and economic dimension of the Moro insurgency with the issuance of Executive Order No. 371 proclaiming a Special Zone of Peace and Development in the Southern Philippines (ZOPAD), and establishing therefore the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) and the Consultative Assembly (CA). The SPCPD and the CA were aimed to oversee and coordinate investments and developments in the ZOPAD.
10. The President Estrada regime had been beset with controversy. His policy statement to develop Mindanao as a food-basket for the country was significantly far from being felt on the ground. His promises to infuse investments into the region as an essential hallmark of his government was brought to naught by his declaration in March 20, 2000 of an “All-Out War” with the MILF.
11. The **President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo** did not show any significant and specific social and/or economic policy particularly intended for the Moros, but her administration highlighted one significant gesture of tremendous interest in winning the hearts of the Moro masses. For the first time, two of Islam’s most important celebrations Eid’l Fitr (Festival of Breaking Fast) and Eid’l Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) were declared national holidays in the Philippines.
12. President Benigno Aquino III envisioned a new Mindanao free from strife and where people achieve their fullest potential.” (The devil is in the details, 2012)

Aquino had projected that within his six-year term, a peace agreement would be signed with the MILF and the tripartite review of the implementation of the Framework for Peace Agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which was started under the Arroyo administration, would be completed. (Carolyn O. Arguillas, 2021)

13. In a nutshell, two important agreements were signed under Aquino's watch. The 2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. These documents taken together were designed primarily to put an end to the centuries-old Moro conflict in Mindanao and the creation of a Bangsamoro Autonomous Government in Mindanao (BARMM).
14. As a consequence, therefore, no Bangsamoro Basic Law was passed under the Aquino administration. Republic Act 11054 or the Organic Law for the BARMM, popularly referred to as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), was passed by Congress under the Duterte administration in 2018 and the BARMM was established in early 2019.
15. President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. In the 2016 Philippine presidential election, President Duterte was elected President of the Republic of the Philippines. Following the failure of the enactment of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), during President Aquino's tenure, the rise of Rodrigo R. Duterte into power has been welcomed as a renewed opportunity to conclude a final peace agreement between the national government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.
16. Thus in 2016, upon Duterte's victory in the presidential election, he made true and walked the talk on his campaign promise to push the Mindanao process

forward and in November in that year signed an Executive Order which provides for the establishment of a new BTC with the sole objective of drafting a bill on the Bangsamoro Basic Law which the same has been enacted into law as The Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) or “Republic Act No. 11054, also known as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. (**Republic Act No. 11054, 2018**)

17. In January, 2021, upon its ratification by a majority of the people in the Bangsamoro called for the purpose, Republic Act No. 11054 finally gave birth to the Bangsamoro Government in Muslim Mindanao or the BARMM.
18. The Philippine government granted three political autonomy models for the Moro People. The Marcos Model of Autonomy through Presidential Decree No. 1628, “Declaring Autonomy in the Southern Philippines,” and the defunct Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) under the 1987 Philippine constitution and its implementing mechanisms through Republic Act No. 6734 “An Act Providing for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao,” and Republic Act 9054 “An Act to Strengthen and Expand the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Amending for the Purpose R.A. 6734.” And finally, Republic Act No. 11054 which gave birth to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in in Muslim Mindanao or the BARMM.
19. This study also reveals that the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and few of its prominent members, Libya and Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia have had significant contribution for the prospects of peace in the southern Philippines.

20. **OIC's** interest in the peaceful settlement of the Moro insurgency springs partly from its mandates as a pan-Islamic organization which promotes Islamic solidarity and peaceful settlement of disputes. The OIC is of the opinion that peaceful resolution of the Moro insurgency will be to the best interest of the Moro people. The OIC had been influential in persuading Misuari to settle for Autonomy rather separatism or independence.
21. **Libya's** support and intervention in the Moro insurgency was primarily inspired by its commitment to Islamic brotherhood and the Qur'anic obligation to relieve the persecution of their Moro brethren. Libya sponsored the 1976 Tripoli Agreement which became the main reference for further negotiations between Moro insurgents and the Philippine Government.
22. **Saudi Arabia** also played a mediating role in the Mindanao conflict since 1973 and provided both funds and sanctuary to different secessionist groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Bangsa Moro Islamic Liberation Organization (BMILO). In 1980, when the Marcos regime failed to satisfactorily implement the 1976 Tripoli agreement in good faith, Saudi Arabia temporarily halted its oil supply to the Philippines-an effective tool for pressuring Manila to abide by the accord, as a great chunk of the Philippine's oil requirement came from the Kingdom.
23. **Indonesia** considers the Philippines as a good friend, a good ally and a good neighbor. It has been actively playing role in the Philippine peace process. In fact, It was Indonesia which brokered the 1996 GRP-MNLF final peace agreement under the auspices of the OIC. At present Indonesia has been part of the

- International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao which is tasked to monitor the ceasefire and the implementation of other agreements between the MILF and the Philippine government in the areas affected by the Moro insurgency in Mindanao.
24. Malaysia's Contribution in the Mindanao Peace Process. After the GPH-MILF peace process collapsed following the all-out war waged against the MILF by President Estrada, "President Arroyo sought Malaysia's help to bring Filipino Muslim separatists to the negotiating table and end escalating violence in the southern Philippines." In February 2001, President Arroyo formally requested the Malaysian Government to act as third-party facilitator to revive the abandoned GPH-MILF peace negotiations with the MILF. Then Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad sent a three-person delegation to the MILF headed by the late Tengku Dato' Abdul Ghafar bin Tengku Mohamed. The delegation met the MILF Central Committee led by the late Chairman Salamat Hashim in Maguindanao. Under Malaysian facilitation, the government and the MILF agreed to resume their formal negotiations immediately, to honor, respect, and implement all past agreements.
25. This time, Malaysia, not only served as host country, it also served as go-between conveying positions of the parties. As such, Malaysia provided a conducive atmosphere, venue, and facilities; presided the talks as "referee" in case of misunderstandings; helped bridge differences by shuttling between the parties; administered the discussions; and, recorded and kept minutes, including the commitments and agreements made in the course of the talks. For the past 17 years, according to Mohagher Iqbal, the MILF Peace Negotiating Panel Chair,

Malaysia has been active, efficient and thriving in its role as Third Party Peace Facilitator such that the 2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro which were designed primarily to put an end to the centuries-old Moro conflict in Mindanao were all signed by the MILF and the government of the President Benigno Aquino III under Malaysian facilitation.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

This dissertation gives its readers the following recommendations:

1. **On the issue of the Evolution of the Moro Insurgency, its principal and fundamental causes.**
 - a. It is vital and imperative that the Philippine government adopts a specific and comprehensive policy towards addressing legitimate Moro grievances including the need to provide adequate social services, create more jobs, guarantee religious freedom, support educational development and improve vital infrastructures in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and diffuse political powers by appointing competent and accountable Moro bureaucrats not only in the Region but also in all organs of the government.

2. **On the issue of Spanish and American colonialism**

- a. It is deeply recommended that the government spearhead an initiative to correct the errors committed against the Moros during the Spanish and American colonialism by recognizing the roles of the Moro people in Philippine history.
- b. The history of the Filipino people and all its facets and symbols including the Philippine flag must embrace and incorporate the heroic roles of the Moro people in the history of our collective struggle for national independence, for long before Bonifacio or Aguinaldo fought the Spaniards or the Americans, the Moros had already been locked in brutal battles with foreign colonialists.
- c. In as much as the Philippine government cannot and will never recognize Moro's desire for separatism, it is but timely that their heroic roles in the history of the country be given justice and recognized through re-writing all future Philippine history books commissioned by the Philippine government incorporating therein a specific chapter on Moros' heroic roles in the history of the Philippines.

3. On the issue of government's policy of peace to resolve the Moro separatism in southern Philippines.

- a. It is imperative that every government's policy with socio-cultural, educational and/or economic implications for the development of the Moro people must have some degree of continuity, accountability and sustainability. It is therefore recommended that;
- b. President Marcos' courage to embark on a broad spectrum of socio-economic, educational, cultural and even religious policy initiatives designed primarily to

- address legitimate Moro grievances should be sustained by the present and all succeeding Philippine administration ensure inclusive governance in the country;
- c. President Ramos' initiative creating a zone of peace and development in the areas affected by the Moro insurgency deserves a place in the Philippine government's priority programs in the pursuit of national progress and development.
 - d. President Erap's promise to make Mindanao with particular emphasis on the Moro communities as a food basket for the country must be given teeth and muscle by the present and succeeding administration;
 - e. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's gesture of recognizing religious rights of the Muslims deserves a place in future programs of the present and succeeding administration to promote national unity and understanding;
 - f. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo positive gestures of declaring two of Islam's most important celebrations Eid'l Fitr (Festival of Breaking Fast) and Eid'l Adha (Feast of Sacrifice), as national holidays in the Philippines should be preserved by each succeeding administration to promote some semblance of inclusive accommodation of the religious rights of the Muslims in the country;
 - g. It is also imperative that the government honor its commitment and obligations to the full implementation of any covenant or agreement it concluded with the Moro insurgents, be it the 1976 GRP-MNLF Tripoli Agreement or the 1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement and the Bangsamoro Organic Law with the MILF under the current administration;
 - h. President Benigno Aquino III and President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's vision to make peace as part of their governmental vital policies should be sustained and

strengthened by the succeeding administration. The newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Government in Muslim Mindanao requires the collective support of the whole country. The BARMM as an autonomous government is the penultimate political solution to the Moro armed conflict in Mindanao. It is therefore of vital importance that the Peace Process in Mindanao should continue. The parties to the conflict adopt a complete cessation of hostilities and observe human rights and international humanitarian law;

- i. The formation of NGOs and Civil Society Movements tasked with ceasefire monitoring, managing refugee and evacuation centers, promoting inter-religious and inter-organizational dialogue, and monitoring human rights performance and violations on the ground (by the parties to the conflict) be encouraged;
- j. That the Moro insurgents – the MNLF and the MILF be transformed into a Full Regional Political Movement or Party with a permanent voice in Regional and National politics promoting national unity of the Filipino nation and protecting the general interest and welfare of the Moro people;
- k. That Moro assertion of their right to ancestral domain be recognized, properly defined, marked and delimited through a political covenant to be concluded by the Moro insurgents and the Philippine government;
- l. That a *genuine* MORO AUTONOMY in its present model under the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) must pass the test of constitutionality to be legally binding and should be supported, sustained and empowered to finally bring a complete and permanent peace in Mindanao.

- m. Certainly, a peaceful settlement of the Moro insurgency in Mindanao is an important government undertaking which every Filipino should support and aspire for, because the restoration and maintenance of peace in the region, or for any other nations, is a requisite to political stability and economic development. Indeed, no nation at present can succeed in its growth and development path where there is war in its backyard.
- n. Similarly, the absence of effective and permanent peace in Mindanao will always hound the Filipino nation, for the Moro conflict in the region, if not effectively, permanently and peacefully resolved, bleeds not only the Moro communities but also the whole nation shaking the country's political stability and gradually depleting the national treasury. In effect, a continuing conflict in the Moro land is an obstruction, impediment or stumbling block to our country's economic growth and development.
- o. Now that a comprehensive final peace settlement of the Moro separatism in Mindanao has already been concluded by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the National government which resulted into the enactment of the Bangsamoro Organic Law providing for the eventual creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. (BARMM) The same must be supported, sustained and given opportunity to take off. A policy of workable peace therefore must be of paramount consideration for both the MNLF and the MILF in their quest for the self-determination of the Moro people because only this way – the presence of peace and the absence of conflict can guarantee the over-all interest and welfare of the Bangsamoro inhabitants.

4. **And finally, on the issue of the Role of the OIC, Malaysia and Indonesia to the finding of a peaceful solution to the Moro insurgency in Mindanao.**
 - a. This study highly recommends that the OIC and its members especially Saudi Arabia, Libya, Malaysia and Indonesia should continue playing an imperative and effective roles in pursuit of attaining a permanent, meaningful and sustainable peace in Mindanao particularly in finding a peaceful solution to the Moro separatism in the region by providing technical, logistics and economic aid to the area of autonomy.

INDEX AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Moro Separatism. The Moro separatism in the Philippines has been well described as refers to political tensions and open hostilities between the Moro rebel groups (Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front) and the Government of the Philippines. (“**Moro insurgency**” available at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/http://google.com.ph], accessed 11 am, July 15, 2021).

The Philippine Government. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines refers to the corporate governmental entity through which the functions of government are exercised throughout the Philippines, including, save as the contrary appears from the context, the various arms through which political authority is made effective in the Philippines, whether pertaining to the autonomous regions, the provincial, city, municipal or barangay subdivisions or other forms of local government. (**Sec. 2(1), Executive Order 292, Administrative Code of 1987, July 25, 1987**).

The Bangsamoro People The Bangsamoro or Moro refers to the 13 ethno-linguistic groups indigenous to Mindanao that adopted Islam as a way of life. The three largest and politically dominant ethnolinguistic groups are the Maguindanaon, (People of the flooded plains) of the Cotabato provinces (Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, North and South Cotabato), the Maranaos (people of the lake) of the two Lanao provinces; and the Tausug (people of the current) of the Sulu archipelago. The remaining ten are the Yakan, Sama, Badjaw, Kalagan, Sangil, Iranun, Palawani, Melebugnon, Kalibogan and Jama Mapun. **Majul (1985)**. The Terms “Muslims” and “Moro” have been used interchangeably. The former refers to a universal religious identity, while the latter denotes a political identity distinct to the Islamized peoples of Mindanao. The Spaniards originally used the term for peoples of Mindanao who shared the religion of the Moors who had once subdued Spain. “Moro” was used in the same derogatory way as the term ‘Indio’ for

Filipinos whom they converted to Christianity. However, with the self-assertive attitude expressed by the MNLF in the early 70s, the Moro term gained positive connotations among the Muslim youth. It expressed distinctiveness as a people who had resisted foreign domination. Used together with a Malay word, Bangsa (nation) as in 'Bangsamoro' or 'Bangsa Moro', it indicates a nationality distinct from that of the majority Filipinos. **San Juan (2008).**

Mindanao. Mindanao is the second largest islands of the Philippines, occupying 36,537 square miles (94,630 square kilometers). Present day Mindanao consists of 25 provinces, as follows, in alphabetical order: Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Basilan, Bukidnon, Camiguin, Compostela Valley, Cotabato, Maguindanao, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Davao, Davao Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Sur, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay Sarangani. Mindanao is the only area of the Philippines with a significant Muslim presence. ("**Mindanao**" available at [\[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ http://google.com.ph\]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/http://google.com.ph), accessed, 10 pm, July 17, 2021).

Jabidah Massacre. Jabidah Massacre in March 18, 1968 of a hundred of Muslim army recruits at a secret training camp on the island of Corregidor. President Marcos desired to take back Sabah or North Borneo allegedly planned a sneak attack to conquer North Borneo. Unmasked by a mutiny before this force could attack North Borneo, Marcos allegedly ordered the killing of his own Filipino Muslims soldiers in a desperate effort to hide his plan from Malaysia, his powerful nearest neighbor. The Jabidah Massacre resulted from a failed Philippine invasion of North Borneo. It resulted in the slaughter of Muslim youth, some say hundreds of young men, not by opposing forces but by executioners from their own Philippine army. **Stern (2012)**

Manalili Massacre. On June 19, 1971, Ilaga killed seventy Muslims in the Manili

Massacre. While most of the town's men were working their farms, twenty Ilaga entered the town and convinced –mostly old men, women, and children – to gather at a mosque for a peace conference. Once Moros were inside, Ilaga threw grenades, fired guns, and hacked with axes and swords. **Stern (2012)**

Christian Death Squad . “Ilaga” or otherwise known as Christian Death Squad

is a Christian militia organized by Christian local politicians determined to expand their zones of control by displacing Muslims. Herman Lopez, the first cousin of Ferdinand Marcos' mother, was the brain of the Ilaga Christian paramilitary groups whose goals were : (1) grabbing lands from the Muslim villagers; (2) destabilization of Muslim communities, and (3) reducing unity of Communist and Muslim rebels. The Ilaga put fear into the hearts of Moros by killing, carving out ears, ripping out eyeballs, and carving crosses on the corpses. **Stern (2012).**

Moro National Liberation Front. Founded in 1969 under the leadership of Nur

Misuari. Its first members were Muslim youth recruited by the traditional Muslim leadership for military training in Malaysia. When the MNLF was founded, its objective was to create an independent Bangsamoro homeland. However, under pressure from the Organization of Islamic Conference, it has accepted Autonomy within the Philippine State. **San Juan (2008).** The **Moro National Liberation Front** (MNLF) is a political organization that was founded by Nur Misuari in 1969. The MNLF struggles against the Philippine Government (GPH) to achieve independence of the Bangsamoro Land (or Bangsamoro Nation, or Mindanao Nation). (“MNLF” available at [[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ http://google.com.ph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/http://google.com.ph)], accessed, 10 am, July 18, 2021).

Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is a

Muslim revolutionary group located in Southern Philippines. While the MILF was officially founded in 1984, its origins were in a group led by MNLF Central Committee Member Hashim Salamat that left the MNLF shortly after the collapse

of the GRP-MNLF 1976 Tripoli Agreement in 1977. At first called the New MNLF, it formally established itself in 1984 as the MILF. The MILF calls for an Independent (sovereign) Moro Islamic State. Hence, it puts much greater emphasis on Islam than the MNLF, and most of its leaders are Islamic Scholars from traditional aristocratic and religious backgrounds. The MILF claims to have 120,000 men (six divisions) regular Islamic Armed Forces of which more than 80% are well armed. **Gershman (2001)**..

Moro Sultanate. The Moro Sultanate refers to the indigenous political government that existed in the Moroland before the advent of foreign rule in the Philippine. It continues to exist even after Philippine independence in 1946 though, at present, with bare symbolic influence. The Moro Sultanate consists of the following:

The Sultanate of MAGUINDANAO . The Sultanate of Maguindanao, the lower valley (sa ilud) kingdom, was a harbor sultanate relying heavily on trade and naval power. At the height of its power in the 17th century under Sultan Qudarat and Sultan Barahman, Maguindanao was the acknowledged overlord of all Mindanao, Sulu and even Borneo. The last Maguindanao sultan, Sultan Mangigin, died in the 1920s/30s during the American Occupation. (**Available at [jamalashley.ifastnet.com/sultanates.html], accessed 3 pm, July 19, 2021**).

The Sultanate of BUAYAN .The Sultanate of Buayan, the upper valley kingdom, relied on its rich agricultural lands and had the support of a great number of non-Muslim Malay tribes. The ruler of Buayan chose to stick to the old title of Rajah (a Hindu word for King) to emphasize the fact that the House of Buayan dates back to the Sri Vijaya and Majapahit empires that encompassed most of Southeast Asia. Buayan's power was eclipsed by Maguindanao during the time of Datu Buisan, Qudarat's father. Buayan almost regained its old glory when it practically wiped out the remaining Spanish forces in the late 1890s. When the Americans came, Buayan led the fight in Mindanao. Unfortunately, Datu Ali, the

Rajah Muda of Buayan, who was about to finally unite Maguindanao and Buayan, was killed by the Americans through treachery of some Moros. With the deaths of the old rajah (Datu Utto) and the young rajah (Datu Ali), the Buayanens and even the Maguindanaons lost heart in their fight against the Americans. The powerful non-royal Moro Chinese datus took over the leadership of the Pulangi and collaborated with the Americans. Thus ended the rule of the royals in Maguindanao and Buayan. (Available at [jamalashley.ifastnet.com/sultanates.html], accessed 3 pm, July 19, 2021).

Sultanate of Sulu. The Sultanate of Sulu was founded ca. 1400 by Syed Abu Bakr, an Arab who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad, p.b.u.h. Syed Abu Bakr took on the regnal name Sharif Hashem, perhaps to emphasize his claim to the Hashemite bloodline. The Sultan of Sulu held sway over the Sulu Archipelago, Palawan, and later North Borneo (now the Malaysian state of Sabah). The Zamboanga peninsula's ruler changed depending upon the vicissitudes of fortune. Maguindanao, Sulu and the Spanish took turns in ruling Zamboanga, known locally as Samboanga. (Available at [jamalashley.ifastnet.com/sultanates.html], accessed 3 pm, July 19, 2021).

The Confederation of RANAO sultanates .Near the center of the island is the Lake (Ranao), the highest lake in the Philippines. Around this lake live the M'ranos. Contrary to what some people believe, the Ranao sultanates were never subservient to the Maguindanao royalty. Datu Dimasangkay, the uncle of Qudarat, married into M'ranao/Iranun royalty. From then on, the M'ranos/Iranuns became firm and loyal allies of Maguindanao royalty. Perhaps it was because of the M'ranao/Iranun connection that Buayan's power was eclipsed by Maguindanao in the Pulangi area. It must be noted that when Qudarat was defeated by the Spaniards, he retreated to his relatives among the M'ranos/Iranuns. (Available at [jamalashley.ifastnet.com/sultanates.html], accessed 3 pm, July 19, 2021).

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The Autonomous Region in Muslim

Mindanao (abbreviated ARMM) is the region, located in the Mindanao island group of the Philippines, that is composed of predominantly Muslim provinces, namely: Basilan (except Isabela City), Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. It is the only region that has its own government. The regional capital is at Cotabato City, although this city is outside of its jurisdiction. The ARMM previously included the province of Shariff Kabunsuan until July 16, 2008, when Shariff Kabunsuan ceased to exist as a province after the Supreme Court in *Sema v. Comelec* declared unconstitutional the "Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act 2001", which created it. (**Bai Sandra Sema vs. COMELEC and Didagen Dilangalen, G.R. No. 177597, 16 July 2008**)

1976 GRP-MNLF Tripoli Agreement.The **Tripoli Agreement**, signed on 23

December 1976, is an agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), with the participation of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission Members of the Islamic Conference and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). According to the agreement, full autonomy shall be given to the thirteen provinces, namely Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, and Palawan. Included in the agreement are nine cities and all the villages situated within the mentioned provinces. (Available at [en.wikipilipinas.org/wiki/http://google.com.ph], accessed 4 pm., July 16, 2021).

1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement. The 1996 Peace Agreement of

September 2, 1996. In the words of Pres. Ramos, the signing of the final peace agreement between the Republic of the Philippines “brings to a close almost 30 years of conflict, at the cost of more than 120,000 Filipino lives.” He hailed the Peace Agreement as the beginning of “a new era of peace and development for the Southern Philippines, and for Philippines as a whole.” Truly, a new era has

begun, the era of rebuilding, of forging partnership between and among diverse peoples of the land, and establishing one community and one future for all. There were two phases in the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement of 1996. The first phase was the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development or SPCPD and the Consultative Assembly or CA. in the 14 provinces and all cities therein. The 14 provinces and nine (ten?) cities shall be established as a Special Zone of Peace and Development. Within the next three years, these areas shall be the focus of intense peace and development efforts. The SPCPD shall be composed by one (1) Chairman, one (1) Vice Chairman and three (3) Deputies, one each representing the Muslims, Christians and the Lumads. The CA shall be an 81-member body. All the members of both bodies shall be appointed by the President upon recommendations of the MNLF and after due consultation with the various leaders and sectors in the Southern Philippines. The MNLF Chairman, Nur Misuari, shall chair both the Council and the CA. Accordingly, the Council and the Assembly shall supervise and coordinate the implementation of peace and development programs in the area (Available at [www.philippineupdate.com/frjun.htm], accessed, 5pm. August 25, 2021)

2008 MOA-AD. It is the Memorandum of Agreement between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines that consists of statements agreed upon by consensus between the peace panels of both parties. It deals with Concepts and Principles, Territory, Resources, Governance of the Ancestral Domain of the Bangsamoro.(**Orlando B. Quevedo, (2008).**

Bangsamoro Homeland. Historically the Bangsamoro homeland consisted of the territory under the control or influence of the Moro Sultanates. But now as described by the MOA, the Bangsamoro ancestral domain would only include the present territorial territory of the ARMM (Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao) as its core and additional barangays in Region IX, XII, and Palawan. More than 700 barangays outside ARMM would be restored to the ancestral

domain, subject to plebiscite within 12 months after the signing of the MOA. More towns would be included, again subject to plebiscite after 25 years. Moreover, this Bangsamoro ancestral domain would consist of land, waters, seas, air, and other resources. **Quevedo, (2008).**

Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). The territory described above would have a juridical personality. It is a juridical entity that would have its own form of government and would exercise authority and jurisdiction over the Bangsamoro ancestral domain. Bangsamoro.(Ibid).The MOA is silent about the issue whether or not the JBE is part and parcel of the Republic of the Philippines. Instead it recognizes “the Central Government,” and establishes “associative relationship and associative arrangements” between BJE and GRP, as well as “shared authority over territory” “shared responsibility” “sharing of resources,” etc., with a period of transition specifying the relationship. But the MOA also states that “The Parties shall faithfully comply with their commitment to the associative arrangements upon entry into force of the Comprehensive Compact.” Therefore, it may be understood that the “relationship of associative arrangements” will continue even after the JBE shall have been “fully entrenched and established in the basic law of the BJE.” Bangsamoro. **Quevedo, (2008).**

Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The **Organization of Islamic Conference**, (now Organization of Islamic Cooperation) is an international organization consisting of 57 member states. The organization attempts to be the collective voice of the Muslim world (Ummah) and attempts to safeguard the interests and ensure the progress and well-being of Muslims. The OIC has a permanent delegation to the United Nations, and is the largest international organization outside of the United Nations.^[1] The official languages of the OIC are Arabic, English, and French. It changed its name on 28 June 2011 from the **Organization of the Islamic Conference** to its current name. (Available at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/http://google.com.ph], accessed 3 pm. July 24,, 2021). The OIC is intergovernmental organization involving representatives from fifty-

seven states founded in 1969. It has facilitated negotiations between the MNLF and the Philippine government since the 1970s and has been involved in monitoring the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement. The MNLF has been an official observer of the OIC since 1977. The MILF failed to obtain observer status in 2000. Libya, Indonesia and Malaysia are the members of the OIC that have been most active in mediating between the Philippine government and the Moro groups. **Gershman (2001)**.

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