

*Between Re-traditionalization and Islamic
Resurgence*

***The Influence of the National Question and
the Revival of Tradition
on Gender Issues among Maranaos in the
Southern Philippines***

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To all those Maranao women who taught me that you have to fight for your rights.

To my great-aunt who taught me that one does not need much in life.

To my husband who stayed with me in this difficult time.

To my daughter who came at the right moment.

Contents

GRAPHICS	5
MAPS	6
PICTURES	7
TABLES	8
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	9
GLOSSARY	12
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	18
ZUSAMMENFASSUNG	19
INTRODUCTION.....	22
I. RESEARCH CIRCUMSTANCES	24
II. APPROACH	26
CHAPTER ONE: BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE	28
INTRODUCTION	28
I. MINDANAOAN SOCIETY AND THE HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT	30
<i>A. Political Divisions and Social Framework</i>	<i>30</i>
1. Mindanao	30
a. Religious and Ethnic Distribution	42
b. Economy	48
c. Education.....	53
<i>B. Historical Overview: the Region Prior to Independence</i>	<i>61</i>
1. Spanish Colonial Period.....	61
2. The American Colonial Period.....	66
3. The Republic of the Philippines.....	75
a. Peacetime and the MNLF Rebellion	75
b. The Final Peace Agreement (FPA) and the MILF Rebellion	89
II. THE “NO WAR, NO PEACE” ENVIRONMENT	99
<i>A. Theoretical Approach.....</i>	<i>99</i>
1. Definition of Terms.....	99
2. De-Embedding and Alternative Structures	102
3. Markets of Violence	104
4. Community Ceasefires: Peace Zones.....	109
5. Case Study: MSU Marawi	112
<i>B. Why the Situation Remains: The Failure and Success of Peace Talks</i>	<i>116</i>
1. Ceasefire or War: The Importance of Peace Talks	116
2. Looming Conflict.....	121
3. The Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD)	131
4. Subsiding War and Stabilization of the “No War, No Peace” Environment.....	134
5. The Inclusion of Women in the Peace Process.....	148
6. Outlook: The Benigno Aquino Government	153
<i>C. Conflict as a Tool of Stabilization.....</i>	<i>157</i>
1. Family Feuds (Ridos).....	157
2. Ridos and Elections	158
3. Interconnections and Differences between the National and Local Levels of the Conflict	162
4. National Politics as Family Politics and the Remaining Datu System	166
CONCLUSION.....	170
CHAPTER TWO: THE LINEAGE SYSTEM, THE IMPORTANCE OF STATUS, AND THE REVIVAL OF THE SULTANATES	172
INTRODUCTION	172
I. THE LINEAGE SYSTEM	174
<i>A. Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao</i>	<i>174</i>
1. The Salsila.....	174

2. The Four Principalities.....	177
3. The Seven Districts.....	180
4. Introduction of the Sultanate System.....	183
5. The Development of the 16 Royal Houses and the 28 Lawmakers.....	188
6. Administrative Division.....	197
B. <i>Arrangement of Lineages</i>	208
1. Order and Agreement.....	208
2. Eastern Unayan as Example of an Autonomous Sultanate.....	210
3. One Arrangement for the Pat a Pangampong.....	212
C. <i>Clan Organization</i>	220
1. Clans as the Basis of the Sultanate.....	220
2. Political Clans.....	226
II. THE IMPORTANCE OF STATUS.....	230
A. <i>Datu Society</i>	230
1. Competitive Equality.....	230
2. Descent Line Status.....	235
3. Maratabat (Status Honor).....	237
B. <i>The Title System</i>	246
1. Choosing a Titleholder.....	246
2. Reorganization of Descent Line Claims.....	248
3. Responsibilities and Advantages of Titleholders.....	252
4. Religious Titles.....	255
5. Numerous Titles.....	258
III. DECLINE AND RESURGENCE OF THE SULTANATE SYSTEM.....	264
A. <i>A Countermovement to the Rebellion</i>	264
B. <i>Support on the Grassroots Level: Conflict Settlement beyond the State</i>	274
C. <i>A Local Alternative</i>	279
CONCLUSION.....	284
CHAPTER THREE: BETWEEN RE-TRADITIONALIZATION AND ISLAMIC RESURGENCE: GENDER DEBATES IN A “NO WAR, NO PEACE” ENVIRONMENT.....	286
INTRODUCTION.....	286
I. TRADITIONAL SPACES OF POWER.....	287
A. <i>Symbolic Equality and Male Hegemony: The Multifocality of Power</i>	287
B. <i>Traditional Fields of Power and their Hierarchical and Moral Character</i>	293
C. <i>Public Decision-Making: “You Have to Fight for Your Rights!”</i>	302
D. <i>Gender Roles and Economic Realities: Non-Recognition of Female Labor</i>	309
E. <i>A Gender-blind Reward System in a Lineage Society</i>	314
II. FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS.....	321
A. <i>Marriage and Divorce</i>	322
1. Arranged Marriages: Neo-Traditional Arrangements.....	322
2. Bride Price: Between Security and Sellout.....	332
3. Polygyny and Divorce: The Importance of Family Politics.....	335
B. <i>Gender Norms and Sanctions</i>	338
1. Illicit Sexual Relations: A Strong Conservative Traditional and Islamic Moral Code.....	338
2. The Executive Rights of the Family: Norm and Sanction.....	344
III. ISLAM AND GENDER NORMS.....	345
A. <i>Islamic Resurgence</i>	345
1. Islamic Parties: Success and Decline.....	347
2. Syncretism versus Islamic Resurgence: “I am a Maranao and thus a Muslim”.....	354
3. Religious Organizations: The Ulama League of the Philippines, the National Ulama Conference of the Philippines, and the Tabligh Movement.....	357
B. <i>Muslim Women Leaders and Muslim Feminism</i>	364
1. Political Leadership between Re-traditionalization and Re-Islamization.....	364
2. Muslim Women's Movements: Muslim Feminism.....	371
CONCLUSION.....	381
CONCLUSION.....	384

BIBLIOGRAPHY 389

INDEX OF NAMES 415

APPENDIX 419

1. TIMELINE OF CONFLICT AND PEACE PACTS 419

2. ARMM ADMINISTRATION 422

3. LANA O DEL SUR GOVERNORS 423

4. MARANAO WOMEN IN POLITICAL POSITIONS IN LANA O 424

5. FEMALE POLITICIANS IN LANA O DEL NORTE 425

6. FEMALE POLITICIANS IN LANA O DEL SUR 427

7. REPRESENTATIVES OF LANA O 431

8. HOW UMPAS AND SANDAB GOT TO MINDANAO: A STORY RELATED BY THE MASIRICAMPO SA BUTIG 433

9. LINEAGE INVOLVING ARAB ANCESTORS OF THE SULTANATE OF BUTIG 436

10. A MURDER CASE RELATED TO THE AUTHOR BY A BAI A LABI, 2008 437

Graphics

GRAPHIC 1: MUSLIM ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE PHILIPPINES IN 2000	45
GRAPHIC 2: CUMULATIVE TOTAL PERSONS AFFECTED BY THE MINDANAO CONFLICT, 10 AUGUST 2008–7 JULY 2009.....	105
GRAPHIC 3: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPS) IN MINDANAO FROM 2000 TO 2009.....	119
GRAPHIC 4: NUMBER OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS BETWEEN THE AFP AND THE MILF FROM JANUARY 2002 TO SEPTEMBER 2008	119
GRAPHIC 5: FREQUENCY OF <i>RIDOS</i> IN LANA DEL SUR FROM 1994 TO 2005	158
GRAPHIC 6: FIVE NONIS SA UNAYAN.....	186
GRAPHIC 7: DESCENT LINE DIVISIONS AND HIERARCHIES IN THE <i>PATA PANGAMPONG</i>	191
GRAPHIC 8: <i>PATA PANGAMPONG SA RANAO</i>	195
GRAPHIC 9: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EAST UNAYAN <i>SUKU</i>	211
GRAPHIC 10: STRUCTURAL CHART OF THE <i>PATA PANGAMPONG</i>	213
GRAPHIC 11: GENEALOGICAL CONNECTIONS OF THE BAI A LABI KO SHAKBA.....	216
GRAPHIC 12: TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY ON THE <i>AGAMA</i> LEVEL ACCORDING TO TAWAGON (1987).....	218
GRAPHIC 13: GENEALOGICAL CONNECTIONS OF NASRODEN ADOR, SULTAN SA BUTIG, 2008	248
GRAPHIC 14: REARRANGEMENT OF DESCENT LINES: THE SULTANATE OF MARAWI.....	250
GRAPHIC 15: BALINDONG JAMAN CLAN.....	251
GRAPHIC 16: ADVISORY COUNCIL UNDER CHAIRMAN HRH (HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS) DATU ELIAS MOHAMMAD, DATU A CABUGATAN SA MASIU.....	271

Maps

MAP 1: MAP OF MINDANAO REGIONS.....	31
MAP 2: MAP OF LANA DEL SUR	33
MAP 3: MAP OF MARAWI	35
MAP 4: MAP OF THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATIONS OF MUSLIM ETHNIC GROUPS IN MINDANAO AND THE SULU ARCHIPELAGO	46
MAP 5: MAP OF MINDANAO AND THE SULU ARCHIPELAGO. HOTSPOTS OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE AFP AND THE MILF AND BETWEEN THE AFP AND THE ASG FROM AUGUST 2008-AUGUST 2009	118
MAP 6: MOA-AD, MAP OF ANNEXES A AND B: LANA DEL NORTE	130
MAP 7: MOA-AD, MAP OF ANNEXES A AND B	133
MAP 8: MAP OF PLACES OF INTERSECTION AND DEMARCATION OF SULTANATES (<i>PAT A INGED A KIYASOSOLUNDAAN O BANGSA O PAT A PANGAMPONG A RANA O</i>) AND DISTRICTS (<i>SUKUS</i>)	181
MAP 9: MAP OF THE 16 ROYAL HOUSES AND THEIR APPROXIMATE PLACES OF ORIGIN.....	196
MAP 10: MAP OF THE 28 LAW MAKERS AND THEIR APPROXIMATE PLACES OF ORIGIN	197
MAP 11: MAP OF THE <i>PAT A PANGAMPONG</i> ACCORDING TO MEDNICK, 1965.....	206
MAP 12: MAP OF THE <i>PAT A PANGAMPONG</i> ACCORDING TO THE 16 ROYAL HOUSES, 2003.....	207
MAP 13: MAP OF THE <i>PAT A PANGAMPONG</i> AND THE POLITICAL DIVISIONS IN LANA DEL SUR, 2008	207

Pictures

PICTURE 1: MAN COURTING MARANAO GIRLS	38
PICTURE 2: ROYAL WOMEN AT A <i>PAGANA</i> MARANAO.....	38
PICTURE 3: EVERYDAY LIFE AT THE MARKET	39
PICTURE 4: STREET BLOCKAGE IN MARAWI CITY.....	57
PICTURE 5: ISLAMIC SCHOOL FOR ORPHANS.....	59
PICTURE 6: MILF MAJAHIDAT, CAMP BUSHRAN, BUTIG, 1999.....	87
PICTURE 7: <i>HARAM</i> -STREAMER	162
PHOTO 8: ENTRANCE TO LANA DEL SUR.....	171
PICTURE 9: ENTHRONEMENT CEREMONY	217
PHOTO 10: ENTHRONEMENT CEREMONY, SULTANATE OF PATANI, LANA DEL SUR	221
PICTURE 11: MARANAO COURTING SONG.....	232
PICTURE 12: THE CURRENT BAI A LABI SA RAMAIN IS DECLARED AS SUCH ON A STREAMER.....	262
PICTURE 13: ON 8 MAY 1974, PRESIDENT MARCOS CONFIRMED THE ROYAL CONFEDERATION IN MALACAÑANG	266
PICTURE 14: SULTAN SA MASIU AND PRESIDENT ARROYO.....	269
PICTURE 15: TOPAAN “TONI” DISOMIMBA, SULTAN SA MARAWI.....	269
PICTURE 16: MSU ROYALTIES	274
PICTURE 17: ENTHRONEMENT CEREMONY, SULTANATE OF PATANI, LANA DEL SUR, <i>DATUS</i> AND <i>BAIS</i>	288
PICTURE 18: SULTAN A PITHI-ILAN SA PATANI.....	289
PICTURE 19: STREAMERS SHOWING COUNTERPART-TITLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SULTANATE OF PATANI	289
PICTURE 20: THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF ELDERS.....	304
PICTURE 21: THE PROVINCIAL ULAMA COUNCIL, MEN	305
PICTURE 22: THE PROVINCIAL ULAMA COUNCIL, WOMEN.....	305
PICTURE 23: CO-EDUCATION IN THE 1930S.....	309
PICTURE 24: MARAWI CITY: CITY OF STREAMERS.....	315
PICTURE 25: RELATIVES CONGRATULATE THE GOVERNOR	316
PICTURE 26: POSTERS SHOWING SULTAN AND BAI A LABI SA PAGALAMATAN	316
PICTURE 27: ALONTO-ADIONG-TAHA-WEDDING: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION OF GENEALOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BRIDE	323
PICTURE 28: ALONTO-ADIONG-TAHA-WEDDING: THE WALI AND THE GROOM PRESSING THEIR THUMBS.....	323
PICTURE 29: ALONTO-ADIONG-TAHA-WEDDING: BRIDE AND GROOM AND THE GROOM’S MEN AND BRIDESMAIDS PRESENT THEMSELVES ON A PLATFORM AFTER THE WEDDING CEREMONY	324
PICTURE 30: ALONTO-ADIONG-TAHA-WEDDING: FEMALE RELATIVES OF THE GROOM	324
PICTURE 31: A DATU AND HIS WIVES, 1930S	337
PICTURE 32: BITIARA CLUB, MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONALS IN DANSALAN, 1954.....	347
PICTURE 33: SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.....	352
PICTURE 34: GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY	363
PICTURE 35: CLAN MEETING.....	363
PICTURE 36: FEMALE POLITICAL POWER	367
PICTURE 37: MUSLIM WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, LANA DEL SUR PROVINCIAL CHAPTER, 1952.....	372

Tables

TABLE 1: RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN THE PHILIPPINES ACCORDING TO NSO (2002).....	44
TABLE 2: MUSLIM POPULATION IN THE PHILIPPINES BASED ON THE 2000 CENSUS.....	47
TABLE 3: BOMBING ATTACKS IN 2008-2009.....	136
TABLE 4: DISTRICTS (<i>SUKUS</i>) WITHIN THE <i>PATA PANGAMPONG</i> , DIVIDED ACCORDING TO DESCENT LINES	182
TABLE 5: THE 16 ROYAL HOUSES, THE 28 LAWMAKERS AND THE DEMARCATION SULTANATES	192
TABLE 6: AREAS CLAIMED TO BE PART OF THE <i>PATA PANGAMPONG</i>	203
TABLE 7: THE RETURN OF THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL FAMILIES.....	228

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFF	Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry
AFRIM	Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AMDF	Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc.
AP	Associated Press
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BDA	Bangsa Moro Development Agency
BIAF	Bangsa Moro Islamic Armed Forces
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BJE	Bangsamoro Juridical Entity, generic term referring to the proposed self-governance system contemplated under the GRP-MILF peace negotiations
BLMI	Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute
BMA	Bangsa Moro Army
BMLO	Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization
BMWAB	Bangsa Moro Women Auxiliary Brigade
BSC	Bangsamoro Solidarity Conference
BSCUP	Bangsamoro Supreme Council of Ulama of the Philippines
BUC	Bishop-Ulama Conference
BUSC	Basilan Ulama Supreme Council
CAFGU	Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
CBCP	Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines
CCCH	Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities
CEDAW	<i>Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women</i>
CMD	Christian/Muslim Democrats
CMPL	Code of Muslim Personal Laws
ComElec	Commission on Elections
CVO	Civilian Volunteer Organisation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Rehabilitation
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DLF	Development and Livelihood Fund
EO	Executive Order
EU	European Union
FLEMMS	Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey
FPA	Final Peace Agreement (between the Ramos government and the MNLF in 1996)

GAD	Gender and Development
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Society for Technical Cooperation)
HELP-CM	Health, Education, Livelihood, Progress Task Force-Central Mindanao
ICG	International Contact Group
IDMC	International Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IMERGG	Islamic Movement on Electoral Reform for Good Governance
IMT	International Monitoring Team
IPP	Islamic Party of the Philippines
IPSP	Internal Peace and Security Plan
IRA	Internal Revenue Allotment
JCPA	Joint Civilian Protection Authority
JI	Jamaat-e-Islami (Islamic community)
JPI	Jamiatul Philippine Al-Islamia (Islamic University of the Philippines)
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines
KI	Kapamagogopa, Inc. (Maranao: helping one another)
LASURECO	Lanao del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc.
LGU	Local Government Unit
LMT	Local Monitoring Team
MARADECA	Maranao People's Development Center, Inc.
MCW	Magna Carta of Women
MCW	Mindanao Commission on Women
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MIM	Muslim (later on Mindanao) Independence Movement
MKFI	Magbassa Kita Foundation, Inc (Tausug: Let us read!)
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MNLF-RG	Moro National Liberation Front-Reformist Group
MOA-AD	Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain
MPC	Mindanao Peoples' Caucus
MSU	Mindanao State University
NAP	National Action Plan
NCMF	National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (formerly OMA)
NDCC	National Disaster Coordinating Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	New People's Army
NPC	National Power Corporation
NSCB	National Statistical Coordination Board
NSO	National Statistics Office

NUCP	National Ulama Conference of the Philippines
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OFWs	Overseas Filipino Workers
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OMA	Office on Muslim Affairs (now NCMF)
OMPIA	Ompongan o Muslim sa Philipinas a Iphuthagompia a Ranao (Political Party of the Muslims in the Philippines for Reform in Lanao)
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
PCIJ	Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism
PCID	Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy
PDP-LABAN	Partido Democratico Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (People Power)
PIPVTR	Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, Inc.
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PLRC	PILIPINA Legal Resources Center
PNP	Philippine National Police
RA	Republic Act
RG	Regional Group
RIDO	Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities
ROSULPHIL	Royal Sultanate League of the Philippines
RP	Republic of the Philippines
RRR	Renegotiate, Reaffirm, and Review
SB	Senate Bill
SOCCSKSARGEN	Region in the Philippines which includes the following provinces: South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City
SOMA	Suspension of Military Action
SOMO	Suspension of Offensive Military Operations
SPCPD	Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development
SZOPAD	Special Zone for Peace and Development
TI	Transparency International
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRO	Temporary Restraining Order
UIFO	Union of Islamic Forces and Organizations (later on the BMLO)
ULP	Ulama League of the Philippines
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UP	University of the Philippines
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
YMPN	Young Moro Professional Network

Glossary

abaya (Arabic عبايه)	outer garment that covers the whole body
adat (Arabic عادة)	derived from the Arabic word <i>ada</i> meaning customary law. Locally is might also refer to a “share” which is given, for example, at weddings.
adimat	amulet/charm
agama	community or social unit, usually clustered around a mosque
agong	gong
al az'l (Arabic العزل)	coitus interruptus
alim (Arabic عليهم)	male Muslim religious scholar
alima (Arabic علمية)	female Muslim religious scholar, plural: <i>alimat</i>
apo	lineage ancestor
aurat (Arabic عورة)	intimate parts of the body
awid	support
ayonen	title for ruler in Bumbaran
bai/bae	female counterpart to datu
Bai a Labi	Highest female title. Some would translate it as Queen.
bayok	traditional song said to be derived from Bumbaran
bangon	lot of land
bangsa	descent
banka	small boat
barangay	smallest administrative unit in the Philippines; before it was called <i>barrio</i>
batal	touch that makes the bride belong to the groom
bebendir	small gong
betang	bride price
bisaya	slave
bolo	Filipino machete
bono	murder
boring a maratabat	spoiled maratabat
Bumbaran	mythical town in the <i>Darangen</i>
carabao	water buffalo
dagamot	sorceress
da-i-bangenda	people who do not have a claim on titles
damm	penalty
dar ul-Islam (Arabic دار الاسلام)	House of Islam

<i>Darangen</i>	Maranao epic poem
datu/dato	chieftain; some would translate it as king
da'wah (Arabic دعوة)	call to faith
debakan	drum
diat (Arabic الديه)	blood money
djinn (Arabic الجن)	supernatural beings
dowry	is locally used to connote bride price
Dwapolo ago Walo	
a Mbabaya ko Taritib	28 Law Makers
Eid al-Adha (Arabic عيد الاضحى)	Festival of Sacrifice
Eid al-Fitr (Arabic عيد الفطر)	Festival marking the end of Ramadan
ganta	Philippine dry or liquid measure holding about three quarts
gapa	Land on which a community lays claim; is subdivided into two categories: <i>kakola</i> , which is the communal land, such as a forest, owned in common; and <i>mianggapa</i> , which is classified under private ownership
gibbon	a bedroom for the daughter of the Sultan that is close to the sleeping place of the Sultan and his lady
grar	title
guro	teacher
haram (Arabic حرام)	forbidden
Higa-onon	Indigenous ethnic group in Mindanao
idal	alternate
igma (Arabic اجماع)	agreement/consensus
imam (Arabic امام)	head of religious affairs
inged	township arranged around supported descent line
inikadowa	twin spirit of a person
juramentados	a person, woman or man, who has taken an oath, describing ritualized suicide or suicide attackers who have taken an oath to die defending Muslim territory
kadi (Arabic قاضى)	judge
kafir (Arabic كافر)	infidel
kaga ba'an	curse of the ancestral spirits
kakasi	love charm
kakinikini	to walk gracefully
kalaawi	gift to the bride about one year after the wedding
kalilang	feast
kalipa	caliph, head of a caliphate (Arabic خليفة)

kalipongan	small unit
kambilang atao	decorum
kandadaonga	session where verses are exchanged between girls and boys in which their feelings are indirectly expressed
kandidiyaga	crying, sometimes rhythmic, over the dead
kandori	thanksgiving celebration
kapaka alampas sa di ta rk	robbery or stealing
kapakasbo/kasebo	adultery (applicable to married man or woman – at least one of them has to be married)
kapakasina/kasina	derived from the Arabic word <i>zina</i> (fornication) (applicable to unmarried man or woman)
kapalagoy sa babay	abduction
kapamagongoai	mutual consideration
kapamagawida	mutual support
kapananadem/kapangangaloy	reminisce
kapangangalek/kapangalap	threatening
kapedi-pedi na kalimo-limo	pleading
kapelolobed	rape
kaperaraneg	mauling
kaphasada ko rido	resolution ceremony of a <i>rido</i>
kaphoparoi	mutual glorification
kapmokalid/mimortad	one who leaves the Islamic religion for another religion
kapugad	a gift to the bride
kapuphunuda	mutual paying deference
kasipa	game in which teams have to kick and hold a sipa, a ball-like contraption made of rattan
katengaga	elopement
kathatabanga/katatabanga	mutual help
katongkir sa di benar	false accusation
kazisiapa	mutual protection
kazuzulai	mutual magnification
khalifah/khilafah (Arabic خليفة)	God's vice-regents
kitab (Arabic كتاب)	regulations which are based on the Qur'an and the <i>hadith</i>
kitakhesen ko makambabala	commitment for the resolution of a conflict
kitegelen ko lalag	wisdom
kokoman a kambhatabata'a	law of kinsmen
kolintang	set of 8 gongs
kopia	cap
kota	fort
kumbung	local veil
kuruj	notion used in relation to Tabligh. Trip from place to place to re-Islamize Muslims whose observance of Islam is weak

lamin	lady's dormitory tower, built to stand out from the <i>torogan</i>
lawiin	the visit of the wife of a sultan or <i>datu</i> to his home for the first time after marriage, welcomed with a celebration by the family and clan of the husband
let a igaan	gift to the bride
lokes	elder
Lumad	indigenous people in Mindanao
lumba	paragon
luwaran	selection; refers to a code of laws which are based on a selection of Arabic books mostly originating from the Hadramaut (cf. Hooker 1983: 163)
mababa-i bangsa	low <i>bangsa</i> (blood status)
mabeba-a tao	low people
madaris (Arabic مدارس)	plural of <i>madrasah</i>
madrasah (Arabic مدرسة)	educational institution
mahr (Arabic مهر)	obligatory bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage
Malacañang	Office of the President of the Philippines
mala-i bangsa	big <i>bangsa</i>
malong	tube skirt
mapia-a tao	good people
maratabat (from Arabic.	
martaba (مرتبة)	rank, status-honor
maratabat sa bangsa	honour of descent
maratabat sa kandatu ago agama	honour of title and domain
maratabat sa warisan	honour of women (female kin)
maswarah	community meeting
Mbabaya ko Taritib	Lawmakers
mbota' mbota'a/mbatabataa	clansip
montiya	precious stone
moriatao	offspring
mota'a/mbataa	three generational group traced down from one's grandparents. It includes the two sets of grandparents and their descendants, but does not include the siblings of the grandparents and their descendants.
nafaqa (Arabic نفقة)	something given as maintenance
nati	carabao calf
niqab (Arabic نقاب)	face-covering veil
noni	full-blooded
olol	enslavement for women convicted of high crimes
omerta	code of honor which can be found among the

	Italian Mafia
pagagamot	person who is using poison for treatment
pagawid	supporter
pagawidan	supported
pamamantak	sorcerer
pamomolong	a person who can heal, also called medicine man or spiritual healer, who can be a man or a woman
pananalsila	specialists on genealogy
pandita	schools which offer second-level education in Islamic subjects
panoroganan	Royal House
panta	wig of long hair
Pat a Inged a	
Kiyasosoludaan o	
Bangsa o Pat a	
Pangampong sa Ranao	Areas of demarcation or intersection of the Four Principalities of the Lake
Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao	Four Principalities/Encampments of the Lake
Pelokelokesen	council of elders
pendarpaan	spirit medium
Pamagsopa sa Marawi	Alliance of Marawi
poona	source
purdah (from Persian پرده)	segregation of the sexes and seclusion of women
qisas (Arabic قصاص)	death penalty
rabai	pillage
radiam (Arabic الرجم)	stoning of convicts in adultery and incest crimes
raga	unmarried woman
raja	monarch (derived from Sanskrit)
ranao	lake
rawaten	role model
rido	clan or family disputes
rido-or-sesalakawa-	
a-tawo a miakaolika	Serious conflict which occurs between Maranao who are not directly related
rila	forgiveness
ruma bichara	ruling council
sakeena (Arabic سكينه)	tranquility or enduring peace
sakop	freeman/followers/commoners
salsila (Arabic النسب سلسله)	genealogy
sandil	concubines
sa'op	relatilate
sari sari store	convenience store
sayat	gift to the bride
sebangan	east
sedepan	west

sela sa adat	which is was part of the dowry but which is not demanded by the wife except in times of trouble between the couple
shaitan (Arabic شيطان)	devil or evil <i>djinn</i>
sharia (Arabic شريعة)	“path”; refers to laws which are based on the Qur'an and the <i>hadith</i>
shia (Arabic شيعة)	Derived from Shī'atu 'Alī; the followers of Ali
sukodan	neutral relative
suku	district
taalik	waiting period until a resolution ceremony of a <i>rido</i>
Tablighi Jamaat	a transnational movement to spread and revive the Islamic faith
taritib (Arabic ترتيب)	order/arrangement
tonong	spirit
toril	live-in schools where children from three years old and above are confined in one place and taught Islamic religion and the Qur'an
torogan	palace
tonganai'i/tonganaya'i	clan, which consists of persons related to each other within the fourth degree of consanguinity
ulama (Arabic علما)	male Muslim religious scholars; singular: <i>alim</i> , female: <i>alima</i> , female plural: <i>alimat</i>
ummah (Arabic أمة)	community
ustad (Arabic استاد)	teacher in Arabic; plural: <i>ustadz/ustads</i> ; female: <i>ustazah</i>
vinta	native boat
wali (Arabic ولي)	marriage guardian
warisan	female clan member
zukudan/sukodan	neutral relative

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¹ Bai a Labi literally means “highest woman” and is the highest royal title a Maranao woman can receive. Noni means “full blooded”.

² Highest Woman of the Royal House of Bayabao Masiu.

³ Literally this means “Master of the Camp of Butig”.

Zusammenfassung

Zwischen Re-Traditionalisierung und Re-Islamisierung. Der Einfluss der Nationalen Frage und der Wiederkehr der Tradition auf Genderfragen bei Maranaos in den südlichen Philippinen

Die Re-Traditionalisierungsbewegung auf den südlichen Philippinen ist mehr als nur eine Reaktion auf die Moderne (Appadurai 1998; Kohl 2006). Sie muss in ihrem lokalen Kontext verstanden werden. Auf den südlichen Philippinen ist sie eng mit der nationalen Frage verwoben, gestellt von einer rebellierenden muslimischen Minderheit in Mindanao. Die Re-Traditionalisierungsbewegung verläuft teilweise Hand in Hand mit der Rebellion, aber auch in Opposition zu dieser. In jedem Fall haben beide Bewegungen Auswirkungen auf lokale Machtstrukturen. Frauen sind von diesen Prozessen nicht ausgeschlossen, genauso wenig wie deren repräsentative Organisationen. Dies lässt die Frage aufkommen, welche Rolle das islamisch-synkretistische *adat* (Gewohnheitsrecht) im Kampf um Frauenrechte spielt. Und im Besonderen, ob eine Frauenbewegung basierend auf *adat*-Rechten sich als potentielle Alternative zu dem die Debatte um Frauenfragen monopolisierenden islamischem oder westlichem Feminismus etabliert.

Betrachtet man die jüngsten Entwicklungen in Mindanao und ignoriert dabei die Geschichte der Region, resultiert dies in unzeitgemäßen Antworten auf Fragen, deren Beantwortung sich noch im Prozess befindet. Kein Phänomen existiert für sich allein, sondern muss in seinem Kontext betrachtet werden. Die Einbeziehung historischer Fakten reflektiert nicht nur die Komplexität der nationalen Frage in Mindanao. Sie sind auch nützlich bei der Entwicklung einer generellen Analyse der Faktoren, die muslimische Frauenorganisationen dazu bringen, eine Rolle in der Beantwortung sozialer und politischer Fragen zu spielen. Die vorliegende Arbeit hat einen breitgefächerten Fokus auf die Entstehung und sozio-kulturelle Konsequenzen der Rebellion. Außerdem werden das die Region prägende synkretistisch-traditionelle System und deren Auswirkungen auf Genderfragen untersucht. Sie legt somit das Fundament für ein besseres Verständnis der sozio-kulturellen Prozesse, in die muslimische Frauenorganisationen auf den Philippinen verwickelt sind.

Auf den Philippinen ist die Frage der Beziehung zwischen Re-Traditionalisierungs- und Islamisierungsbewegungen von speziellem Interesse, da die nationale Regierung eine „Divide et Impera“-Strategie im Angesicht der Rebellion der muslimischen Minderheit in Mindanao

anwendet. Das anfängliche Ziel der größten Rebellengruppe, der Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), in den 1970er Jahren war es einen säkularen Staat zu errichten. Erst in den 1980er Jahren wurde der Einfluss des Islams wichtiger. Zu dieser Zeit trat die MNLF-Splittergruppe, die Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), an die Öffentlichkeit. Diese wollte nicht nur die Unabhängigkeit der muslimischen Gebiete, sondern auch einen islamischen Staat. Die *da'wah* Bewegung⁴ war jedoch nicht auf die Rebellenorganisation begrenzt, sondern verbreitete sich auf den gesamten Philippinen. Nach dem Sturz der Marcos-Diktatur und der damit einhergehenden Demokratisierungswelle wurden mehrere islamische Parteien gegründet. Die Provinz Lanao del Sur, der Forschungsschwerpunkt dieser Dissertation, ist in diesem Zusammenhang von speziellem Interesse. Denn dort hat sich eine der größten islamischen Parteien gebildet, die OMPIA Partei,⁵ die in der Provinz in den 1990ern mehr als ein Jahrzehnt an der Regierung beteiligt war. Die politische Landschaft veränderte sich in den 2000ern mit der Rückkehr der traditionellen politischen Elite. Der Machtverlust der islamischen Parteien hatte jedoch keinen Bedeutungsverlust des islamischen Bezugsrahmens zur Folge. Im Rahmen der anhaltenden Rebellion und der daraus resultierenden „no war, no peace“-Umgebung⁶ wurde der Islam zu einem Politikum und der Quelle wichtiger Rechtfertigungsnarrativen (Forst and Günther 2009). Diese werden von konkurrierenden Parteien referiert, um einen Machtvorteil zu erlangen. Die Definition der Narrative variiert jedoch, nicht nur zwischen Traditionalisten und Islamisten, sondern auch innerhalb dieser Gruppen. Wie Judith Butler schreibt, kann eine Narrative multiple Definitionen enthalten, die in einen jeweils anderen Kontext gesetzt werden, um als Rechtfertigungen zu dienen (2008: 14).

Frauenrechte positionieren sich in diesem Zusammenhang zwischen Re-Traditionalisierung und Re-Islamisierung. Aufgrund der „no war, no peace“-Umgebung, durch die der Islam eine kritische Wichtigkeit erlangte, kann keine klare Unterscheidung zwischen den beiden Bewegungen gemacht werden. Interessanterweise fordern Frauen von der Re-Traditionalisierungs- und der Re-Islamisierungsbewegung ihre Rechte in den meisten Fällen in

⁴ Das arabische *da'wah* „Ruf (zum Glauben)“ beinhaltet eine Missionierungsbewegung, um den islamischen Glauben zu verbreiten.

⁵ Ompong an o Muslim sa Philipinas a Iphuthagompia a Ranao (Politische Partei der Muslime auf den Philippinen für Reform in Lanao).

⁶ Eine Umgebung, in der positiver Frieden und Krieg abwesend sind. Sie ist durch Strukturen charakterisiert, die man auch im Krieg vorfinden kann, so zum Beispiel gegenseitiges Misstrauen der verfeindeten Parteien oder die Präsenz von Militär. Weiterhin beinhaltet diese Umgebung die Möglichkeit, dass ein bewaffneter Konflikt jeder Zeit ausbrechen kann.

einem islamischen Rahmen, auch wenn die Machtfelder (Lenz 1997) der Bewegungen sich voneinander unterscheiden. Islamisten berufen sich vor allem auf den Koran und die Gleichheit aller Menschen vor Gott, während Traditionalisten ihre Macht auf der Basis hierarchischer Strukturen ausspielen. Die Frauenbewegung kann in Bezug zur Re-Traditionalisierung nur in ihrer historischen Entwicklung verstanden werden. Hierdurch wird die Basis geliefert, um Rekonstruktionen und Neotraditionen zu lokalisieren (Kohl 2006), aber auch Möglichkeiten zu erkennen, die das Gewohnheitsrecht Frauen bieten kann. Die Rolle, die der Islam in diesem Zusammenhang spielt, ist wegen seines Einflusses und seiner Vorrangstellung gegenüber *adat* zentral. Weiterhin machen die speziellen Umstände der Rebellion Genderfragen zum Politikum. Die Region ist dominiert durch die „no war, no peace“-Umgebung; diese führt dazu, dass sich die muslimische Minderheit bewusst von der christlichen Mehrheit absetzt, um somit ihren Anspruch auf Selbstbestimmung zu untermauern. Eine Strategie, die eine verstärkte koranische Argumentation in Bezug auf Genderfragen beinhaltet. Dies bedeutet, dass Genderfragen an die nationale Frage in Mindanao gebunden sind, diese wiederum steht in jedem Fall mit Ethnizität in Verbindung, die als religiös definiert wird. In diesem speziellen Kontext ist der Re-Traditionalisierungsprozess nicht essentiell in Opposition zur Re-Islamisierung zu verstehen. Beide Bewegungen folgen anderen Zielen, erstere kann sich eine Lösung der nationalen Frage im Rahmen der nationalen Regierung vorstellen und letztere fordert eine solche außerhalb dieser. Beide sind sich jedoch in der Frage einig, dass die ethnische und somit die religiöse Identität gewahrt werden muss. Die Vorstellungen der die Region weitgehend dominierenden Traditionalisten basieren auf dem Islam, es werden jedoch hierarchische Strukturen favorisiert, die hauptsächlich Frauen der lokalen Elite fördern. Der sogenannte westliche Feminismus ist in der Region nicht anerkannt, wenn er nicht in einen ethnischen Rahmen eingebunden wird. Frauenbewegungen mit Bezug auf den Islam können, trotz des großen Einflusses der Re-Islamisierung, traditionelle Strukturen nicht ersetzen, die weithin dominant bleiben. Schlussfolgernd kann behauptet werden, dass aufgrund der „no war, no peace“-Umgebung der muslimische Feminismus in Mindanao in all seinen Variationen, hauptsächlich auf traditionellen Machtstrukturen basiert und auf islamische Argumente begrenzt ist und dass dessen Zukunft eng mit der Lösung der nationalen Frage verwoben ist.

Introduction

A revival of traditions is by no means merely a reaction to modernity (Appadurai 1998; Kohl 2006). It has to be understood in its local context. Thus, in the southern Philippines, it is largely bound to the national question posed by an ongoing rebellion by a Muslim minority in Mindanao. The re-traditionalization movement developed partly alongside and partly in opposition to the rebellion, and in any case local power relations were affected by both movements. Women were not excluded from this process, nor were their representative organizations. This raises the questions of the role and possible functions of the Islamic-syncretistic *adat* (customary law) in women's rights struggles and whether a women's rights movement based on *adat* can establish itself as a potential alternative to both Islamization and Western feminism, which monopolize the current debates on women's questions.

Studying the processes in Mindanao by ignoring their historical developments would result in untimely responses on issues that are still unresolved in the region. Each specific phenomenon does not exist for itself but has to be incorporated in its context. Considerations of historical facts do not only reflect the complexities of the national question in Mindanao. They are also useful for developing a global analysis of the factors that led Muslim women's organizations to play a part in social and political issues. Indeed, the present work with its wide-ranging focus on the development and socio-cultural consequences of the rebellion and the syncretistic-traditional systems characterizing the region and their consequences on gender issues is partly meant to lay the foundation for a better understanding of the socio-cultural process in which Muslim women's movements in the Philippines are involved.

In the Philippines the question of the relations between re-traditionalization movements and the ongoing Islamic resurgence is of particular interest since the national government has used a divide-and-rule policy when faced with the rebellion of the Muslim minority in Mindanao. The initial goal of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the 1970s was secular nationalism; it was only in the 1980s that Islam became more important in the framework of the MNLF's splinter group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MILF not only called for self-determination, but also included the promotion of Islam in its agenda. This *da'wah*⁷ movement was, however, not limited to rebel organizations, but spread all over the Philippines. Many Islamic parties emerged after the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos which resulted in a spread

⁷ Literally *da'wah* means "call to faith" and signifies a missionary movement to spread the Islamic creed.

of a democratic wave. The province of Lanao del Sur is of particular interest in this regard, because one of the biggest Islamic parties in the Philippines, the OMPPIA Party,⁸ ruled there for almost a decade in the 1990s. The political landscape changed in the 2000s when traditional political elites returned to positions of power. Although the Islamic parties have declined over time, this does not mean that the Islamic frame of reference has vanished. In the context of the ongoing rebellion and the resulting “no war, no peace” environment, Islam became a political issue and provided an important narrative of justification (Forst and Günther 2009) that is utilized by competing parties in order to claim power in the region. The definition of this narrative, however, varies, not only between traditionalists and Islamists, but also within these groups. As Judith Butler says, a narrative can contain multiple definitions of itself, which are set into context to serve as justifications (2008: 14).

Women’s rights in this context became an issue that was positioned between re-traditionalization and Islamic resurgence. However, because of the current “no war, no peace” environment, where Islamic narratives of justification are of critical importance, no clear division between the two types of movements can be drawn. Most interestingly, women from the re-traditionalization and Islamic resurgence movements claim their rights in most cases within an Islamic framework, even though the basis of their fields of power (Lenz 1997) is different. Islamists mainly refer to the Qur’an and the equality of all human beings before God, whereas traditionalists base their power on hierarchical structures. Taking a general approach to the subject into consideration is important also because the women’s struggle, in relation to re-traditionalization, can only be understood in its historical development, providing a basis to detect re-constructions and neo-traditions (Kohl 2006), especially concerning the possibilities *adat* can provide. The role of Islam in this context is central because of its influence and primacy over *adat*. Further, the special features created by the “no war, no peace” environment⁹, in which the Muslim minority forms a conscious opposition to the Christian majority to underline the claim to self-determination, make the gender issue a political issue and consequently reinforce the Qur’anic argumentation. This means that the gender issue is connected to the national question and sovereignty in Mindanao, which is in any case related to ethnic identity, being

⁸ Ompongana Muslim sa Philipinas a Iphuthagompia a Ranao which means Political Party of the Muslims in the Philippines for Reform in Lanao.

⁹ A “no war, no peace” environment is an environment in which positive peace and war are absent. It is characterized by war-characteristics like mistrust between the conflicting parties or the presence of military. Further, it holds the possibility that violent conflict can break out at any time.

basically defined as religious. In this particular context, the re-traditionalization process is not opposed in essence to Islamic resurgence and cannot be introduced as a conscious countermovement to it since it follows its own agenda. The former sees the possibility of their claims being met within the framework of the Republic of the Philippines, while the second claims that the solution to the national question lies outside the state. The agenda of the traditionalists is still based on Islam but is in favor of hierarchical structures that mainly support women from the elite. Likewise, so-called Western feminism is not widely appreciated without being “repackaged” in an ethnic framework. Women’s movements in relation to Islamization, despite the strong influence of the latter, cannot replace traditional structures that are dominant. It can be concluded that, because of the “no war, no peace” environment, Muslim feminism in Mindanao, in all its variety, relies mainly on traditional power structures and is limited to Islamic argumentations. Its future depends on political issues and to a great extent on the solving of the national question.

I. Research Circumstances

During my research in Lanao del Sur, I was puzzled not to find the expected conflict environment, which is the way the place is often defined. Instead, I came to know an area in which there was neither peace nor war, meaning an area where characteristics of a war can be found, such as a general mistrust toward non-Muslims (expecting them to be potential spies), a particular fear of non-Muslims to visit Marawi City, and military checkpoints along the road. The mistrust, however, was in many cases overshadowed by politeness and hospitality, and the checkpoints were only occupied on certain occasions such as a red alert by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), expecting another outbreak of violent conflict, which occurred shortly after my one-year stay in Lanao. Even though my fieldwork was vastly limited, since I was not allowed to roam around freely or be on my own in Marawi City, due to the danger of being kidnapped, the city was not at war. How then could I describe Lanao del Sur, which for several years has been characterized by regular outbreaks of violent conflict, resulting most of the time in a high number of refugees, either because of the national conflict or because of local clan feuds (*ridos*)? During my research I became acquainted with the notion of a “no war, no peace” environment (Lucman 2000). This seemed to appropriately describe the local situation with its outbreaks of conflict; peace projects; the permanent existence of violent conflicts in local life stories; the high state of tension even though there is no official war; and an everyday life in

which people work and study, campaign for elections, go to the mosque, or go shopping. In this situation peace and war are decided and institutionalized by the various groups involved, the main players being the government of the Philippines and the MILF, and both war and peace remain outcomes of this environment of “in-between.” It thus seemed crucial for me to describe and define the evolution and characteristics of this special situation in Lanao del Sur, not only to better understand the actual conflict and peace efforts, but also because it seemed to be the basis for gender norms and re-traditionalizations.

I first arrived in Lanao del Sur in order to do research on gender issues. After some initial interviews with Muslim women from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), I met mistrust and ignorance when I wanted to go beyond this rather limited circle. It was only when I changed my subject to focus on traditional *bai a labis* (female titleholders in the sultanate system), an issue that was defined as “uncritical,” that I was welcomed more openly. When inquiring about the sultanate system as a whole, however, I was mainly referred to men as experts, who advised me to talk with women on the issue of *bai a labis*. Consequently, I learned more about the sultanate system and the roles of men and women within it. Roughly, it can be said that every *barangay*¹⁰ has a sultan and his female counterpart, a *bai a labi*, and several other royal titleholders. Considering that Lanao del Sur has more than 1,000 barangays and corresponding sultanates, it occurred to me that studying royalty could lead to a broader understanding of the gender situation. By dealing with the sultanates, I further learned about the importance not only of the bilateral *salsila* (genealogy), but also about underlying clan structures on which the sultanate system was superimposed and which remained strongly intact, even though the importance of royalty has declined in the face of state authority. During my research, a certain re-traditionalization movement became obvious. I had to define it in the context of the “no war, no peace” environment in which the national government sees the chance of supporting re-traditionalization in the framework of counter-revolution and peacekeeping. Additionally, international NGOs, focused increasingly on small-scale conflicts since the 1990s, support traditional systems as providing proper solutions to local conflicts. The role of women in these processes is not always a point of debate. Even though it might be included in the re-structuralizations of sultanates and peacekeeping, there is so far no organized women’s group demanding empowerment based on *adat* (customary law).

The extent to which women can actually rely on *adat* rights for their empowerment and

¹⁰ A *barangay* is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines.

why these claims are recognized not in women's groups but in an Islamic framework, can again be explained by referring to the "no war, no peace" environment, in which gender became a political issue connected to Islam and nationality. Spaces of power for women already existed in several traditionally symmetrically organized fields, like those of bilateral kinship and inheritance. In this context, gender norms become frequently less important than lineage and the power of the family and clan, providing a gender-blind reward system, which can elevate women into political and social leadership positions, despite criticism from fundamentalists. Islam, in its various interpretations, however, provides one of the most important frameworks of legitimation used to define social norms in Lanao del Sur. Thus, women's groups are organized around it, relying on the authority this narrative can provide concerning gender issues. Of special interest is how these groups define and apply Islamic norms.

II. Approach

Doing research in a conflict area is risky and provides many challenges to the security of the researcher. In addition, methodological approaches must be reconsidered in this context. Thus methods like participant observation might pose a problem when the researcher is not allowed to leave the house and roam around freely on her own or can only do so with a local companion. Mistrust and the supposition that one is a spy may hinder conversation. Questionnaires might not be answered, with a statement such as "people are not guinea pigs." Proper learning of the local language (I took an intensive course in Maranao for three months) is also hampered by these barriers. After a number of approaches, the most appropriate method – in addition to living in Lanao for one year (2007-2008) and thus being part of informal and formal discussions and events, which were further debated and explained by several key informants – turned out to be semi-structured interviews with representatives. Interviews, particularly with royal titleholders, were conducted either in English (one of the two official languages of the Philippines, the other being Filipino) or in Maranao and were translated as needed by a research assistant. Titleholders proved to be appropriate interviewees, not only because they are in charge of publicly representing their own lineage, but also because they are generally more open to governmental and (Western) foreign approaches to establishing social, economic, or political relations. The role of people in positions of authority and key informants was crucial for my entrance into a rather closed society. Through Professor Jamail Kamlian, my host in Iligan, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with the chancellor of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of

Technology (MSU-IIT). Professor Marcelo Salazar, who accepted me as a research fellow, provided me with transportation and access to the library and, most importantly, referred me to MSU President Ricardo de Leon in Marawi City. He promised security on the campus during my stay. Monalinda Doro, a Maranao student of Anthropology and Sociology and a language teacher for foreign NGOs, turned out to be my entrance ticket into a society which is in large part based on family relationships. Monalinda's genealogy was traced as a way of finding common relatives of the interview partners, which then facilitated interaction. With her help I came to know some of the MSU Royalties and specifically its women's sector. The MSU Royalties president invited me to stay with the group, which initiated a small conference on the sultanate, followed by a focused group discussion on the role of the *bai a labi*. Monalinda also introduced me to Abdul Hamidullah Atar, head of the NGO Rido, Inc., who invited me frequently to events, provided me with information concerning clan structures, and introduced me to interview partners from the Marawi sultanate. Finally, accidental meetings with other persons, including the key informants Amer Rashid Mindalano and Datu Norodin Alonto Lucman (author and historian from the influential Alonto family), opened doors to local clan arrangements and brought access not only to female politicians, but also to the religious sector.

During my first, two-month, stay in Mindanao in 2005, I mainly conducted interviews with local women's NGOs such as Maradeca and Al-Mujadilah. During my second stay, from 2007-2008 in Lanao, I undertook 73 semi-structured interviews, averaging about two hours, mainly with male and female titleholders. I spoke with some of the interviewees more than once. Additionally, I interviewed female politicians and religious and non-religious women leaders. Another important source of information was the library at MSU Marawi and the Dansalan Research Center, which are stocked with books that are locally published and not usually available in German libraries. Finally, newspaper articles about the Mindanao conflict, mainly from MindaNews, which were in large part written by Carolyn Arguillas, a journalist and women's activist having observer status at the peace negotiations, were collected for one year (2008-2009), providing, besides general background on the issue, the basis for an analysis of this specific outbreak of violence.

Chapter One: Between War and Peace

Introduction

This chapter follows the idea that, like conflict and war, peace should be viewed as a process and not as “the norm” (see Richards 2005: 12). Cultural descriptions tend to ignore or downplay violence as a non-normative situation. However, recent anthropological studies of war focus on a conflicting environment (Avruch 2001; Elwert 1999, 2004; Klute 2004; Richards 2005; Schmidt 1999; Schmidt/Schröder 2001)¹¹ in order to understand violence and conflict as part of social and cultural dynamic. In this thesis this approach is theoretically framed in the context of a “no war, no peace” environment. In the case of the Mindanao situation, this framework of analysis is preferable to the definition of Mindanao as a “conflict area” in the context of a general description focusing primarily on the national conflict. Likewise, in this thesis I argue against the more specific but limited and biased concept of ethno-religious conflict. The approach used here encompasses the development of war and peace alike, reaching a more precise picture of how both are constructed. Times of non-war have predominated in the area for several years without, however, positive peace having been attained; it is this environment that is defined as one of “no war, no peace.”

The “no war, no peace” concept has been applied in several peace and conflict studies to describe a specific environment. For Dijkzeul (2008), it indicates a society in which an outbreak of violent conflict, fostered by public and private institutions, is possible at any time. MacGinty (2006, 2007) refers to a situation following a peace agreement, like in Northern Ireland, or during peace negotiations, such as have been held frequently since the 1970s in Mindanao. There are situations in which a ceasefire or official peace is implemented following an (unsatisfying) peace agreement, while structures of conflict, such as mistrust between specific groups remain. Richards (2005) applies the concept of conflict situations in the framework of an anthropological approach. He defines war and peace as interwoven processes carried out by social agents. These agents can nurture conflict in a non-violent framework, for example by pursuing political ends. Violence and war are hence not to be treated as separated entities, as non-violent environments are not necessarily connected with peace. Richards nevertheless does not provide a concrete

¹¹ Avruch (2001) argues that the human rights movement played a helpful role in the formulation of an agenda for new ethnographies of violence and conflict in anthropology. However, the human rights movement changed its approach after the Cold War, focusing more on small-scale conflicts and local, traditional approaches to resolving these conflicts (Klute 2004).

definition of a “no war, no peace” environment, but rather blurs the concepts of peace and war in order to focus on social actors and the development of war situations out of specific contexts.

While using an analysis of the “no war, no peace” environment that follows Dijkzeul and MacGinty, I have at the same time applied an anthropological framework in focusing on social actors and their involvement into the creation of war and peace. In the Mindanao context, I use the concept to refer to periods of ceasefire and non-war that are not exactly ones of non-violence. I consider the formation of peace and war in this situation of “in between,” taking into account local, national, and international settings and their interconnections.

Following an introduction to the area with a special focus on Lanao del Sur and its capital Marawi City, the development of the Mindanao conflict and the “no war, no peace” environment are described. The latter is considered in detail with regard to zones of peace and markets of violence¹² (see Elwert 2004) and also in connection to the outbreak of war in 2008. Peace talks, I argue, stabilize a situation of “in between” war and peace through being institutionalized in specific panels and places, involving selected individuals in order to find a solution to the conflict. They have been held for several years now without being able to provide a positive peace or prevent war, and they can prolong the situation of in between.

Whereas on the national level violent conflicts in the framework of the rebellion have had a destabilizing effect on Philippine society, they have the opposite effect in the form of family feuds (*ridos*) on the local level. In their frequency, the latter constitute a local example of a “no war, no peace” environment among different families, that strengthen family and clan solidarity and the *datu* system. *Ridos* are exacerbated by “criminal governance” (Kreuzer 2009) in the Philippines, and the Mindanao conflict. The resolution of family feuds came to national and international attention with the supposition that this would be a key to peace and order in Mindanao. Against this supposition, this dissertation argues that family feuds are a traditional form of local conflict-solving and that merely solving them allows the persistence of the national conflict, as well as the Mafia-like Filipino political structures which are the most important causes of the devastation in the region.

¹² Markets of violence can develop in areas of conflict. They involve efforts to derive profit from the conflict situation, for instance kidnappings.

I. Mindanaoan Society and the History of the Conflict

A. Political Divisions and Social Framework

1. Mindanao

Mindanao,¹³ with 120,800 km², is the second largest island in the Philippines, home to about one-fourth of the Filipino Population. The area is divided into six administrative regions: Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX), Northern Mindanao (Region X), Davao (Region XI), South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City (SOCCSKSARGEN or Region XII), Caraga and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The regions were reorganized on 19 September 2001 by the Arroyo government after a plebiscite on the inclusion of provinces and cities into the ARMM. The autonomous region consists of a land area of 12,288 km², which constitutes about 10% of the total Mindanao land area (PRB 2008). It includes three provinces in the Sulu Archipelago, namely Basilan (except Isabela City), Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, and two provinces on the Mindanao island, namely Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.¹⁴ Its capital is Cotabato City, which belongs not to the ARMM but to the SOCCSKSARGEN Region. Populationwise the autonomous region is home to 15% of the Mindanao population (NSO 2008).

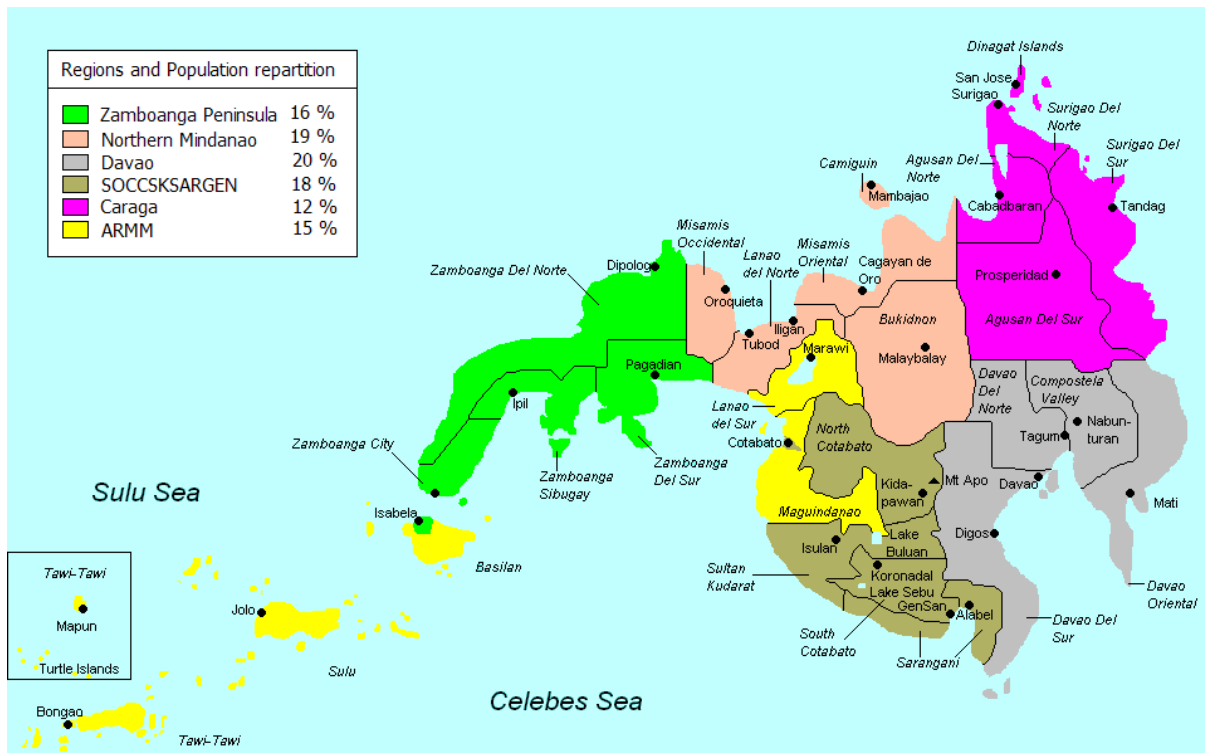
The Muslim autonomous region was created under the government of President Corazon “Cory” Aquino. A new constitution was ratified in 1987 that included under Article 10 the creation of autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras. In accordance with Section 18 of the Constitution, Republic Act (RA) No. 6734 provided for the basic structures of the autonomous government and required that a plebiscite be held in thirteen provinces and nine¹⁵ cities in the Muslim region based on the area-demands of the Tripoli Agreement. Aquino signed it

¹³ Mindanao derives from the root word *danao* which means “inundation by a river, lake or sea. The derivative *mindanao* means *inundation* or *that which is inundated*” (Saleeby 1976: 4).

¹⁴ There was an additional province belonging to the ARMM, Shariff Kabunsuan, which was carved out of Maguindanao on 28 August 2006 (Art. 6, Sec. 19 of RA (Republic Act) No. 9054) by the ARMM Regional Assembly, on the basis of Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act No. 201. On 29 October 2006 the province's creation was ratified in a plebiscite held in Maguindanao. But on 17 July 2008 the Supreme Court declared Article 6, Section 19 of RA No. 9054 unconstitutional insofar as it grants to the Regional Assembly of the ARMM “the power to create provinces and cities” Consequently, it “declare[d] void Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act No. 201 creating the Province of Shariff Kabunsuan” (Supreme Court, 16 July 2008).

¹⁵ In the Tripoli Agreement, signed by the Marcos government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLFF) in 1976, the following areas were chosen for possible inclusion in a Muslim homeland: Basilan, Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Palawan, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur, and the cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian, Puerto Princesa, and Zamboanga. In 1992, Sarangani split from South Cotabato and became an independent province.

into law on 1 August 1989. After the plebiscite only four provinces (Lanao del Sur, except Marawi City; Maguindanao, except Cotabato City; Tawi-Tawi, and Sulu) joined the ARMM. In a new plebiscite in 2001, the province of Basilan (except Isabela City) and Marawi City joined the ARMM.



Map 1: Map of Mindanao Regions

Showing the reorganization of the Administrative Regions following Executive Order 36, Issued 19 September, 2001. The six regions in Mindanao were rearranged as a consequence of a plebiscite on the inclusion of areas into the ARMM. Handmade map by the author. Proportions do not entirely correspond with reality.

Today the region is home to two cities, Marawi City (Lanao del Sur) and Lamitan City (Basilan), 113 municipalities and 2,470 *barangays* (villages or communities, the smallest administrative units in the Philippines). Even though it has only the second largest population in the ARMM after Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur is the province with the most municipalities (39), followed by Maguindanao (33), Sulu (19), Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi (11). The local media see the creation of municipalities as one strategy of strengthening the political influence of clans. In Maguindanao, for example, 15 new municipalities were created between 2001 and 2009, under the rule of patriarch and former provincial Governor Andal Ampatuan Senior. Mayors belonging to the Ampatuan family ruled six of the new municipalities (Tiongson-Mayrina 2010b). The

addition of municipalities can thus serve to accommodate relatives but also to solve disputes among rival politicians. Similar reasons might be found for the creation of *barangays*, in which Lanao del Sur again ranks first, with 1,158. It is followed by Maguindanao (489), Sulu (410), Basilan (210), and Tawi-Tawi (203) (NSCB 2007).

The autonomous region is headed by a governor and a vice-governor as well as assemblymen and women, who are elected in special ARMM elections every three years (the last elections took place in 2008). The provincial and municipal elections on the other hand are held as part of the national elections, similarly following a three-year rhythm (the last elections were held in 2010). After the Maguindanao or Ampatuan Massacre¹⁶ on 23 November 2009 the ARMM governor, Maguindanao Muslim Zaldy Ampatuan, was expelled from the Lakas-Kampikam (Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino-Christian Muslim Democrats) political party for his alleged role in it and arrested on charges of rebellion. The Vice-Governor and Maranao Muslim Ansaruddin-Abdulmalik “Hooky” Alonto Adiong became ARMM Acting Governor on 14 December 2009. On 7 July 2010 Reggie Sahali-Generale, the daughter of Tawi-Tawi Governor Sadikul Sahali, became the first ARMM female (acting) Vice-Governor.

Lanao del Sur was carved out of Lanao province in 1959, dividing the former province roughly along ethnic and religious lines. The province has a total land area of 13,574 km². Geographically, Lake Sultan Alonto (more commonly known as Lake Lanao)¹⁷, lies on a plateau in North Central Mindanao. The plateau is surrounded by the Pulangi Lowlands in the neighboring province of Bukidnon in the east and by the Butig Mountain Range and Mount Piapayungan in the southeast, providing a natural barrier to the provinces of Maguindanao and Cotabato. The plateau loses elevation towards the southwest and north where it meets with the sea at Iliana Bay (Lanao del Sur) and Iligan Bay (Lanao del Norte).

Lake Lanao lies about 734 m above sea level (other sources write 702) and is of tectonic-volcanic origin. With 375 m², it is the second largest and with a depth of 112 m the deepest lake in the Philippines (Frey 1969). It is fed by four bigger rivers coming from the east and several smaller ones around the lake but it has only one outlet, the Agus River to the north of the lake (Wahl 1976). It flows into Iligan Bay in Lanao del Norte through two waterfalls, the Maria

¹⁶ The Maguindanao Massacre involved the murder of about 58 people. Members of the Ampatuan family are accused of masterminding the killings as part of a conflict over political positions in Maguindanao with a rival clan, the Magundadatus. The massacre is discussed fully in the following section.

¹⁷ Though the lake was renamed Lake Sultan Alonto, this name is not often used. The name Lanao derives from the Maranao word *ranao*, which means lake.

Cristina Falls and the Linamon Falls. Four provinces surround Lanao del Sur: Lanao del Norte in the northwest, Bukidnon in the east, Maguindanao and Cotabato in the south. It is bordered by Illana Bay to the southwest. Rolling hills and volcanoes mark the landscape. Its land area is mainly classified as forest and is further divided into production forest and agricultural land (2,540 km²), and alienable and disposable land, which include production areas, protection areas, and built-up areas (1,331 km²).

The climate of Lanao del Sur changes with the altitude. The mean temperature is 21 degrees Celsius. The hottest time is from March to June and the coldest from November to January (Madale 1997: 10). The Islamic City of Marawi, lying on the northern shores of the lake, is famous for its cool temperatures, since it is located about 700 m above sea level. The lowest temperature recorded is 12 degrees Celsius. Marawi lies outside the typhoon belt area and its annual rainfall is 2,826 mm (City Planning and Development Office 2002).



Map 2: Map of Lanao del Sur

Handmade map by the author based on City Planning and Development Office, City Hall Building, Pada-o, Iligan City. Proportions do not entirely correspond with reality.

The current Lanao del Sur governor (2007-2013) is Mamintal “Bombit” Alonto Adiong, Jr., the elder brother of “Hooky” Alonto Adiong. Both are descendants of the Sultan of Ragain, among the royal houses dominating the Lanao area before the arrival of American colonial forces at the end of the nineteenth century. Lanao del Sur’s capital and only city is the Islamic City of Marawi.¹⁸ Marawi is known as the cultural, administrative, and political heart of the province. Before Marawi was named as such, it was called Dansalan (meaning place of destination). Dansalan was officially created as a municipality on 27 May 1907 under the Moro Province Administration, with the American citizen Jesse Gaston as its first President. On 19 August 1940, Dansalan became a city and the capital of the Lanao Province. Its inauguration as capital took place on 30 September 1950. On 16 June 1956, Senator Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto changed the name Dansalan to Marawi. The change was in honor of the Marawi Sultanate Confederation¹⁹. On 5 April 1980, the city was renamed the Islamic City of Marawi²⁰. The addition of a religious identity to the name of the city was justified by the fact that at least 92% of its population was Muslim (City Planning and Development Office 2002). Some Marawi residents remarked that the re-naming of Marawi City as the Islamic City of Marawi was part of a campaign of President Ferdinand Marcos to appease local Muslims. The Islamic Brotherhood²¹ complained that the city did not deserve this name since corruption, kidnapping, slavery, and drug dealing dominated it.

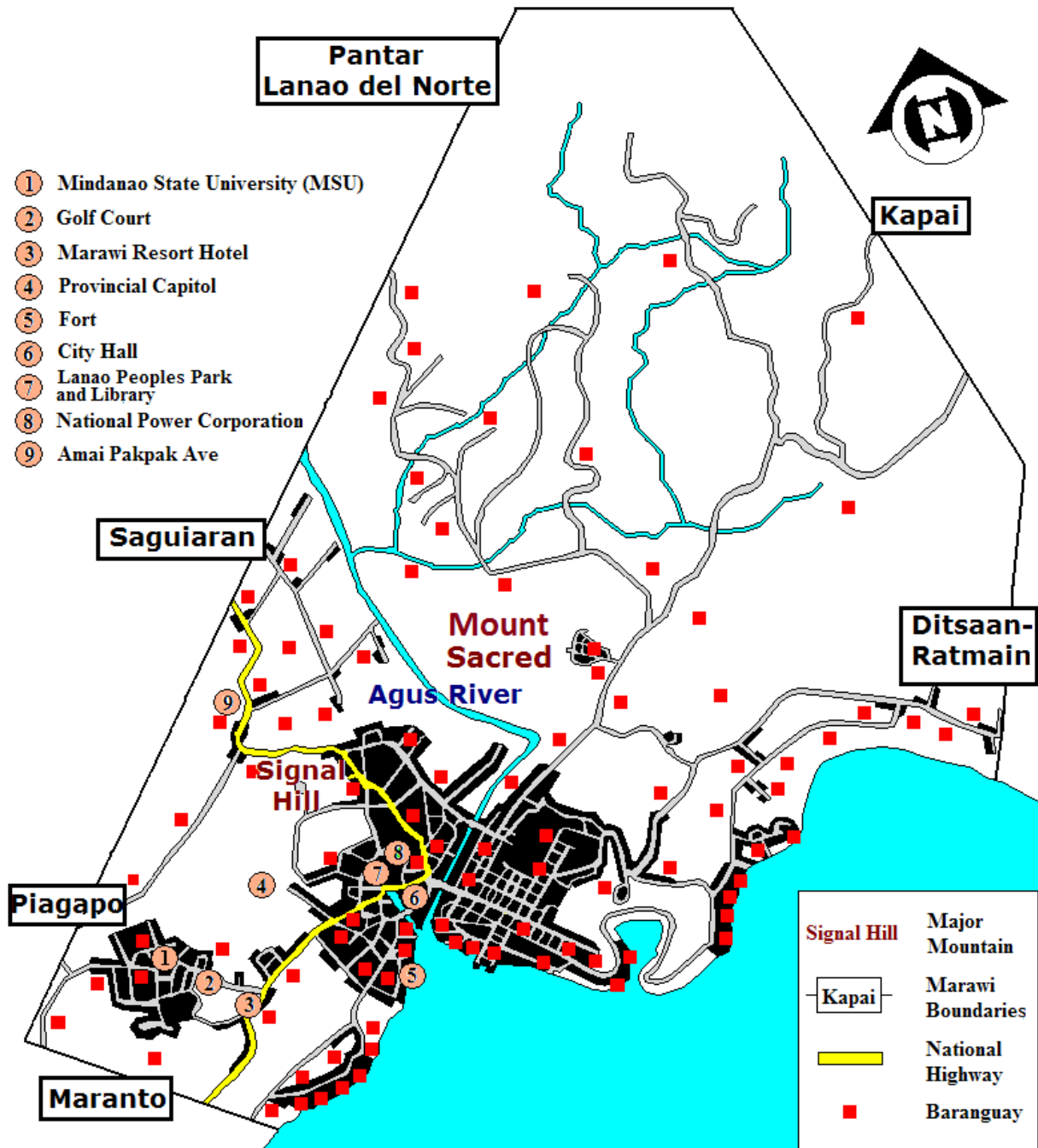
Marawi’s land area consists of about 87 km². The municipalities of Bubong, Ditsaan-Ragain, and Kapai surround the capital of Lanao del Sur. The concrete highway surrounding Lake Lanao connects Marawi City with major places in Lanao del Sur as well as with other Mindanao provinces. A 78 km national highway goes from Marawi south to Malabang. From there, it is 35 km further to Poloc Harbor in Maguindanao and 22 km to Cotabato City, likewise in Maguindanao. The highly urbanized and predominantly Christian Iligan City in Lanao del Norte is the closest town to Marawi, accessible through a 36 km national highway. Finally, the nearest airport in Cagayan de Oro (Misamis Oriental) is located 137 km from Iligan City, easily connected by a concrete highway (City Planning and Development Office 2002).

¹⁸ Its name comes from the word *rawi*, which refers to the reclining lilies in the Agus River, around whose source at Lake Lanao Marawi is built.

¹⁹ Those are all sultanates belonging to Marawi. Today they claim to be one of the biggest and best organized in Lanao del Sur.

²⁰ The change was initiated through City Council Resolution No. 19-A during the mayoralty of attorney Sultan Omar Dianalan.

²¹ A Muslim alliance in Lanao of about 1,000 people, which among other things campaigns for the restoration of capital punishment for serious offenses.



Map 3: Map of Marawi

Source: GIC, City Planning and Development Office, City Hall Building, Pada-o, Iligan City.

Marawi City has the smallest population among the 16 “highly urbanized” cities in the Philippines.²² Its population is young, with a median age of 18. Most households classified themselves as Maranaos (96%)²³ in the 2000 census, making 12% of the total Maranao

²² It had a population of 177,391 in 2007.

²³ Other ethnic groups are non-Muslims, including the Bisaya/Binisaya (1.3%), Cebuano (1%), Tagalog (0.3%), and

population in the Philippines. The Maranao population in Marawi City grew more than seven times between 1948 and 2000, from about 17,000 to 130,000. The Christian population increased in number but decreased in percentage of the population in the same period. In 1948, it was about 16%, growing in the 1950s to about 18% due to migration from the north of the Philippines, but it declined after the outbreak of the Mindanao conflict to 3% in 2000.²⁴

Marawi City has 96 *barangays*; some of them comprise former *agamas*. An *agama* is a community settlement originally composed of relatives/clan(s) living around a mosque. When it has a mosque, it might constitute a sultanate. The *barangay* system was superimposed on the *agama* system but did not entirely dissolve the former, *agama*-organization. Calls to prayer can be heard in Marawi City five times a day. Since almost every *agama* has its own mosque and *muezzin*, which do not call in unison, the calling takes a relative long time; when one has finished another one is still calling. The local radio station stops its program, which includes heavy metal music, local music, and inspirational talk, religious and otherwise (for example, by supporters of the rebellion during the “all-out war”) for the *muezzin*. The Friday prayers are sometimes transmitted via loudspeakers, and thus can be heard outside of the mosque.

The karaoke bars otherwise very common in the Philippines cannot be found in Marawi – only in some restaurants can one sing karaoke –, nor are there discos or movie theaters. Serving of alcohol in public has been forbidden since the Islamic resurgence movement. Aside from the huge number of stray dogs, the nights are usually quiet except in times of red alert or the threat of a new outbreak of the conflict, when gunshots can be heard. Sometimes private karaoke afternoons take place. These events can be mixed in gender. Gender-segregated or mixed groups meet to dance, talk, or celebrate a certain event. Men are advised not to stay after sunset at the house of a woman or family unless they are related or were specifically invited. Women are advised not to roam around, especially without a chaperon.

The colorful jeepneys,²⁵ many of which display Islamic inspirational messages, are not necessarily gender segregated, nor are government offices or the public schools. Some meetings and celebrations, like weddings, are gender segregated, as are the *madrasah* schools at the secondary level. Most women wear a colorful or white *kumbung* (veil). Young women mainly

Hiligaynon/Ilonggo (0.1%).

²⁴ There were 2,643 Christians in Marawi City in 1948. In 1958 Marawi City had 22,913 inhabitants, of which 18,716 were Muslim (81%) and 4,177 were Christian (18%). There were approximately 3,712 Christians in 2000 (3%) (cf. Saber and Tamano 1985/6: 30, 101; NSO 2002d).

²⁵ Jeepneys are small buses. Originating as jeeps that were left behind by the U.S. Army, they were transformed by Filipinos into colorful vehicles of public transportation.

wear a simple piece of textile on the head. It is sometimes tucked behind the ears, or the ends might hang loosely to the ground, which renders the hair partly visible. The use of a white *kumbung* can already be seen in pictures from the 1950s, when it was mainly worn by women who had made the *hadj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Traditionally, women would braid their hair artistically but would not necessarily cover it.

In the 1970s, the hijab was widely introduced in Lanao del Sur. Today young girls might carry their *kumbung* on their shoulders, wearing it only when needed, matching it with tight jeans and t-shirts; some also do not wear a veil at all, even though veiling is required in Marawi City. Other women wear a veil that covers their hair, together with a rather loose blouse, and loose pants, or, for elder women, a colorful *malong* (a textile formed like a tube that can be worn by men and women to cover their whole body or only the lower part as a skirt). The veil sometimes consists of colorful textiles bound like a turban, which can particularly be seen on royal women, and it is sometimes white or black. Both young and older women, some of whom belong to the Tabligh²⁶ movement, sometimes wear cloth to observe *pardah* rules (the segregation of the sexes), thus a garment covering both face and body.

Before the arrival of the Americans, men from the nobility sometimes used a *tobaw*, an artistically folded textile, to cover their heads, along with a *malong* (Amairadia 1980: 46). Pictures from the early twentieth century show that the *fez* was popular. Today different forms of the Indonesian *kopia* (cap) are worn, especially by those connected to the sultanate. When one has done the *hadj*, is a member of the Tabligh, or considers himself pious, headgear signifying religious belonging may be worn. Some religious men and members of the Tabligh prefer the Pakistani dress with loose pants and a long-sleeved shirt that extends to one's knees, and they sometimes wear a white skullcap or the *sahal* (scarf) used by Arabs (Madale 1997: 107). Some traditional men still wear the *malong* at home but the majority cannot be distinguished by their dress from the larger Filipino population.

²⁶ The Tablighi Jamaat is a transnational movement to spread and revive the Islamic faith.



Picture 1: Man Courting Maranao Girls

From about 1930. The women wear the *malong* and the traditional Maranao hair-style. In the background a man wearing a *fez* can be seen. Photo provided by Norodin Alonto Lucman.



Picture 2: Royal Women at a *Pagana Maranao*

Royal women clothed in the *malong* and colorful blouses and veils at a *pagana Maranao*, a traditional celebration to welcome or entertain guests. Photo taken by the author, 2007.



Picture 3: Everyday Life at the Market

Maranao women and men selling goods in Marawi. Photo taken by the author, Marawi City, 2007.

In the market, women as well as men buy and sell products. Along the lake, children swim or people do laundry. In remote areas around the lake, people have to row to the middle of the lake to fetch water (Zurk 2007).²⁷ Since most women cannot swim, this can be a dangerous task. During the day, the streets of Marawi are filled with cars, jeepneys, tricycles, and men and women alike. Women usually do not drive cars but have drivers or use public transportation. It can happen that certain streets are blocked by checkpoints held by a family or clan in order to control the entrance of people into a certain quarter of the city because of an ongoing family feud. During elections, or when there is a coronation, a caravan of cars cruises the streets. Since cars are status symbols they can be fancy and some of them employ a special horn-signal that sounds like an alarm in order to be able to drive faster. In the neighboring Christian city of Iligan, drivers using fancy sound and driving fast are pointed out as Maranao. Everywhere in Marawi are streamers that praise a kinship member or a politician for his or her personal achievements. Locals say that these streamers replace the newspapers since everything of importance is written on them. In a status- and kinship-oriented lineage society, the appreciation of relatives in public, of either gender, is thus institutionalized.

²⁷ In the ARMM for the year 2000, only 34% of the families had access to potable water and 47% had access to sanitary toilet facilities. One-third of the households in ARMM used open pit toilet facilities (NSO 2003). There is no information available on Marawi City.

According to its City Planning Office, Marawi City holds only small-scale industry, the majority of it wholesale, retail, transportation, communication, and storage. There are also community, social, and personal services – as well as manufacturing (like brassware ornaments). A small percentage of the ARMM population works abroad.²⁸ The majority of Maranaos (75%) are farmers (Bamgbose 2003: 57). More of the area belonging to Marawi City is used for agriculture (3,383 ha, or 39%) than for commercial (4%) or institutional (7%) purposes (City Planning and Development Office. 2002). Corn and palay (*rice plant*) are the two main crops grown in the Marawi City area. Others are coffee, ginger, and various fruits. Poultry production is limited to small-scale and local consumption. Fish farming is not developed, which the City Planning Office explains as due to lack of experience and know-how. Tourism became more important for the local government when the peace and order situation “improved dramatically” after the 2000 “all-out war”. An Information Sheet on Marawi City from 2002 promotes Marawi City as the summer capital of Lanao del Sur, and remarks that it is “generally a very peaceful place to visit”.

One major state employer is Mindanao State University (MSU), located in the west of the city. Its complex comprises student dormitories where Muslim and non-Muslim students live together. Christian religious gatherings can be seen on campus during the weekend and the campus holds several mosques. It also has various restaurants, a bank, and a hostel. The Marawi Resort Hotel is just beside the campus and hosts major events and guests. The MSU and the Basman Sports complexes are the two major sports centers in Marawi City. MSU has a nine-hole golf course, swimming pools, and tennis and pelota courts. Muslim and Christian women as well as men practice golf, badminton, and jogging, and can be seen walking around the sports field in the morning before sunrise. In addition, traditional sports are sometimes played, for example, *kasipa*, where teams kick and hold a *sipa*, a ball-like contraption made of rattan (Madale 1996: 21).

There are jeepneys, buses, and taxis going back and forth from Marawi City to Iligan City. They have to pass several checkpoints,²⁹ most of the time vacant but operated when there is an alert. They have to master sloping serpentine curves on Amai Pakpak Avenue, from Iligan City on the shore of Iligan Bay to Marawi City, lying on a plateau on the shore of Lake Lanao. Non-

²⁸ In the ARMM in 2009, about 2.4% of the population were Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), the majority of them women (NSO 2009).

²⁹ In Marawi City, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Camp Ranao can be found in *barangay* Datu Saber. Under the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF)-Balikatan U.S. military facility is also part of this camp.

Muslim students and faculty at MSU Marawi use these transports frequently. Although there are few non-Muslim citizens in Marawi City, MSU employs a high number of non-Muslims and has slightly more non-Muslim than Muslim students. There are limited economic possibilities in Marawi City. Additionally, there is much prejudice against and mistrust of the people of Marawi City on the part of Christian inhabitants of Iligan City; one of the major fears is of being kidnapped. The official homepage of the ARMM even warns those who would like to visit the city, “It might be advisable for the foreign traveler to get help from a Maranao friend or from the Provincial Information Office.” A 2002 survey showed that the mutual mistrust between Christians and Muslims “lies largely on the Christian side” (Rood 2005: 23). The author points out that Muslims in the Philippines, due to their minority situation, initiate interactions with Christians more frequently than Christians with Muslims.

Saber and Tamano (1985-86) write that in 1948 roughly equal numbers of Muslims and Christians cross-penetrated into each other’s communities, and thus the number of Maranaos living in Iligan City and of Christians living in Marawi City were relatively the same (p. 30). But while the Christian population in Marawi shrank after the Mindanao conflict, the number of Maranaos in Iligan City grew eightfold, from 2,338 in 1948 to 18,757 in 2000 constituting approximately 7% of the population (NSO 2002e). Some Maranaos challenge these numbers, arguing that the count of Maranao residents in Iligan City was based on the number of registered voters. Since many Maranaos live in Iligan City but vote in the ARMM, they are not included as Iligan City residents. The population of Maranaos in Iligan is thus even higher. Marawi and Lanao del Sur remain relative ethnically isolated, with a predominantly Maranao population. The Mindanao conflict caused the ethnic distribution to revert to that of pre-American times, with an almost total domination of the lake area by Maranaos.

The Maranao language, which is predominantly used among Maranaos, derives from the Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, southern Philippines, Danao, Maranao-Iranon language family (Gordon 2005). It has some influences from Sanskrit, Arabic, English and local languages, which include influences from Spanish. For example, some Maranaos, like their Cebuano neighbors, give the time in Spanish. Maranao is closely related to the Maguindanao dialect; both are versions of the Iranon group of languages. Today, not every Maranao³⁰ speaks the native language. Some children in Iligan City grow up learning Cebuano, English, and Tagalog instead. The exact number of those using the dialect is unknown. The latest official number concerning

³⁰ Maranao derives from the expression *taw sa ranaw*, which means “people of the lake.”

the whole Philippines dates back to 1995, when 1.27% of the population (871,430) used the Maranao dialect (Gonzalez 1998). Besides Maranao, those having a general education also speak English and Tagalog since these are the official languages of instruction at public schools. There are also Arabic speaking and writing people. Approximately 14% of the Mindanao student population attend the *madrrasah*, the Islamic school (International Religious Freedom Report 2008). Furthermore, a certain number of scholars study in Arab countries.

Before the introduction of the national school system, Maranaos learned the Arabic instead of the Latin alphabet. The old versions of the *salsila* (genealogy) were written in the Maranao language spelled with Arabic letters, or in “old Malay” referring to the Jawi script, Arabic letters that are used to write the Malay language (Che Man 1990: 15). Since public schools teach in English and Tagalog, the Maranao language is rarely used for writing. Very little literature exists in this language and there is no consensus about how words are written. Taking the word Maranao, for instance, one can find several spellings. “Maranao” is mainly used by English speaking scholars who are not used to the pronunciation of the guttural sound /e/ in “Meranao.” Some local authors prefer writing “Meranao,” “Məranaw,” or “M'ranao” (Disoma 1999), which come closer to the pronunciation. In some local writings, the /o/ at the end of the word is replaced by a /w/ (Maranaw), which probably goes back to a transcription of the Arabic alphabet. Howard P. McKaughan and Batua Al-Macaraya, authors of *A Maranao Dictionary* (1996), suggest that for the sake of uniformity of spelling, “Meranao” should be used; this version is also popular in local Maranao newspapers.³¹ In conformity with most of the academic literature, “Maranao” is used in this dissertation.

a. Religious and Ethnic Distribution

Islam came to the Philippines via merchants and later on missionaries from the tenth century onwards. Four centuries later, the religion was widely accepted among Maranaos. Sultanates were established in Sulu, Maguindanao and Lanao in the southern Philippines as well as in today's Manila region (see Majul 1999: 76). Whereas Spanish colonial forces overthrew the *rajas* (derived from a Sanskrit word meaning monarch) in Luzon, they never entirely subdued Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Only the American colonial forces did so at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Yegar 2002). According to the census of 1903, the Mindanao population was about 327,741, 250,000 (76%) of whom were Muslims (Yegar 2002: 246). Other

³¹ Information provided by Monalinda Doro.

numbers have been reported for this period, varying but generally stating a Muslim majority (Rasul 2003a: 127). In 1975, the Muslim population had grown to about 1,798,911, but constituting only 20% of the total population of Mindanao (Rasul 2003a: 127; Yegar 2002: 249). The Christian population had increased considerably through the introduction of a land title system and settlement programs that were initiated by American colonial administrations and continued up to the Marcos government (1965-1986) (Kreuzer 2003; Werning 1983: 47, 56; Yegar 2002: 224, 232). Muslims and Christians filed several court cases in land conflicts in the 1960s, the former relying on their ancient rights and the latter on legal documents. The cases were generally decided in favor of the settlers, who were “more adept in bribing corrupt officials” (Yegar 2002: 249). Consequently, the government was seen as being in complicity with “land grabbing settlers,” leading to conflicts between Muslim and Christian private armies in the Mindanao region. The looming dissension later led, along with other factors, to the Mindanao conflict (Abubacar 1985; Lucman 2000; Yegar 2002).

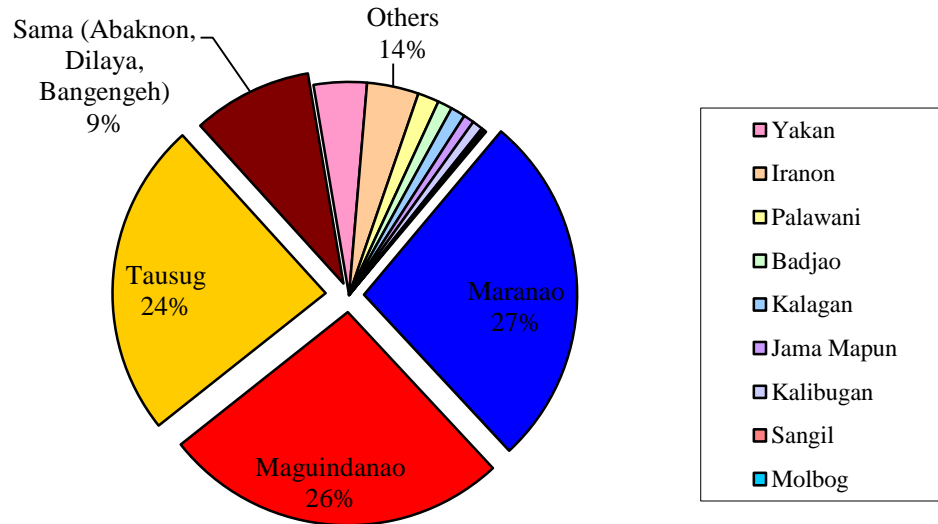
The Mindanao rebellion unified different Muslim ethnic groups in the southern Philippines under the general term “Moros.” Spanish colonial forces originally used this term to denote Filipino Muslims. It derived from the Spanish term, *Moro*, for Muslim Moors from northern Africa who took part in conquering the Iberian peninsula in the eighth century. The common goal of a homeland for the Moros, Bangsamoro, that is pursued by the secular and nationalist rebel group Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) resulted after several years of combat and peace talks, in the creation of the ARMM. However, this did not end the importance of ethnic belonging (Horvatic 2003). Most Moros would define themselves as Muslims, which, among Maranaos is often connected with their ethnicity, thus being Maranao. Intermarriages between Muslims from different ethnic groups and between Muslims and Christians are possible. Nevertheless, the normative marriage partner among Maranaos is a Maranao, especially for women. In Lanao del Sur, the Maranao ethnic group dominates the whole province, ruled by several family dynasties. Many in the ruling elite can trace back their lineage to ancient sultanates in specific places in Lanao del Sur, and marriages, some arranged, often take into account the lineage of the future partner. Marriage outside the ethnic group may thus be connected to a loss of status for the children in case the partner has no equivalent source of status apart from his or her birth. Whereas the importance of ethnic identity is frequently stressed in Muslim groups, rebels criticize the over-emphasis on ethnicity as carrying the risk of division among Moros.

Table 1: Religious Affiliation in the Philippines According to NSO (2002)

Religion	Believers	%	Religion	Believers	%
Roman Catholic	61,862,898	81	Seventh Day Adventist	609,570	1
Muslim	3,862,409	5	United Church of Christ in the Philippines	416,681	1
Evangelical	2,152,786	3			
Iglesia ni Cristo	1,762,845	2	Jehovah's Witnesses	380,059	x
Aglipayan	1,508,662	2	Others	3,776,560	5

The total number of members of Muslim ethnic groups in the Philippines in 2000 was approximately 4 million, about 5% of the predominantly Christian population. In the Philippines there are numerous converts to Islam (Luis Lacar writes that there are about 200,000), having in most cases changed their religion while working in the Middle East or married a Muslim (Angeles 2005; Lacar 2001). The percentage of the population which consists of members of Muslim ethnic groups and that of those following Islam have nonetheless roughly the same. This may be the result either of a strong connection between ethnicity and the Muslim religion or of inaccurate statistics.

In Mindanao, the majority of the household population classifies itself as Cebuano (26%), Bisayan (18%), or Hiligaynon/Ilonggo (8%). These three ethnic groups originate from the Visaya area, having settler ancestry and a non-Muslim background. The largest Mindanao native groups are the Muslim Maguindanaos (6%) and Maranaos (5%). The remaining 37% belong to other ethnic groups. Rodil (2003) writes that there are about 30 indigenous groups, the so-called Lumads, and ten Muslim ethnic groups in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago (2003). Additionally, there are two Muslim ethnic groups in Palawan (the Palawanis and the Molbogs) and the seafaring Badjao, whose people are mostly not Muslim but are still classified as Moros because they live among Moros and what is seen as part of the Sulu sultanate in the Sulu sea (ibid.: 1). Muslim ethnic groups are concentrated in certain areas, partly dominating whole provinces in the ARMM: thus, Lanao del Sur is largely dominated by Maranaos; Maguindanao by Iranons and Maguindanaos; Basilan by Badjaos, Sama Abaknons, Tausugs, and Yakans; Sulu by Sama Abaknons, Sama Dilauts/Badjaos and Tausugs; and Tawi-Tawi by Jama Mapuns, Sama Abaknons, Sama Dilauts/Badjaos, Sama Dilayas, and Tausugs.

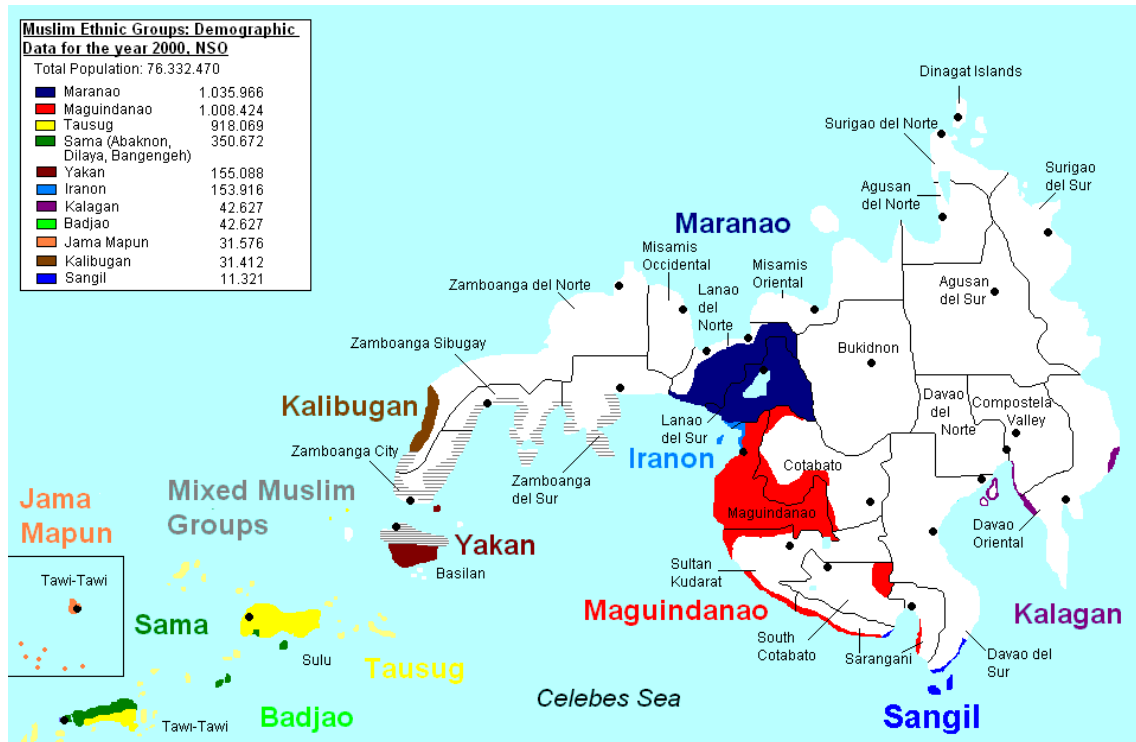


Graphic 1: Muslim Ethnic Groups in the Philippines in 2000

Source: National Statistics Office.

Whereas the majority (61%) in Mindanao are Christians, the opposite is true for the ARMM, where nine out of ten inhabitants are Muslims, followed by Roman Catholics (5%) and the Philippine Episcopal Church (around 1%). The remainder are mostly Evangelicals or members of the indigenous Philippine Christian organization Iglesia ni Cristo (NSO 2003; 2003a).

Apart from Cotabato City, Muslim ethnic groups form a minority in the provinces and cities outside the ARMM. Smaller ethnic groups outside the region include the Kalibugans in Zamboanga del Norte (2% of the whole regional population), the Sangils in Davao del Sur (no data available), the partly Islamized Kalagans in Davao Oriental (3% of the whole regional population), and the partly Islamized Palawanis (8% of the whole regional population) and Molbogs (no data available) in Palawan. More than one-third of the population in Lanao del Norte (36%) are Maranaos; 50% in Cotabato City, 18% in Cotabato, 6% in Sarangani, 4% in South Cotabato, and 2% in Zamboanga del Sur are Maguindanaos; 1% in Zamboanga del Norte are Sama Aboknons or Tausugs; 3% in Zamboanga del Sur are Tausugs; and 7% in Cotabato City are Iranons (NSO 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002f, 2002g). Of the total Mindanao population, 8% of the population are Muslim and do not live in the ARMM, while 12% live in the autonomous region. One of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) aspirations is to include predominantly Muslim villages lying outside the autonomous region in the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity, the area which it seeks to subject to its control.



Map 4: Map of the Highest Concentrations of Muslim Ethnic Groups in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago
Handmade map by the author. Proportions do not entirely correspond to reality. Based on NSO 2000 census; McFarland (1980); Rodil (1993); Wurm and Hattori (1981-1983).

Apart from the numbers provided by the National Statistics Office, it is rather difficult to determine the exact number of persons belonging to Muslim ethnic groups. The Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA), now the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF),³² does not have the ability to conduct a census and the NSO did not differentiate in the recent census (NSO 2007a, 2007b, 2007c) according to religion or ethnic group. This leaves room for speculation on how many Muslims live in the Philippines. Official numbers stick to 5%, referring to the 2000 census (NSO 2003a). Maranao employees of the OMA in Manila estimated in 2008 the number of Muslims in the Philippines to be 12 million. This estimation was based on the argument that the growth rate of the ARMM, at over 5% for 2000-2007, is the highest in the country and furthermore that the census of 2000 under-counted Muslims because of security concerns in conflict regions of the ARMM (Religious Freedom Report 2003). It might be difficult to conduct a census in areas where *ridos* dominate whole villages, or where there are military clashes between rebel groups and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

³² On 18 February 2010, the NCMF Act of 2009, RA No. 9997 approved the creation of the NCMF, which replaced the OMA. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) claimed that the NCMF was one example of “an antidote to the growing consciousness among Moros that they are indeed Moro by nationality” (MILF Central Committee on Information Official Website: luwaran.net).

Table 2: Muslim Population in the Philippines Based on the 2000 Census³³

Area	Total population in 2000	Total number of Muslims ³⁴	Muslims as percentage	Total number of Roman Catholics	Household population of Roman Catholics (%)
Philippines	76,504,077	3,871,106	5	61,998,904	81
Mindanao	18,133,864	3,706,561	20	11,043,523	60
ARMM	2,412,159	2,182,245	90	124,390	5

Note: "Household population" means the de jure population (persons who usually live in household); "Total population" consists of persons who spent the night before the interview in the household.

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing. Volume 1 Demographic and Housing Characteristic, Report N. 2. NSO 2005. In this census, Mindanao comprised about 24% of the Philippines' total population.

According to the 2000 Household Population by Ethnicity, Sex, and Province Census, Maranaos comprise 1.3% (1,035,966) of Filipinos³⁵ with a small female majority. Constituting over a quarter of the population (636,463), Maranaos are the dominant ethnic group in the ARMM (NSO 2003). In Mindanao, they are the second largest Muslim ethnic group, with 979,228 defining themselves as Maranaos. Most are located in Lanao del Sur, where they form 91% of the total population. They also comprise a significant portion of the population in Lanao del Norte where they form the largest ethnic group.³⁶ Of the Maranao population in this province, 11% are located in Iligan City, its capital.

Regarding demographic data on Muslims in the Philippines, one has to keep in mind that the proportion of the population which is Muslim is a political issue. Some Muslim sources thus have a tendency to state the number of Muslims in the country as higher, to underline their demands, whereas the government has a tendency to keep the numbers low to "weaken political demands based on such demographics" (Yegar 2002: 191). Esmael "Toto" Magundadatu, the recently elected Governor of Maguindanao, demanded that the census be done more "professionally," meaning that its enumerators should go directly to the households and not rely on what *barangay* officials say, since the data of the 2000-2007 census are "suspicious."

³³ National Statistics Office, 2005.

³⁴ No official data is available.

³⁵ The three largest Muslim ethnic groups in the Philippines are the Maranaos, the Maguindanaos (1,008,424), and the Tausugs (918,069). Of the total Filipino population, Maranaos and Maguindanaos comprise about 1.3% respectively and Tausugs about 1.2%. All the others comprise less than one percent.

³⁶ A third of the population in Lanao del Norte is Cebuano and 27% are Bisayas/Binisayas. Other ethnic groups include the Boholanos (1.4%), Kankanaïs/Kankaneys/Kankanaeys (0.15%), and Ilocanos (0.12%).

(Notably, the birth rate has declined everywhere in the Philippines except in the ARMM.) Further, NSO officials have claimed that powerful local leaders are keen to see the population soar in order to seek bigger revenue allotments. The chief of the NSO office admitted that numbers in the ARMM were subject to internal evaluations by the NSO. Mentioned were cases where data included a growth rate of 10% each year since 2000. The head of the NSO commented: “The initial results were much worse but we had no way of going back and verifying for ourselves because of security concerns” (Arguillas 2010b). One suggested solution to this problem would be the introduction of a national identity card, so that national censuses would not be necessary anymore (Lucman 2008). Until then problems with statistics have to be taken into considerations and numbers not taken for granted. They nevertheless can serve to provide a rough orientation.

b. Economy

In 2002, Mindanao had about 33% of the country’s total agriculture, fishery, and forestry (AFF), making it one of the top producers in the Philippines (NSCB 2003, 2005).³⁷ The island provides 90% of the country’s timber, 63% of its nickel, and 48% of its gold. It also dominates the production of rubber. Mindanao is the Philippines’ main producer of coffee, coconuts, balinghoy, cassava, and corn. In the Muslim regions (including Lanao del Sur) top producers of balinghoy, cassava, and corn are found (NSCB 2005). Mindanao is frequently referred to as the rice bowl of the Philippines, since it is rich in natural resources, the Muslim regions included.³⁸ Despite its wealth in natural resources, the Muslim area has the highest rate of poverty in the country (NSCB 2008, 2008a, 2006). Besides the negative effects of the conflict on the economic development of the region, the high poverty rate can also be explained by the “transfer of wealth from the southern regions to the nucleus of economic and political power”, which means Manila (Tadem 1992: 8).

The hydroelectric power plants in Lanao del Sur were built by the National Power Corporation (NPC) and constitute a significant example of the transfer of wealth from the province to Manila and of its consequences for the local population. NPC established six of them

³⁷ About 99% of the country’s durian, mangosteen and marang, 90% of its *lanzones*, 87% of its pineapple, 76% of its bananas, 54% of its papayas, 52% of its pomelo, 51% of its langka is produced in Mindanao.

³⁸ The autonomous region has rich natural resources and several international enterprises, such as Unifrutti Chiquita, which is 50% US-owned operate there. In 1997, Ultrex and Chiquita Unifrutti signed a 20-year contract with La Frutera Inc., the largest banana plantation in the ARMM. Chiquita Unifrutti buys La Frutera’s bananas and exports them abroad, marketing them under the Chiquita and Unifrutti brands. Recently Unifrutti-Chiquita made a multimillion-peso investment in Wao, Lanao del Sur exporting pineapples from a 1,000 ha plantation to Japan, Korea and the Middle East.

along the Agus River, where they provide 80% of Mindanao's energy. Two of them are located in Lanao del Sur. In 2006, the NPC had a net income of PHP 90 billion (NPC 2006). The income of the NPC from the power plants in Lanao del Sur can be counted in the billions. Insider sources who want to remain anonymous say it is about PHP 12 billion a year. The NPC Annual Report 2006 states that one centavo per kilowatt-hour from electricity sales must be given to local government units (LGUs) (NPC 2006).³⁹ In the year 2007 about PHP 4 million⁴⁰ was accordingly given to Lanao del Sur. Civil society organizations complain that they do not know what had been done with the money (Gutoc: 2007). In addition, one centavo for the host community is perceived as a very limited share. In 2008 Lanao del Sur Governor Mamintal “Bombit” Alonto Adiong demanded at least 1% “of the gross income of the power plants generating hydroelectricity from Lake Lanao to fund local socio-economic and infrastructure programs” (Macabalang 2008). This request was underlined by the argument that the province suffers from the effects of the power plants on the lake. The NPC had been obliged to keep the water level of the lake at a maximum elevation of 702 m (Supreme Court, 8 March 2005). However, the dam made the river stable but the lake unstable (Naga 2001), affecting the ecosystem of the lake and lake and river dwellers. The natural flow of the river changed and residents were displaced. Consequently, some communities no longer have access to river water and instead have to rely on faucets⁴¹ that might not run the whole day. Sometimes they are limited to one faucet for a whole community. Many residents did not receive compensation from the NPC and some of them retaliated by attacking NPC facilities and personnel physically in the 1970s and 1980s (see, e.g., Fianza 2004: 8; Supreme Court 8 March 2005).

As a government enterprise, the NPC does not have to pay real estate taxes. This is based on a law that goes back to Commonwealth Act No. 120, which became effective on 3 November 1936. The purpose of the law is to promote development through government institutions. Former Lanao del Sur Governor Saidamen Pangarungan (1988-1992) and Provincial Treasurer Hadji Macmod Dalidig filed a case against the NPC in 1996. It demanded that the corporation be required to pay real estate taxes on its properties in Lanao del Sur in the amount of about PHP

³⁹ The money received is divided as follows: (1) Electrification Fund, at one-half of one centavo per kWh; (2) Development and Livelihood Fund (DLF), at one-quarter of one centavo per kWh; and (3) Reforestation, Watershed Management, Health, and Environment Enhancement Fund (RWMHEEF) at one-quarter of one centavo per kWh (Department of Energy, Benefits to Host Communities).

⁴⁰ PHP 3,455,593 were given to Lanao del Sur for DLF and PHP 703,996 for RWMHEE.

⁴¹ In 2002, 70% of the population in Marawi City had access to safe running drinking water. In 2000, the majority of the population in Lanao del Sur drew water for drinking and cooking from springs, lakes, rivers, or rainfall.

150 million covering the period from 14 June 1984 to 31 December 1989. Pangarungan and Daliding argued that the exemption from real estate taxes had been withdrawn during this time. The governor and his treasurer put up the company's property for auction when the NPC refused to pay. "The auction sale was . . . held as scheduled with the Province of Lanao del Sur as the sole bidder. A certificate of sale was immediately issued and registered with the Register of Deeds of the province . . ." (Supreme Court, 19 November 1996) The court ruled that the exemption had remained in place and that the governor had no right to sell the property. The possible privatization of the NPC, nevertheless, remains an issue. The Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 set forth a plan to privatize the Agus and Pulangi power complexes by 2011. The President of the Lanao Power Consumers Federation warned in July 2010 that this might jeopardize the peace negotiations since the area is part of the MILF-claimed ancestral domain under the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD).⁴² According to this memorandum, 75% of the revenues from the power supply generated by Lake Lanao would go to the BJE and 25% to the national government.

Other factors often mentioned as causes of poverty in the region are mismanagement and corruption. Compared to other regions in the ARMM, Lanao del Sur in 2000 had the highest number of households using electricity for lighting (NSO 2003). Nevertheless, the mismanagement of the Lanao del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LASURECO) a cooperative run by the NPC ended, according to anonymous insider sources, with it owing PHP 3 billion to the NPC. This misconduct led to the so-called "disco light" in Marawi City.⁴³ Despite the fact that Lanao Lake and the Agus River provide hydroelectric power for 80% of Mindanao, the local residents were "hit by frequent brownouts due to the alleged mismanagement of the LASURECO" (Pimentel 2004). This is a problem that according to the NPC's Vice-President of Mindanao Generation can be traced back to a high degree of corruption (Interview with Dr. Pasayud Macarambon, 2008).

A 2001 study found that 20% of the Philippine government's budget is lost to graft and corruption (Senate Economic Planning Office: 9). The organization Transparency International (TI) has published a study on the perception of corruption worldwide, summarizing in its "Corruption Perceptions Index." In general, TI found a basic difference between first world and third world countries. Third world countries are more corrupt but first world multinational

⁴² The MOA-AD is one proposed agreement between the government of the Philippines and the MILF to settle the question of ancestral domains. It is discussed more thoroughly in the following section.

⁴³ Disco light is the local name for blackouts or brownouts, which happen frequently in Marawi City.

companies accept blackmailing in their export deals. The corruption list is topped by countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia, conflict-ridden areas in which officials can use public funds for their own good, because public institutions have only a rudimentary existence (Lambsdorff 2007). In this context the ARMM can be seen as a conflict-ridden area, where “[g]iving way to family, cronies [and] personal considerations is more pronounced” than in “other parts of the country” (Gutierrez and Vitug 2000: 195).

Gutierrez and Vitug (2000) reported that “each province in ARMM receives more than PHP 1 billion in revenues yearly from the national government” (p. 196). This sum is in addition to the revenues raised by the local governments and that earmarked for projects funded by senators and the President’s Social Fund. However, the money is not spent for badly needed social services like education, primary health care, water supply, nutrition, and family planning. Maguindanao, for example, spend about PHP 2 per person per year on social services and Lanao del Norte about PHP 60. Instead, the major part of national government subsidies have been spent on infrastructure. Many of these infrastructure projects cannot be inspected because of the peace and order situation. In addition, politicians, lawyers, journalists, and police officers risk triggering a *rido* if they accuse a high-ranking clan member of fraud. Political clans⁴⁴ are generally very well-armed and well-connected; thus, law-enforcement mechanisms are easily set aside. Consequently, even though their actions are disapproved of by the majority of the people, they tend to escape public criticism since this might result in a *rido* (Lucman 2008). An MSU historian states that the concept of state is not much developed in the ARMM:

That is why people find more security in their clan or in their *datus* [chieftains]. Thus, government becomes an alien structure imposed by Manila. Using public funds and equipment for private use may be seen not as criminal acts, but as the normal and logical exercise of the authority of the *datu* or politician in dealing with an alien authority . . . Give the instability in the region, these local leaders, whatever limitations they have, provide the only visible semblance of governance in an impoverished and volatile region. (Gutierrez and Vitug 2000: 203-4)

That the members of the clan and other clients are cared for can be seen in the organization of the ARMM government. It is one of the biggest employers in the region, often hiring people who are “unqualified for their jobs, lacking experience, education, and professional competence” (ibid: 79). Some members of local NGOs in Marawi City have complained that the creation of the ARMM increased local corruption. A Maranao Managing Director of an NGO in Marawi City explains:

⁴⁴ A political clan is an extended family whose members have been involved in politics for several generations.

Before it's [the ARMM's] creation people [belonging to an NGO] would go directly to the central government and then have their projects implemented. But with the new system in which projects like this, livelihood projects, have to be brought through the ARMM government — unfortunately there are a lot of anomalies going on in that institution. This is why many NGOs — some of them stopped doing work for the poor, because the system within the ARMM is so different from the central government that — it is so inefficient . . . Unfortunately if there [is] funding from Australia or the German government for example, it has to be channeled through the ARMM before getting to the NGO. There are a lot of opportunities [to get financed] but our problem is how to tap the funds for development because once it goes through ARMM then it will take us a lot of [“patron-client”] requirements, in addition to the national requirements. Secondly, one of the observations that we have had is that they prepare to channel the funds to LGUs, not to NGOs. And it is a given fact, if you channel it to NGOs, the tendency is it will be fully implemented. Because as an NGO we will be in hot water when we [do] not implement it. Unlike when it is channeled through [an] LGU, wherein the one giving the fund is also from the LGU, no check and balance is there. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

According to Walden Bello (2004), since corruption can be found all over the Philippines and indeed all over the world, in rich as well as in poor countries, it cannot be the main cause for poverty in the Philippines as a whole or in its Muslim regions. Bello explains: “A more adequate explanation [of why the Philippines remain poor] lies in the state being subjugated by a succession of ruling elite factions to serve narrow interests instead of the larger goals of sustainable development and social justice” (p. 224). Whereas in South Korea, which Bello compares to the Philippines, the ruling elites are “in a constant position of equilibrium,” permanently being “disciplined by the state . . . one faction enjoying sizeable advantage over others at any given time . . . [In] the Philippines, in contrast, the elites were locked in a permanent state of rivalry and whoever was winning at a certain moment also got to control the state” (ibid.: 284). The state thus becomes a “prize for momentarily winning chronic inter-elite rivalry” (ibid.). According to Hutchcroft (1998: 24ff.), the absence of any attempt to consolidate the state throughout the history of the Philippines is one possible explanation for this power structure. The Spanish failed to build an effective bureaucracy and American colonial politics were actually “oligarchic-building, not state building” (Bello 2004: 285). Nor did the modern Philippines succeed in building an effective bureaucracy.

While the state and its bureaucracy remained stunted, landowning families and other powerful local forces became entrenched in their localities. Because of the central government's failure to penetrate distant provinces, the local elites — organized primarily in terms of families — strengthened their economic and political foothold. Even after independence, the government could not pursue

strategies that would act against these families' interests because the President and most other national politicians depended on them to deliver votes come election time . . . In sum, the Philippines' relative stagnation can be more adequately explained by the state's inability to control elite factions — dominated as it is by one of them at a given time — and to harness them and their resources for development. (ibid.: 285-286)

Corruption exists in huge dimensions and is especially exercised by elite factions to maintain patron-client relationships (Landé 1966). However, the underlying cause of poverty in the Philippines is not corruption *per se* but rather the oligarchic structures for which the state is a “prize” in which the winner takes all.

The Muslim areas are not poorer than the rest of the Philippines because of corruption or patron-client relationships, both of which are prevalent in the country as a whole. Both, however, are reinforced by the conflict, as can be seen in the Ampatuan case. The conflict has further consequences, among which is the damage to the economy. In the “no war, no peace” environment corruption prospers more easily because of the existing markets of violence, and the absence of law enforcement mechanisms. Some elites see the office they occupy as theirs and thus fight for it with arms or take with them the office equipment, including computers, tables, and vehicles, when there is a change of staff (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 79).

Poverty in the Muslim areas is exacerbated by discrimination against Moros. Representative Mujiv Hataman and Senator Faisah Dumarpa therefore introduced House Bill No. 3012, titled: “An Act Prohibiting Discrimination against Persons on Account of Ethnic Origin and/or Religious Belief.” It has already passed the House of Representatives and has been forwarded to the Senate. Both Moro and non-Moro researchers and activists have reported discrimination against Moros (Kamlan 1998), and Santos (2004) concludes that there is a “need to address the longstanding and documented pattern of more Christian Filipino intolerance toward Muslim Filipinos rather than the other way around. In other words, more peace education work has to be done with Christian Filipinos” (p. 141).

c. Education

During American colonial times, Maranao children were not sent to public schools at all, since they were seen as a medium of Christianization and declared *haram*, religiously forbidden (Saber 1981-1982: 199). Instead, it was the children of slaves who were brought, by the *datus*, to the schools. When it became obvious that “teaching was not confined to religion” (Gowing: 1977: 63) Muslim boys entered school, but girls were still kept at home because it was feared that

they could marry an “infidel” (*kafir*). Indeed, many slave girls “married soldiers and Christian government employees” (Saber 1981-1982: 200). Among Maranao groups in Ramin, it is said that Princess Tarhata Alonto Lucman, the daughter of the Sultan sa Ramin, Alauya Adiong Alonto, was the first Maranao woman to attend a public school. At age five, Tarhata demanded to have a secular education and, when she promised also to study the Qur’an, her relatives agreed. She became a model for other Maranao families in the Ramin area, who followed the example of her parents and sent their female children to school. With time, education became very much appreciated, having an augmenting effect on the bride price of women. Families from the countryside even sent their children to better schools or to universities in Marawi City and those who had the means would buy a house there in order to be close to their children (Usodan-Sumagayan 1988). Today women are better educated than men, as the 2000 census for Marawi City and the 2007 census for Lanao del Sur show.

By 2002, there were 94 private and public schools in Marawi City, the vast majority of them elementary schools.⁴⁵ In the school years 2000-01 and 2001-02, about 60,000 students were enrolled, 50% in elementary school, 30% in secondary school, and 20% in tertiary educational institutions. In the year 2000, of the total population of Marawi City five years old and over, 29% had attended or finished elementary education, 21% had either reached or completed high school education. Those who had attained higher education comprised 29%. This includes both domestic and international institutions. Among those with only an elementary education, men slightly outnumber women (51% to 49%), while those who have finished a secondary or tertiary degree are predominantly female (NSO 2002d). The gender distribution in the ARMM of the functionally literate, as well as of children participating in school is relatively balanced, with a decrease of participation in school for both sexes after elementary school.

Nationwide surveys show that the Muslim areas have poor results in education. This can partly be traced back to the conflict situation. In 2006, at MSU the only state university in Marawi City, which is one of the major employers in Marawi City only 48% of university employees were Muslim. In the academic year 2007-08, during the interim presidency of the Christian General Ricardo De Leon, this number decreased to 42%. Muslim employees are mainly found among the high school faculty (69%), non-teaching academic personnel (79%), and the administrative personnel (73%) (MSU Annual Report, 2006). A similar situation can be found

⁴⁵ Five were pre-schools, 67 elementary, and ten tertiary, including one public school in the MSU system. About 29,600 students were enrolled in 32 government schools in the city.

in the college enrollment rates: the number of Christian students was slightly higher than that of Muslims in the year 2007-08, despite the region's population being predominantly Muslim.⁴⁶ Besides the high dropout rate, this distribution can be considered partly the outcome of lower standards in the basic levels of education in the ARMM.

About 39% of the Mindanao population five years old and over had reached at least secondary education. Northern Mindanao had the highest proportion (44%), followed by the Davao region (43%), SOCCSKSARGEN (41%), and Caraga (40%). The ARMM had the lowest proportion, with only 30% (NSO 2003b). On the recently conducted National Achievement Test⁴⁷ for Grade 6, the ARMM was at the bottom of the list. *Newsbreak* reports: "Some 30,396 public schools participated in the March 2008 examinations. Of this number, 366 schools obtained a mean percentage score of 34 and below. And of these schools, more than half (195) are located in the ARMM" (Bagayaua 2008). Similar results are found in the Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS)⁴⁸ in 2003. In statistics for the year 2003 published by the Department of Education on the Functional Literacy Rate in each province, the ARMM is way behind the leading National Capital Region (63% to 94%) (NSCB 2008b).

Several circumstances have led to a lower standard of education in the ARMM. A study in 2008 documented the lack of facilities like chairs and classrooms as one factor. The same study describes Marawi City as one of the locations having a "severe shortage" in classrooms, with a ratio in the elementary and secondary levels of more than 56 pupils to one classroom and a ratio of more than three pupils to one chair (Bagayaua 2008).

Beside the poor conditions of the schools themselves, some people in the ARMM cannot afford an education at all. State schools do not demand fees, but the school uniform, transportation, and books, papers, and pens still have to be paid for. Only the better off families can afford the better education offered by private schools. Additionally, the conflict situation has a negative influence on the dropout rate. Children often cannot go to school because of the tense security situation or massive evacuations which last several weeks or even months. Sometimes

⁴⁶ The five fields with the highest enrollments in 2007-08 were: (1) Agriculture, (2) Business Administration, (3) Engineering, (4) Public Affairs, and (5) Education.

⁴⁷ The National Achievement Test includes the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and the National Secondary Achievement Test. The former "is a test designed to assess abilities and skills of Grade VI pupils in all public and private elementary schools in five (5) subject areas: English, Filipino, Science, HEKASI and Mathematics." The latter "aims to assess the abilities and skills of graduating fourth year students to determine their knowledge and capabilities in five (5) subject areas: English, Filipino, Science, Mathematics and Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies)." (Department of Education 2008).

⁴⁸ FLEMMS tests the ability of a person to read and write, with understanding, a simple message in any language or dialect.

schools are occupied by the army for years, and infrastructure is damaged, making it difficult or even impossible for students to attend school or teachers to go to work (ibid. 2003). According to the *Mindanao Examiner*, the Council for the Welfare of Children's Sub-Committee on Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement expressed the concern that if the "conflict and displacement continue, the distress and anxiety experienced by children may worsen . . . [The] impact of suspended schooling will force students to drop out of the system for good, affecting their future chances to find jobs and livelihoods" (Gamolo 2008). In November 2008, about 550 students in North Cotabato alone dropped out of school because of the hostilities that had broken out in August 2008 (Cadelina 2008). According to the NGO E-Net Philippines, four out of ten children and youths in Region XII (North and South Cotabato, Sarangani, and Sultan Kudarat) are missing school due to the armed conflict. The dropout rate there is three times higher than the national average. Besides the occasional conflicts between the rebel movement and the government forces, the ARMM region is also suffering from *ridos*. *Ridos* can lead to the instability of whole areas, since normally not just two persons are involved in the violence but whole families and clans. Streets can be blockaded for months; whole families have to hide or are not allowed to cross a certain area. Children are taken out of school or have to change schools; adults do not go to work because they would risk being shot.

Another reason for the low educational standard is nepotism. In 2003, the Regional Education Secretary of the ARMM, Dr. Mahid Mutilan, said that "[m]any provisional teachers are not qualified to teach and were most likely hired because of their connections" (Bagayaua 2003). The article elaborated that in "public schools in Lanao del Sur, it is normal to see teachers not doing anything . . . Often, some do not even report for work. The children's education thus suffers. It is difficult to discipline lazy teachers . . . because often they are connected to local politicians." Because of nepotism and corruption, there is a widespread problem of ghost teachers, teachers only appearing on the payroll but not in person, in the ARMM.



Picture 4: Street Blockage in Marawi City

Because of a family feud, a street has been blocked. Thus one of the families involved in the feud can control the entrance to the area. Photo taken by author, 2008.

In education, Lanao del Sur is, in most cases, slightly better off than its ARMM neighbors. The percentage of the population of Marawi City, for instance, having a secondary education is relatively large. This can partly be attributed to the fact that education is seen as an achievement that the whole family and clan can support financially and morally. There used to be special *kandoris* [thanksgiving celebrations] for those achieving higher education (Disoma 1999). This practice lessened with the increase in the number of Maranaos being highly educated. Today this only happens when one receives a PhD or succeeds on special exams. Nevertheless, Maranaos are usually proud of their educational achievements and see theirs as the most educated Muslim ethnic group in the Philippines (Madale 1997: 29).

Besides public education, there are also a number of *madaris* (singular *madrasah*) Islamic elementary and secondary schools, in the Philippines. The Kamilol Islam Society, an association that was founded by local Muslims, introduced the first *madrasah* in Marawi City in 1938⁴⁹. Its

⁴⁹ Before the introduction of public schools there were *gurus* (teachers), who were usually the local religious leaders and who “taught a small group of children the fundamental facts of Islam.” This was followed by the development of *pandita* (schools which offer second-level education in Islamic subjects), which were larger organized in Mindanao, mainly during and by the American administration “in an effort to maintain some control” over the Moros (McKenna

first teacher was the Guro sa Marawi. In 1952, through the efforts of Maranao Congressman “Domocao” Alonto the *madrasah* was converted into a bilingual school, offering both a public school and education in the *madrasah* curriculum. Because of a conflict between the two heads of departments, the school was split in two, a regular private school under “Domocao” Alonto and a *madrasah* under the Guro sa Marawi. The founding of other *madrasah* schools followed, initially by local leaders who sponsored the school and, after World War II, mainly by Maranaos who had been educated in the Middle East (Milligan 2001: 439; Rodriguez 1992: 93ff.). Milligan writes that before the 1970s there had only been few *madaris* in the Muslim regions, but “[a]s the secessionist movement gained momentum in the early 1970s the numbers of madaris grew rapidly to well over 1,000 in the western provinces of Mindanao”. One crucial reason for this rapid growth was that many Muslim Filipinos wanted to “emphasize their Islamic cultural identity” (Boransing, Magdalena and Lacar 1987; Milligan 2001: 439; 2004). McKenna and Abdula (2009) connect the increase in the number of *madaris* with the peace agreement in 1976 that led to new funding of religious institutions in Mindanao from Libya and Saudi Arabia. Because of an economic boom in the Muslim Philippines due to American reparations and because of scholarships given by Middle Eastern countries, there were numerous Moros getting an education in the Middle East. The religious funding then provided them with the needed money “to open madrasas without relying on the patronage of traditional leaders” (p. 210).

In 2000, there were approximately about 2,000 *madaris* in Muslim Mindanao “with more than 900 in the province of Lanao del Sur alone” (Milligan 2001: 439). A report submitted in 2008 to the Institute on Training and Development and sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State stated: “There are 1,569⁵⁰ Islamic schools (Madrasahs) across the country. Of these, 53% are located in the ARMM.” In 2008, 1,140 *madaris* seeking financial assistance from local and foreign donors were registered with the Office of Muslim Affairs, while the Department of Education filed only 35 applications. This situation is due primarily to the inability of the *madaris* to meet the Department’s accreditation standards for curricula and adequate facilities.

and Abdula 2009: 208). After World War II, *madari* schools mostly developed with sophisticated teachers of Islam (Rodriguez 1992: 92; see also Isidro 1976).

⁵⁰ In 1981-82, 850 *madari* schools were located in Region XII (Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat) The majority of these schools (435) were located in Lanao del Sur (Rodriguez 1992: 94). The majority of the pupils in Region XII were enrolled in public schools.

Summarizing several studies on *madaris* in Mindanao in the 1980s, Rodriguez (1992) stated that most *madaris* were in a rather pitiable condition, lacking facilities and well-educated teachers. A study from 1982 on the patterns of enrollment in *madrasah* schools in the Philippines found that parents with low educational attainment tended to prefer that their children attend a *madrasah* school, while those with high educational attainment preferred governmental schools. Job opportunities in the Middle East were a motivation for enrollment as was the desire to have Islam and Arabic as subjects (pp. 70, 72). Girls as well as boys attend *madaris*. At the elementary level, they are co-educated. Starting from the secondary level, the sexes are segregated. At the tertiary level women outnumber men. Some may be encouraged by the prospect of becoming Arabic teachers in government schools. Those attending the Arabic classes in public schools, again a majority of them female, are mainly children who are interested in working as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Middle East (McKenna and Abdulla 2009: 226f.).



Picture 5: Islamic School for Orphans

The institution is sponsored by Saudi Arabia. Photo taken by the author, Marawi City, 2008.

Some children attending a *madrasah* go exclusively to this school, but it is difficult to obtain employment with a degree from a *madrasah*, apart from being a religious teacher. Thus, most attend public schools and *madaris* at the same time. They have to go to school seven days a week. Milligan explains that parents send their children to weekend *madaris* to overcome the lack

of Islamic education in public schools. Being Muslim is seen as a part of Maranao identity that in mainstream education has to be subordinated under a general “Filipino” identity that is largely defined by the Christian majority (Milligan 2005: 140-1; see also McKenna and Abdula for an analysis of Filipino textbooks). This double burden is not seen as the ideal solution and most Maranaos would prefer integrated schools (ibid.: 146). In the 1990s, some private *madaris* started to integrate government-authorized curricula (Milligan 2004). In 2001, as part of the carrot-and-stick-strategy applied by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Muslim minorities after 11 September, *madaris* began to be integrated into the country’s national education system. During the school year 2002-03, the government began to implement a program called Education for Peace and Progress in Mindanao. The goal was to integrate *madaris* into the country’s national education system and “to foster religious understanding between the country’s Muslim minority and the Christian majority” (Sabutan 2008). The five-point program agenda included information and communications technology, *madrasah* education, peace education, the teaching of Mindanao culture and history, and teacher training. The program initially involved *madaris* in the ARMM, with the expectation that it would eventually expand to all Mindanao provinces. Some opposition critics, however, have stated that the government program violates the prohibition against state-funded promotion of religion.

In 2004, a standard curriculum for public elementary schools and private *madaris* was approved by the Department of Education (Dept. of Education Order No. 51) and the ARMM adopted it in the same year (ARMM RG Executive Order (EO) No. 13-A). On this basis, the *madrasah* system became part of the national educational system, similar to the Christian and Chinese school systems (*Frank X. Lynch, S.J. Resource Center* 2006). Thus, public schools, having more than 25 Muslim students, are, since 2004, obliged to offer the Arabic language and classes on Islamic values. In 2007, there were 459 public schools nationwide, excluding the ARMM, that were implementing the *madrasah* program (Esplanada 2007). According to the Religious Freedom Report (2007), all public schools in the ARMM offer this program.

At the end of 2007, there were about 50 (out of over 2000) *madaris* “in the process of accreditation with the Department of Education” (Religious Freedom Report 2007). The other *madaris* still did not meet “the DepEd’s accreditation standards for curricula and adequate facilities” (ibid.). Thus, integrated *madaris*, which offer “the public school curriculum and Arabic literacy, as well as Islamic religious subjects” (Legarda 2007), are relatively few. The traditional or weekend *madaris* still constitute the major form of *madrasah* education in the Philippines.

This means that not only is the curriculum different, but so is the funding. A majority of the *madaris* are either internationally sponsored, for example by Middle Eastern states, or locally funded by the communities themselves (Milligan 2004). However, even the education of *madrasah* teachers as well as the books for integrated *madaris* are mainly funded internationally by other states like Australia, Libya, the UK or the US, or by organizations like UNICEF and the World Bank (Frank X. Lynch, S.J. Resource Center 2006). The government cut funding in 2007, ignoring the fact that “the Madrasah education program could contribute to peace-building efforts of the government, especially in Mindanao” (*Sun Star Manila*, 27 August 2007). Thus, the *madrasah* issue became, like so many other issues concerning Muslims in the Philippines, the object of political contention between Muslims and the government. Non-Muslim Filipino politicians feared that non-integrated *madaris* might be breeding cells for terrorism (Religious Freedom Report 2003), and this fueled the suspicion of Muslims that the government only wants to integrate the *madaris* to be able to control them. As the Maranao politician Mutilan explained in 2003, some segments of the Muslim society “still look at the Philippine government as a colonial government . . . some Muslims may view mainstreaming [of *madaris* as] part of an effort to colonize them and to eliminate their culture and their religion” (Bagayaua 2003). McKenna and Abdula (2009), based on research in south and central Mindanao, write that most parents of children going to *madrasah* schools “agree that the central issue in Islamic education in the Philippines is resources, not reform” (p. 224). The new Benigno “P-Noy” or “Noynoy” Aquino government has promised to put more effort into the integration of *madrasah* schools into mainstream education.

B. Historical Overview: the Region Prior to Independence

1. Spanish Colonial Period

The conflict in today's Muslim regions, which has lasted for about 40 years, is the consequence of a complex situation, having one of its root causes in Spanish colonial times. At the Second International Bangsamoro Development Conference, at El Manuel Convention and Entertainment Center, Cotabato City on 19-21 June 2007, the source of the conflict was identified by the MILF as the “unjust annexation or inclusion of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan in the sale by Spain to the United States of the Philippines under the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898.”

The major Sultanates of Buayan,⁵¹ Maguindanao,⁵² Sulu⁵³, and the *Pat a Pangampong* (Four Principalities) in Lanao⁵⁴ had never been entirely part of the Spanish colony and thus Spain sold them without entirely possessing them. The Spaniards, entering the Philippines in the sixteenth century, started several attempts to subdue the southern sultanates but were not entirely successful. This was partly because of the local resistance in Muslim Mindanao, which had been politically and economically the largest organized community in the Philippines. It was also due to the fact that the Spanish forces concentrated their energies on the northern Philippines to intensify their trade with China rather than on the southern Philippines, which would have been a bridge to the spice trade with the Moluccas (Cushner 1971: 65).

According to Majul (1999), the resistance of the Philippine sultanates against the Spanish intruders was not “an isolated or insignificant phenomenon but an essential part of the general resistance of all Muslim peoples . . . against Western Imperialism, colonialism and Christianity” (p. 410). The author suggests the common resistance of an established Islamic *ummah* (community), strengthened via marriages, trade relations, and tribute systems. On this basis, the sultanates could keep their relative independence from Spain in the sixteenth century. The support of Borneans and Makassars from Sulawesi to the Sulus, and Ternatans from the Moluccas to Buayan and Maguindanao helped the local resistance. After Spain’s temporary invasion of Brunei in 1578 and its victory over the Sultan of Ternate in 1606, the Dutch and the British supported the sultanates in order to weaken the Spanish trade competition (ibid). McKenna (1998) nevertheless argues that the conception of a common Muslim identity at this time is a myth created by Muslim scholars and nationalists (p. 80ff.). He defines the Moro wars during the Spanish period a “cold war.” Long periods of peace and co-existence were interrupted by short times of war between sultanates and the Spanish (ibid: 82ff.). They were characterized by contracts and trade relations between the Spanish and *datus*, especially after the Spanish monopolized the trade in the region.

⁵¹ The Buayaan Rajanate included the upper part of Pulangi River, covering the “watershed of the Cagayn Valley on the north and the inaccessible slopes of Mount Apo on the east” (Saleeby 1976: 51).

⁵² The Maguindanao sultanate included “the whole southern coast of Mindanao from Point Tugubum, east of Mati, to Zamboanga, and beyond this latter point to the outskirts of Dapitan. All the pagan tribes living around the Gulf of Davao and in the Sarangani country, all the Subanons west to Tukurun and Dapitan submitted to his power and paid him tribute” (Saleeby 1976: 50). It thus covered the whole of Bukidnon, Cotabato, Davao, Lanao, Misamis, and Zamboanga at its height in 1619 under Sultan Qudarat. It also had tributary regions in Basilan and parts of the Visayas, over which the sultanate fought with the Spaniards in the seventeenth century (Majul 1999).

⁵³ At the height of its power around 1450, the Sulu sultanate included the Sulu Archipelago, southern Palawan and Sabah. It also had tributary regions in the Visayas, for example in Cebu (Majul 1999).

⁵⁴ According to Saleeby (1976), the Maranaos at the height of their influence controlled the whole area “and the seacoast west of Cagayan de Misamis and north of the Illana Bay” (p. 51). This area roughly comprises today’s Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Spanish had improved their war and naval technology by using gun steamships and other inventions like the telegraph, and later on the telephone, which gave them an advantage over the Muslims (Yegar 2002: 207). Several sultanates and *datus* signed peace treaties with the Spanish forces. The last treaty, between the Spaniards and the Sulu sultan, Jamal ul-Azam, was ratified in 1878. In the eyes of the Spaniards, it made the sultan accept their sovereignty. The Sultan of Jolo, on the other hand, understood his treaty with the Spanish as making his sultanate “a sort of protectorate of Spain while retaining a great deal of autonomy” (Majul 1999: 354). In any case, autonomy was restricted to those parts of the sultanate that were not occupied by the Spaniards, who already had a foothold in the old capital of Jolo and a fort in Basilan. Whereas Jamal ul-Azam accepted a treaty, there were still Sulu *datus* who disagreed, attacking Spanish soldiers or trying to recapture the capital. According to a British report, Jolo in 1890 was in a “state of siege and . . . no European ventured to go outside the walls of the town” (ibid.: 358, 362). While Spain’s authority was in fact extremely limited, Germany and Great Britain nevertheless had recognized Spain's sovereignty over the Sulu archipelago five years earlier. Germany accepted under the condition that “the freedom of commerce allowed in Sulu be also extended to the North Borneo Territory” (ibid.: 359). Britain posed the condition that Spain gives up its claim over “territories tributary to the Sultan of Sulu on the mainland of Borneo” (ibid.: 358).

Around 1860, the Spaniards established a “politico-military government” over the area they held in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. They divided the area into five districts.⁵⁵ In 1871, Cotabato⁵⁶ became the capital of the new government (ibid.: 342). However, after an earthquake the Spanish reinstated Zamboanga as the capital. During the Philippine Revolution in 1898, the Spaniards evacuated their garrisons in the interior of Mindanao⁵⁷ shortly after the

⁵⁵ Namely: Cotabato, Davao, Misamis, Surigao, and Zamboanga (Lucman 2000: 206).

⁵⁶ The Spanish acquired a strong-hold in Maguindanao only in 1851 in Pollok (Pollok Port is near Parang, in today’s Maguindanao Province), which was near the seat of the Sultan of Maguindanao at Simuay Crossing (today not far from Camp Darapanan, the main headquarters of the MILF, which is 15 km from Cotabato City). The Spaniards’ victorious attack intimidated the Maguindanao sultan, who gave away to them ancient realms along the Pulangi. In 1861, based on dynastic rivalry with the Sultanate of Buayan, the Maguindanao Sultan Muhammad Makakwa allowed the Spaniards to settle in Cotabato in exchange for their protection. The sultan later on received a salary from the Spanish government, lost his economic independence, and became quite poor since the Spaniards had increasingly occupied his tributary areas. Thus, the protection turned into a form of protectorate, to the advantage of the colonial forces. While the Maguindanao sultanate declined, the *datus* of the Pulangi River looked to the Buayan Datu Utto, who attempted to unify the *datus* and smaller sultans of the Pulangi under his rule. The Spaniards prevented this maneuver but could not defeat Datu Utto himself, who finally sent a letter reaffirming his and his wife’s, the daughter of the famous Sultan Qudarat, loyalty to the Spanish (Majul 1999: 367).

⁵⁷ This gave the Buayan under Datu Piang, a former minister of Datu Utto and Chinese mestizo, the chance to attack remaining garrisons like Cotabato, an attempt which ended with the arrival of the Americans.

Americans arrived. In 1899 Zamboanga, Cotabato, and later on other Spanish strongholds in Mindanao were occupied by the new colonial power.

The Maranaos had their first encounters with the Spaniards in 1639 when an expedition under Captain Francisco de Atienza and Fray Augustin de San Pedro brought the first Spaniards to Lake Lanao to explore the region. The local Maranao *datus* offered them allegiance, promised tribute, and accepted the missionaries (ibid.: 156). Nevertheless, the construction of a garrison in 1640 encountered resistance by the local chiefs. Their opposition originated with the intervention of Sultan Qudarat from the Maguindanao area,⁵⁸ who gave a speech to the Maranao *datus* to explain the negative consequences of cooperation with the Spaniards. Qudarat encouraged the Maranao *datus* to resist and the Spaniards were driven back to Iligan Bay (Saber 1986: 25). Members of the royal houses in Lanao today claim that Qudarat was the descendant of Sharief Kabungsoan, a Muslim missionary and descendant of Prophet Mohammad in Maguindanao and his Maranao wife. Qudarat is thus a half-Maranao whose name appears in several royal genealogies.

Spanish forces did not return to the lake region for the next two and a half centuries. One of the reasons why Maranaos were left in peace for such a long time is that their domain, high on a plateau, was relatively impenetrable for a large army of invaders (Lucman 2000). However, the Spaniards did not conquer the Maranaos with military force alone but also by blocking their trade with the seacoast regions. This situation encouraged the Maranaos to initiate several raids against Spanish-controlled areas.

At the very end of the nineteenth century, General Valeriano Weyler, the Spanish Governor-General from 1888-1891, built a “chain of fortifications” from Iligan to the lake region (Saber 1986: 50). Moreover, in 1891 he decided to conquer the Lake Lanao area. He started his mission from the same two spots as the former attackers did, from the already Christianized Iligan in today’s Lanao del Norte and from the recently occupied Malabang in today’s Lanao del Sur. The focus of the attack was “Fort Marahui” or Camp Amai Pakpak, the strongest native fort (*kota*) in the region. The fort, which lies within today’s Marawi City, was led by Datu Akadir, or Amai Pakpak, as he was known to the Spaniards, and equipped with “ancient cannons, captured European guns, and an assortment of bladed weapons of hundreds of warriors who could instantly be assembled through the sound of gongs and cannons during emergencies” (ibid.: 7). In

⁵⁸ The Maguindanao area along the lower Pulangi River reached its climax of influence in Mindanao under Sultan Qudarat (1619-16771) (McKenna 1998: 77).

spite of their military victory, the Spanish had to return to their base because their forces were not strong enough to hold their position against further attacks from the Maranaos, who later took revenge by attacking settlements in Iligan and southern Misamis Oriental.

The new Governor-General Ramon Blanco (1893-1896) gave the instruction to build steel steamships in order to conquer the Maranaos, because this would prevent their escaping on *vintas* (native boats) from *kotas* that were about to be demolished and regrouping in other *kotas* across the lake. The Spanish again attacked Fort Marahui, which had been reconstructed and was manned with Maranao warriors who came to “join in jihad.”⁵⁹ Eventually, in 1895, the superior forces of General Blanco succeeded in overcoming the fort. They established a garrison in Marawi and sent four gunboats⁶⁰ into the lake to hinder the Maranaos from using their *vintas*. Some chiefs were intimidated by this military power and signed peace agreements; others retreated to the hinterlands and continued their resistance from there. The Spanish withdrawal in 1898 to make way for the Americans (Saber 1986) rendered the question of a successful colonization academic. Nevertheless, this “departure was regarded . . . as a complete victory” by Maranaos (Lucman 2000: 23).

The Spaniards limited the economic power of the sultanates by monopolizing the trade in the area. Majul (1999) notes that the Spanish destroyed plantations and Muslim trading vessels (p. 408). McKenna considers that, with their monopoly of trade, the Spanish became the biggest trading partners of Maguindanao (1998: 84). Furthermore, occupation — including sometimes the Christianization of the population — and the fact that some Muslim *datus* accepted the sovereignty of the Spanish limited the sultanates’ political influence. Finally, the Spaniards influenced the election of certain sultans in order to restrict the political independence of the sultanates. Again, McKenna emphasizes that there was not a common Moro or even ethnic group identity under one sultan. There were raids of Maguindanaos by Christian communities but in cases of increased rivalry among *datus* or sultans among the Maguindanaos, some of them would fraternize with the Spanish in order to get help in conquering their rival (ibid.: 83).

Islam in the southern Philippines is often said to have developed in the framework of the defense of territory. The Spaniards came not only to conquer the southern islands, but also to convert the Muslims to Christianity. Majul argues that this triggered a strong resistance, sometimes taking the desperate form of what Admiral Jose Malcampo, the acting Governor-

⁵⁹ According to Saber, *jihad* in the Maranao language is called *prang sabir* (fighting for an Islamic cause). *Prang* is derived from the Malay word *perang*, which means war (information supplied by Prof. Vivienne Angeles).

⁶⁰ The boats were the S.S. Almonte, S.S. Corcuera, S.S. General Blanco, and S.S. Lanao.

General of the Philippines (1874-1877), called “juramentados”. This term describes suicides or suicide attackers, women or men, who took an oath to die defending Muslim territory (Majul 1999; Yeager 2002: 206). McKenna (1998) on the other hand questions the development of a stronger Islamic identity due to the resistance. The *datu*-ship structures of the Muslim ethnic groups had a fractionalized character and a common identity as Moros or *ummah* was non-existent. This does not mean that there was no consciousness of being Muslim. At present, in Lanao, for example, there are many cases where being Maranao is equated with being Muslim.

The Moro wars, even though the Moros were not unified under one identity and the wars were not religious in nature, still had consequences for Christian-Muslim relations. Spanish forces occupied regions in the Visayas that had previously been tributary to Muslim sultanates. Additionally, they recruited Christianized Indios, among others from former tributary regions, to fight alongside the colonial forces against Muslims. Finally, they blocked the Muslim sea-trade, which accelerated Muslim raids against Christian settlements, taking Indio slaves and Spanish captives. The so-called pirates kept the slaves or sold them to the Dutch. While the captives were given back to the Spaniards in return for ransom (Majul 1999). This created a gap between Moros and Christianized Indios; the former thought of the latter as slaves, and as their enemies, as they fought side-by-side with the Spanish intruders against them (Yeager 2002: 208); the Indios thought of the Moros as pirates (McKenna 1998: 81).

2. The American Colonial Period

Spain claimed to have sovereignty over Mindanao, Palawan, and the Sulu Archipelago, even though it had not conquered the whole area. Based on this claim, the Spanish sold the Muslim regions to the Americans. After buying the Philippines for USD 20 million under the Treaty of Paris in 1898, the Americans concentrated their forces in Luzon and the Visayas to put down the Philippine Insurrection. Instead of involving the Muslims in the American-Philippine war, they initially preferred dealing with them diplomatically. In 1899, Sultan Jamalul Kiram II of Sulu signed the Bates Treaty with the American negotiator General John Bates. The agreement was based on the 1878 treaty the Sultan of Sulu had signed with the Spaniards. It accepted the sovereignty of the Americans over the sultanate; the sultan had to hand over criminals who had acted against non-Muslims, and help in the suppression of piracy and slavery. In return, the Americans guaranteed religious freedom, gave autonomy to the sultan in internal affairs of the sultanate, and provided monthly payments to the royal *datu*s. Verbal assurances of America's

peaceful intentions also neutralized Muslim leaders in Mindanao.

After the Americans succeeded in ending the Philippine Insurrection in 1901, they established a civil government under US Army General William Taft. In Mindanao, General George Davis became the first Proconsul (1901-1902). In his report of 1902, he compared the Muslim areas to Indian reservations in the USA and the Moros to Native Americans; like them, they had to be civilized (Gowing 1981-1982: 12). Davis wanted to stop slavery, polygamy, and piracy, “as well as to weaken the rule of the Dato over their subjects” (Yegar 2002: 214). The initial American policy toward the Muslims was peaceful. General Davis ordered his men to be kind to the natives and not to interfere with their religious or cultural practices. At the same time in the Lake Lanao region, the Americans built wagon roads between Iligan and Marahui to the north of Lake Lanao and on the “Ganassi trail” (from Malabang to Ganassi) to the south of the lake Lanao. These infrastructures were described by Magdalena (2002) as “a key to the military campaign and successful governance of the Moro region” (p. 39; see also Gowing 1981-1982: 13). Those plans were disturbed by several violent incidents, which provoked the Americans to send out a punishment expedition.⁶¹

One of these incidents happened in March 1902. An American private was killed by some Maranaos near Parang-Parang, close to Cotabato, and the killers were identified as followers of the Sultan of Bayang. In response, a detachment of soldiers was sent on the trail from Parang-Parang to Lake Lanao to “open the trail to the divide” (Magdalena 2002: 9).⁶² Some Maranaos attacked them and forced the detachment to leave their horses and equipment behind; one soldier was killed. Shortly after this incident another soldier was “cut to pieces by a bolo” at Malabang. The reaction of Colonel Frank Baldwin, who later on led a punishment expedition against Bayang, represented a change in American policy toward Maranaos:

As soon as this occurrence was reported I was so convinced that there was an element that would carry on a warfare of this character that I presented again to the department that I did not believe anything of a lasting and satisfactory solution of this question, and establishing the supremacy of the United States over the island and the people, could be accomplished in any other way than to advance the

⁶¹ One incident was described by Gowing (1983). About 1900 Maranaos from Malabang under Datu Udasan raided the town Callalanuan, “looting property and carrying away slaves” (p. 83). The commanding officer Brett in nearby Parang-Parang went to investigate the *datu*, accompanied by 25 soldiers. With him came 100 Moros who were followers of Datu Udasan’s rival Datu Piang of Cotabato. While the talks were going on, fighting between Datu Udasan’s and Datu Piang’s followers broke out and 14 people were killed. Datu Dacula, whose son died in the fighting, wrote a letter to General William Kobbé in Zamboanga, asking him how the Americans could have tolerated such an attack, accusing them of having supported Datu Piang (ibid.: 83).

⁶² Citing Colonel Baldwin’s report.

troops to the lake, peaceably if possible, otherwise if necessary; and that this would be the only way to stop this assassination of soldiers or American citizens and insure peace . . . by adopting only peaceful measures we would soon have our little garrisons along the seashore menaced by the lake Moros if we did not force our way to the lake. (ibid.: 9-10)

Soon after the *bolo* incident, a message was sent to leading Maranaos to surrender the assassins and to provide compensation for the stolen goods (Magdalena 2002: 3; Saber 1986: 12). The chiefs refused to hand over their kinsmen and the Sultan of Bayang wrote that he would “recognize nobody but the Sultan of Turkey” (Magdalena 2002: 3). The colonial rulers departed from their policy of diplomacy and sent 1,800 American and Filipino soldiers from Parang-Parang to Malabang and then against the Maranaos in the southern lake region. They first attacked several smaller *kotas* like Pualas and Binidayan, and finally arrived at Fort Pandapatann — Padang Karbala to Maranaos — in Unayan, where 600 Bayang warriors and their allies defended themselves. The Americans won the battle, due to superior numbers and weapons. They established Camp Vicars to maintain their victory. Since Baldwin had been promoted, John Joseph “Black Jack” Pershing became the new Commander-in-Chief. Under his administration, military operations as well as diplomacy were employed. He adopted “some Maranao as his brothers, sons, daughters, etc.,” and he was even given a honorary title of *Datu* (Saber 1986: 13). However, there were other areas near the lake like Bacolod Grade, Butig, Calahui, Masiu, and Taraka, where the people were still hostile toward the Americans. Saber explains:

During that time, most nativistic Maranao, outwardly or inwardly, discriminated against both Spaniards and Americans whom they considered as *kapir* or “infidels”, and whom they challenged for coming to their land. Such was the built-in attitude towards strangers created by their war experiences and the long period of isolation from other peoples. (ibid.: 14)

Saber quotes a letter of the Sultan of Bacolod, whose sultanate lay to the east of the lake, that was sent to Pershing containing the following challenge: “You get out of Ranao because you are not fit to live among civilized Moros since you are uncircumcised. If you do not come, we will come to fight you” (Saber 1986: 14). The American Press criticized the repression by the colonial government of the *kotas* in the hostile areas as a massacre. Captain Pershing made a tour around the lake, pacifying one rebellious chief after the other, either with diplomacy or with force of arms. He was promoted from Captain to Brigadier General; later on, he became the Military Governor of Moro Province (Magdalena 2002: 29; Saber 1986: 14).

Moro Province was established in 1903, containing the Muslim areas in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago and excluding the northeastern parts of Mindanao, which were Christianized. It became the only province that was ruled by the military; civilian Filipino governors headed the others. The province was divided into five districts: Cotabato, Davao, Lanao, Sulu, and Zamboanga, each of which had an Army officer as District Governor. According to Gowing (1981-82), the main purpose of the province was “to provide a framework wherein traditional Moro political and social structures could be gradually changed into the structures adopted generally in the other provinces of the Archipelago” (p. 17). Infrastructure, telecommunications, schools, and hospitals were established and taxes collected. The Bates Treaty was abandoned in 1904, thus removing the authority the Sultan of Sulu still had over the internal affairs of his sultanate as well as the subsidies the sultan and the *datus* received. Further, anti-slavery measures were undertaken and the Americans rejected the Muslim legal code, except *sharia* laws regarding personal status and inheritance (Yegar 2002: 215, 217). To enforce these rules, General Leonard Wood, Governor of Moro Province from 1903 to 1906, undertook punitive attacks “to teach the Moros some [sic] lesson for not renouncing slavery, slave-catching, theft and other ‘uncivilized’ practices” (Magdalena 2002: 29). Under Wood's administration, 3,000 Muslims were killed, “while the number of Americans killed was less than seventy” (Gowing 1981-1982: 18).

The next governor, Tasker Bliss (1906-1909), installed at a time when most Muslims had already submitted to American rule, focused on education in order to “civilize” them. This involved the institution of compulsory education. Scholarships were given to Muslims, and scholarship recipients were sent to Manila or the United States. The Muslim elites were pressured to send their children to school. However, only the children of slaves went to the school, while the elite kept its children at home or sent them to traditional religious schools. Consequently, Brigadier General Bliss also started to support the education of local teachers, the use of the local language as a medium of education, and even the traditional Islamic schools, to which he sent books, and whose curriculum was limited to the “reading and writing of Arabic and the Arabic rendering of Moro languages.” His goal was to initiate a transition from the traditional school to public school (Gowing 1981-1982: 22; Yegar 2002: 218). Generally, it can be said that the American policy was quite friendly toward Islam under a constitution of secularism and religious freedom. The schools the Americans supported were not confessional, but they sponsored trips to Mecca in 1911 (Gowing 1977: 65; Saber 1981-1982: 200). Gowing summarizes the American policy toward the Muslims in the Philippines:

The Americans came to Moroland with a “holy mission,” the mandate. The Americans wished to Americanize and Christianize the Moros. “To develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the science of self-government” meant to accomplish these changes in terms of American values. In short, they sought to impose a western civilization suffused by the Judeo-Christian ideology upon an Asian (Filipino) society suffused by Islam . . . While setting aside Moro legal codes and judicial procedures, the American government scrupulously avoided any interference with the freedom of the Moros to worship and practice their religious customs. Americans believed that they were respecting the religious liberty of the Moros. Again, it must be emphasized that the Americans were unaware [of] or indifferent to the fact that religion and culture were intermingled in Moro society. (Gowing 1977: 329-330)

In 1911, Governor John J. Pershing (1909-1913) ordered the disarmament of the Muslims, which led to resistance in Cotabato, Lanao, and Sulu. In Sulu, there were reports of *mujahida* (female Islamic warriors) being in the battle of Mount Langkuasan in 1912, where Muslim women fought under the lead of Princess Asda Shariful Hashim against American soldiers. They rolled down logs to crush the American attackers, and thereby, before the male and female fighters were overrun, killed twenty American soldiers (Lucman 2000: 282). The battle of Bud Bagsak in Sulu in 1913 was the last large-scale battle between American soldiers and Muslims in the Philippines. Its consequence was the Carpenter Agreement in 1915, signed by Governor Frank Carpenter and Sultan Jamalul Kiram II of Sulu. The Sulu sultanate had to recognize the American colonial government; the sultan lost his major prerogatives, except his religious duties, and was awarded an annual pension of USD 6,000.

Even though the Muslims had officially been defeated and disarmed, military clashes between Muslims and American soldiers continued. In 1914, the Department of Mindanao and Sulu (1914-1920), which had a civilian government under Frank Carpenter (Gowing 1981-1982: 26, Lucman 2000: 284), replaced the Moro Province. In 1916, the Jones Law (Act No. 240) gave the Philippine Legislature control over Mindanao and Sulu and Muslims the right to representation. As an immediate outcome, Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison appointed two senators and five assemblymen. In 1917, the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes was established, aiming to “bring the non-Christian communities into the national process” (Tan 1981-1982: 61). Under the Department of Mindanao and Sulu, based on the conclusion that elite Moro women were an influence in their society a boarding school for girls was established in Sulu in 1916 and financed by women from New York. Its goal was to educate the girls to be future leaders among their people (Angeles 1998: 213). Carpenter even sent one Muslim woman, Tarhata Kiram from Sulu, to the USA to be educated there. Conversion of these Muslim women

to Christianity was not part of the program since this would have destroyed their status and value among their people (ibid.: 213).

American rule had special consequences for the distribution of land in the Philippines. In 1902, the Land Registration Act (Act No. 496) was introduced, instituting the Torrens system⁶³ of land ownership. The next year, Act 718 passed; it “made void land grants from Moro Sultans or Datus, or Chiefs or non-Christian tribes, when made without government authority or consent” (Lucman 2000: 272). Act No. 926, in the same year, declared as belonging in the public domain and open for homesteading all land to which no title according to the new registration system had been claimed. Magdalena describes the consequences for the traditional system of land ownership:

the natives were dispossessed of their rights to the land, which were defined by customary laws based on kinship membership. Traditional and suspicious as they were, the Moros did not realize the value of the modern concept of legal ownership of lands, and naturally did not bother themselves to have their lands surveyed, classified and covered by Torrens title. To them, it was enough that they lived by their own rules, which later ran inconsistent with modern law. (2002: 49)

Many Muslims lost their land because their traditional rights were not recognized. On the other hand, some Muslim leaders profited from this situation by claiming vast tracks of land as their own, sometimes selling parts of them to the government, settlers, or others (Yegar 2002: 226). Land to which no title was claimed was mainly sold or leased to plantation owners, foreign enterprises like Goodyear, or immigrants who came from Luzon, the Visayas, America, or Japan (Kreuzer 2003: 10). It was easy for influential people to possess lands that before had belonged to Muslims. This situation eventually led to countless land conflicts and can be seen as one of the root problems of today’s conflict situation (Yegar 2002: 226). In 1919, as a result of Act No. 2874, non-Christians were prohibited from possessing more than 10 hectares of land for each male family member over 18. Other citizens of the Philippine Islands or of the USA over the age of 18 years, however, could possess a homestead not exceeding 24 hectares (Che Man 1990: 24).

In the framework of relocation programs from 1913 to 1917, several agricultural colonies⁶⁴ were formed in the Muslim areas. During this time, about 8,000 settlers arrived. Officially, the purpose of these colonies was to increase agricultural production, to balance the population distribution in the Philippines, to begin the cultivation of fallow land and to enable

⁶³ The Torres system is based on a register of land holdings maintained by the state which and guarantees a title to those included in the register.

⁶⁴ The colonies were created in Glan, Pagalungan, Paidu Pulangi, Pikit, Silik, and Talitay in the Maguindanao area, and Momungan in today’s Lanao del Norte province (Cagoco-Guiam 1996).

poor farmers to become landowners (Yegar 2002: 223). According to Werning (1983), at this time there was no overpopulation in Luzon or the Visayas, but areas that were controlled by oppressive landlords were defined as overpopulated. In order to ease the growing social problems in these regions, the US government started a re-settlement program for the poor, granting them advantages in order to up-grade their social and economic standing, mainly on the backs of the Moros in Mindanao (p. 47). Rodil (2003) writes that in Cotabato it was Datu Piang — the most respected Muslim leader in Buayan at the time — who was responsible for the coming of the first Christian colonies to the province (there were eight in Cotabato). Two of his sons served in the management of these colonies (p. 185). Christians as well as Muslims were among the colonists, which was intended so as to facilitate the assimilation of the Moros (see also Eder and McKenna 2004). The religiously mixed colonies were not very successful because of the threat of malaria and a lack of services. In 1918, the government decided to support only those that had their own means, a plan that also failed.

In 1935, 30,000 to 35,000 people lived in government agricultural colonies in Mindanao (Yegar 2002: 224). In 1939, the National Land Settlement Administration was established; it aimed to include army veterans. It bought land from the government and private sources to organize settlements. In some cases, Muslim ancestral land was declared to be public domain and sold (*ibid.*: 232). Even though there had been warnings by Muslims that the land issue might lead to violence, these programs were enforced. Yegar reports that between 1936 and 1941, especially in Lanao, there were numerous minor military clashes between armed forces of the Philippine government and local Muslims (*ibid.*: 232).

Some business elites in Mindanao were interested in a territorial break away from the Philippine entity. In 1910, the Zamboanga Chamber of Commerce requested of the American President that the southern islands be separated from the rest of the Philippines and become American territory, referring to their rich natural resources (*ibid.*: 223).⁶⁵ In the 1920s, some American businessmen, plantation owners, and government officials supported Moro petitions to the US President and Congress warning that Philippine independence, bringing with it the rule by Christian Filipinos over Muslims, might result in violence (Magdalena 2002). The petitions resulted in 1926 in the Bacon Bill (HB 12772), proposing the annexation of Mindanao and Sulu by the Americans instead of giving independence to the whole Philippines (Magdalena 2002:

⁶⁵ The number of American settlers in Mindanao had been about 5,000 during the time of the Moro Province, most of them connected to the army. Majority left already after a few years. In 1907 there were only 100 American plantation owners in Mindanao, part of them left when the army withdraw in 1913 (Yegar 2002: 223).

51ff.). The Bill was neglected and in 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Bill established an autonomous Commonwealth under which the Philippines was granted full rights in internal matters.⁶⁶ In reaction, the Dansalan Declaration was signed in 1935 by 121 *datus* from Lanao and sent to President Franklin Roosevelt and Congress. It demanded that the Muslims remain under American administration until they were able to govern themselves. It warned that, in the event of the inclusion of the region in the Philippines, there would be “troubles between [the Muslims] and the Christian Filipinos because from time immemorial these people have not lived harmoniously together” (Lucman 2000: 291, quoting the Dansalan Declaration).

In 1920 the Department of Mindanao and Sulu was closed down. Direct rule by the American Mindanao and Sulu ended. Instead, the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes was in charge while Christian Filipinos took over control of the administration and legal matters in the Muslim areas. “The majority of officeholders in public service in the southern Philippines were Christians; giving rise to Muslim complaints that the real meaning of ‘Philippinization’ was ‘Christian Philippinization’.” (Yegar 2002: 220). The Muslims were not treated as a separate group anymore but as a minority in a predominantly Christian state. This attitude resulted in riots and resistance to inclusion in a future independent Philippine state. In Lanao, people revolted against taxes they had to pay, against the registration of their land, and especially against compulsory education in public schools (ibid.: 227). Even though the civil administration was less violent than the initial American regime, American rule was better tolerated by the Muslims than Filipino Christian rule “since the latter was considered as a greater threat to their religious and cultural identity” (ibid.: 234).

In 1936, the Sultan of Sulu died. In its attempt to uproot traditional power systems in order to attain social equality, the Commonwealth government refused to recognize his successor. Two years later, President Manuel Quezon declared in a memorandum that “the ranks of sultan[s] and *datus* were canceled according to the principle that all Filipinos [are] equal before the law and in their treatment by government agencies” (ibid.: 231). The decision was met with condemnation by the royal clans in Sulu and Mindanao (Lucman 2000). The Commonwealth government furthermore tried to diminish the special status of the Moros, for example by closing down the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes in 1936 and replacing it with the Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu, who was a Christian Filipino (Yegar 2002: 230). The right of suffrage was granted to Muslims in 1938, enabling them to elect local officials. However, the governors of the

⁶⁶ The Sultan sa Ragain, Alauya Adiong Alonto, was elected Delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1934.

provinces of Bukidnon, Cotabato, Lanao and Sulu were still appointed by the President (Madale 1997: 134).

The process of the Philippinization of the Moros was interrupted by the invasion of the Japanese, which led initially to a guerrilla war in Lanao where Maranaos fought alongside both American and Japanese Forces. Whereas the American government had prohibited the possession of firearms, World War II resulted in a rearmament of the Moros (Lucman 2000: 297). The Maranao Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto, a member of an influential clan in Lanao — his father, Alauya Adiong Alonto, the Sultan of Ramain, had been a Senator under the Commonwealth government — was installed in 1942 by the Japanese as head of the Lanao government. Some months later, he surrendered to Marcelo Paiseo whom the Philippine Army supported (*ibid.*: 294ff.). A year after the Japanese capitulation, the Philippines was declared independent by the Americans; this included the Muslim areas.

During the American occupation the Muslims in the Philippines were disarmed and, apart from frequent minor military clashes, largely submitted to American authority. Their leaders, as long as they cooperated, were as far as possible integrated into the new system by the American administration. At this time new Muslim elites developed, cherished by the Americans as counter-authorities who opposed the rebellious traditional elites. Education was used as a tool of integration and of forming new Muslim elites, who defined themselves as “Muslim Filipinos” (McKenna 1998: 112). This approach was continued by the young republic, which added to education an emphasis on Filipino nationalism, which was then colored by the religious beliefs of the majority (McKenna and Abdula 2009: 207-8). On the other hand, under the American Constitution guaranteeing religious freedom, Islam was accepted as a private religion in a secular state. The general goal nevertheless was, as Governor Frank Carpenter stated in 1917, to “civilize” the Muslims, in order to integrate them as Muslim Filipinos (McKenna 1998: 115).

Ancestral land was integrated into the Torrens System of land title registration. Muslims lost land because of their unfamiliarity with the system of registration while some of their elites profited from this situation by claiming land that had belonged to their clan. Under the Commonwealth, settlement programs were initiated. These brought large numbers of Christian settlers from Luzon and the Visayas to Mindanao. This policy was later continued by the independent Philippines government and made the Moros a minority in Mindanao. With the creation of the Commonwealth, the idea of an American annexation of Mindanao and Sulu was dropped, and Muslims came under the governance of Christian Filipinos.

3. The Republic of the Philippines

a. Peacetime and the MNLF Rebellion

Under the Republic, the legislative body was changed. Muslim Filipinos were able to vote for representatives in general elections, where they lost their senate representatives but gained three seats in the lower house in the persons of Alauya Adiong Alonto of Lanao, Ombra Amilbansa of Sulu and Salipada Pendatun of Cotabato (Madale 1997: 134).

According to Datu Norodin Alonto Lucman, author of *Islam: War on Terror* (2008) and grandchild of Alauya Adiong Alonto, Moro nationalism was in full bloom after World War II. The symbolic high point according to Lucman was the Bandung Conference in 1955, a milestone of the Non-Aligned Movement. Several independent Asian and African nations met in Indonesia for the first large scale African-Asian conference, deliberately not inviting representatives from Europe, the US, or the USSR. The aims of the conference were to promote Asian and African economic and cultural relations and to oppose colonialism. The conference adopted certain main principles from the UN Charter that, for example, granted the right of every nation to self-determination. Among other things, the participants “pledged to support Muslim aspirations for self-determination in Mindanao” (Lucman 2000: 300). At this time, the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser invited Senator Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto and Congressman Rashid Lucman to Egypt. Between 1958 and 1978, 200 scholarships were granted to Filipino Muslims to study in Egypt (Majul 1979) in order to bridge the gap created by the Philippine educational institutions, which did not provide Islamic education (Lucman 2000). In the 1950s Alonto had developed an interest in strengthening the Islamic religion and had founded several religious institutions not only in Mindanao but also all over the Philippines. Under the Marcos regime (1965-1986), he founded the religious organization Ansar ul-Islam, which campaigned for self-determination and meaningful autonomy for Filipino Muslims. This idea was, according to Alam, later on realized in the creation of the ARMM (Alam 2005).

The first group of young Moro students educated in Egypt included the Maguindanao Hashim Salamat and the Maranao Mahid Mutilan, who studied Islamic theology at Al-Azhar University. Salamat was the nephew of Senator Salipada Pendatun and a relative of Udtog Matalam, although “his family was neither wealthy nor prominent” (McKenna 1990: 247). McKenna describes him and other Al-Azhar students as frustrated in their attempts at political participation since the traditional and political elite would not even allow them to come near

them. Mahid Mutilan, who spent years as a missionary outside of the Philippines, founded the Islamic OMPIA Party after Marco's downfall. Salamat joined the MNLF and later on founded the MILF.

Others students who went to Egypt chose to take up sciences like engineering and medical courses. Fifteen Moro students enrolled in the Cairo Military Academy to become soldiers, later to be known as the Nasserian Fifteen (Lucman 2000). They were indoctrinated into Nasserist philosophy, which was incarnated in a program called "Islamic socialism". This aimed not only to promote peace but also to oppose the political Islam favored by the Muslim Brotherhood (Aburis 2004: 92). After their studies, the military students were integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as commissioned officers. It is doubtful whether Nasserism influenced the Moro students at Al-Azhar University, although Gamal Abdel Nasser used the leading educational institution to discredit the Muslim Brotherhood (ibid: 88). Hashim Salamat later on stated that Abu Ala Maududi, founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) (Islamic Congregation) in today's Pakistan, had influenced him (Hassan 2003). Maududi was also credited with laying the foundation of Islamic philosophy that influenced the Muslim Brotherhood, Ikhwan Al-Muslimeen. It advanced the cause of political Islam in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Egypt was not the only country to support Islamic development for Muslims in the Philippines. Other Muslim countries gave large grants to finance religious buildings, schools, teachers and books in the southern Philippines. Preachers from Egypt, Indonesia, Libya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia came to Mindanao and Sulu after World War II. They reformed the local religious customs in order to bring them "closer to the accepted norms of orthodox Islam in the observance of precepts and adherence to customs and dress that were unknown in the Philippines before World War II" (Yegar 2002: 242). This development brought about a new affinity of young Moro students with the Islamic *ummah*, fostering adherence to *sharia* law and the observance of Islamic principles with regard to leadership issues. The students became more critical toward their traditional leaders, especially those holding important political positions, whom they blamed "for inadequate efforts in improving the social and economic situation of the Muslim community". The traditional leadership was accused of "maintaining a feudal economic regime in which Muslims were exploited by fellow Muslims" (ibid: 243). An accusation which, according to Yegar, was never previously articulated.

In 1951, Hadji Kamlun led a popular revolt in Sulu.⁶⁷ The Philippine Congress appointed a committee of three Muslim congressmen, headed by Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto, to investigate the problem of the Muslims and the situation in the south. The committee found that the Moros defined themselves not as Filipinos but as Muslims. It also revealed that their major loyalty was with their ethnic group. Only members of the Muslim intelligentsia saw themselves as Muslim Filipinos and only in academic circles was the word Moro used (Eder and McKenna 2004). The committee recommended accelerating educational and economic development. The Commission on National Integration law was created in 1957 to foster the economic development and full integration of the Muslims. On this basis, MSU was founded and several scholarships were awarded to Muslims. The Mindanao Development Authority, operative since 1963, and in 1975 replaced by the Southern Philippines Development Administration, was put in charge of economic projects. However, the projects seldom worked out because of “inefficient administration, corruption, inadequate budgets, and because it met with a cool reception by Muslims who suspected that the real goal of the declared integration was to blur Muslim identity” (Yegar 2002: 245). In 1963, the Commission on National Integration stated that the integration of the Muslims had not been achieved; that the economic, social, and educational gap had not been bridged; and that as a result the Muslim areas continue to be among the poorest in the Philippines. In 1961, a congressman from Sulu, Ombra Amilbangsa, introduced a bill asking for the independence of his province (Kamlan 2004: 110).

Muslims in the Philippines felt they were treated as second class-citizens. The immigrant-settlers dominated the agricultural land in Mindanao and the modern sectors of the economy and the administration, of which Muslims made up only about 2-3% of the leadership. In politics, the percentage of Muslims was relatively high in the 1950s (Kreuzer 2003). Since the American occupation, supporting those Muslim elites who were willing to collaborate had been a strategy of domination: divide and rule. These Muslim leaders were able to monopolize resources like land titles, education, production facilities, and political relations with Manila. Nevertheless, Muslim political participation declined in the next decade (*ibid.*). Many traditional Muslim elites during this time belonged to the Liberal Party, not Marcos's Nacionalista Party. Marcos supported the opponents of the traditional elites, the former were in some cases Christians who had gained victory using violent means (Hunt 1955; Kreuzer 2003: 11, 18). Marcos oiled patronage politics

⁶⁷ The rebellion was connected to a land conflict in which Kamlun was supported by his followers. According to Prof. Vivienne Angeles (personal communication). Kamlun was imprisoned in 1955 until 11 December 1968, shortly after the Jabidah-Massacre on 18 March 1968, when he was pardoned by President Marcos.

and “[s]pecialized budgets, pork-barrel funds, and even department budgetary allocations . . . for what was called the most expensive election in the Philippines,” the election of 1969 (Celoza 1997: 25). During the Marcos administration, it was possible for what Kreuzer (2003) calls the Muslim counter-elites to prosper. Families like the Dimaporos in Lanao and the Ampatuans in the Maguindanao area⁶⁸ gained influence by cooperating with the American colonial forces and finally through the help of Marcos (p. 19).

Meanwhile, the fear of some Americans, already pronounced in the 1920s, that there would be a conflict between Christian and Muslim Filipinos in an independent Philippine state became realized. This was the case especially in the 1950s and 1960s, with the conflict reaching its high point in the middle of the 1960s under Marcos (Werning 1983: 56), when the government restarted the settlement programs,⁶⁹ which had been abandoned during World War II. The increasing number of Christian migrants led to Muslims becoming a minority in Mindanao. Gonzales (2000) reports that by this time Muslims owned only 17% of the territory they once had (p. 108).

In 1968, the Jabidah Massacre⁷⁰ was revealed internationally, which upset Malaysian officials when they learned about President Marcos’s attempts to retake the island of Sabah.⁷¹ The government was accused of having secretly recruited Tausug-speaking Muslims as well as non-Muslims, mainly from Sulu and Tawi-Tawi with the goal of encouraging them to infiltrate into Sabah in order to destabilize the region and “take over the resource-rich island” (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 4). The massacre of over 25 recruits exposed this attempt.⁷² Anti-Marcos rallies were

⁶⁸ Whereas the Ampatuans in Maguindanao did not belong to the traditional royal elite, the Dimaporos belong to the Royal House of Masiu.

⁶⁹ Mainly in Cotabato, where it is said that most land conflicts between Muslims and Christian settlers developed and in Agusan, Bukidnon, Davao and Zamboanga del Sur.

⁷⁰ In March 1968, 87 Tausug trainees on the island of Corregidor complained in a letter to President Marcos about lack of payment and the quality and amount of food (Arguillas 2009f). The letter reached the head of the operation Major Eduardo Martelino, a convert to Islam. The four authors of the petition, after talking to Martelino, left the island; three of them remain unaccounted for (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 13). The rest of the petitioners were disarmed and 58 of them had to resign. About 70 trainees who did not sign the petition were transferred away from Corregidor. Another 24 were brought back to Sulu on 16 March. Two days later, 12 trainees were told to return home; they left the camp and remain unaccounted for. The same day another 12 left the camp, with them Jibin Arula, the only survivor of this group. While his colleges were lined up to be shot, Arula escaped and was rescued by fishermen on Caballo island (ibid.: 14). Jibin Arula reported the incident to several politicians, including the Maranao Congressman Rashid Lucman and Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino.

⁷¹ The operation under which Sabah was to have been infiltrated was called “Project Merdeka”; the commando group was called “Jabidah.” *Merdeka* (Bahasa Melayu) means freedom and *jabidah* denotes a beautiful woman in Muslim lore (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 4).

⁷² Sabah had been part of the Sulu sultanate from the second half of the seventeenth century on. In 1878, the British North Borneo Company is believed to have bought Sabah from the Sultan of Sulu (Kershaw 2001: 30). The Sultan on the other hand, persisted in saying that the contract was a lease and that he had never sold Sabah (Majul 1999:

organized, among others by the Sama Muslim Nur Hadji Misuari, who was a political science instructor at the University of the Philippines (UP) (1966-68).⁷³

The 1960s saw the beginning of a mass movement involving several Muslim organizations demanding self-determination. One of the first to emerge was the Muslim (later Mindanao) Independence Movement (MIM) under the Maguindanao Governor of Cotabato, Datu Udtog Matalam. McKenna (1990) calls this a “paper movement,” since Datu Udtog’s motivation was to regain his own reputation, which had been lost due to political intrigues, rather than to start a rebellion. Udtog signed his name to manifestos, appropriating the anger of Muslims generated by the Jabidah massacre, “and spent the rest of his life, until his death in 1983 at age 84, farming his land” (pp. 239-244). MIM was taken more seriously by Cotabato Christians and the national media than was intended by Datu Udtog. According to Lucman (2000) and Che Man (1990), around the same time Congressman Rashid Lucman organized the Union of Islamic Forces and Organizations (UIFO), which later on become the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO).

In 1968, “Malaysia took its revenge” (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 22): the Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and Sabah’s chief minister Tun Mustapha secretly invited Rashid Lucman to Malaysia, where they made him a promise to train Muslims from the Philippines and give them 10,000 arms and all needed logistical support. In exchange, the Muslim leaders in the Philippines would not claim Sabah. In the same year the UIFO and the MIM sent 92 Muslims from different prominent clans (64 from Lanao, 15 from the Sulu region, 11 from the Cotabato region) to be trained in guerrilla warfare on Pangkor island under the supervision of the Royal Malaysian Special Forces. This group was later called “the Blackshirts,”⁷⁴ owing to their black tiger uniforms, which were provided by the Malaysians.

In Malaysia in 1969, a group of secular Moro intellectuals organized themselves as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) without the knowledge of Rashid Lucman, with Nur

352). In 1945 Sabah became part of the British Crown Colony and since 1963, through a UN Referendum it has been part of the Federation of Malaysia. The Philippines claimed Sabah unsuccessfully in 1922, 1950, 1962, and 1963 (Lucman 2000: 302). Even after Sabah became part of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur paid annually (and still pays) about 5,300 ringit to the heirs of the Sultan of Sulu. Whereas Malaysia defines their payments as “cession-payments,” the heirs of the Sultan of Sulu consider the payments as rent.

⁷³ Che Man (1990) writes that Misuari was an officer of the Ka-bataang Makabayan (Patriot Youth) in the 1960s. This was a radical student group in Manila “which applied a Marxist analysis to the Philippine situation and advocated a revolutionary struggle against feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism” (p. 77). McKenna writes that the government later on tried to label the MNLF as a Communist movement and Misuari as a member of the Communist Party in order to discourage other Muslims from joining it (1990: 289).

⁷⁴ Other authors defined the Blackshirts primarily as the private army of a political clan, similar to the Barracudas under Ali Dimaporo (Gonzales 2000: 112).

Misuari as chairman and Abul Khayr Alonto, the son of the Lanao del Sur Governor Abdul Gafur Madki Alonto, as vice-chairman. In 1970 after the return of the recruits, the BMLO was formed. It had a religious, political, and military wing. Rashid Lucman was the chairman of the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA). Senator Salipada Pendatun (1946-1951, 1969-1872) led the political wing and Senator “Domocao” Alonto (1955-1961) assumed the chairmanship of religious affairs. He co-founded and became the Director of the religious organization Ansar ul-Islam in 1969, mainly composed of *ulama* (religious scholars), which was organized to preserve and develop Islam in the country (Alam 2005: 360). The BMLO considered itself an umbrella organization of all liberation forces (Che Man 1990: 78). Misuari was part of BMLO Military Affairs, as head of Moro Youth Power (Lucman 2000). However, the MNLF established its own independence movement without the elders, political clans, and royalties. Rashid Lucman later complained that this was only possible by using the logistics of the BMLO.

The motives of the young Muslim intellectuals who received a formal education in Manila and Egypt⁷⁵ and constituted the core of the MNLF, and those of the traditional elites⁷⁶, were different. The former sought revolutionary change that would make the society more egalitarian (Kreuzer 2003: 27). The latter favored the traditional hierarchical system and wanted to keep their positions of power. Rashid Lucman (a congressman from 1962-1969) as well as Pendatun had been members of the Liberal Party and thus their positions under the presidency of Marcos (1965-1986), who shifted from the Liberal Party (1946-1965) to the Nacionalista Party (1965-1978), were threatened (ibid: 26).

According to Che Man (1990), in 1970 Rashid Lucman met with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who agreed to support the Moro movement for self-determination. In the same year he also met again with President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who introduced him to President al-Gaddafi of Libya. The latter promised Lucman, Alonto, and Pendatun that he “would provide all forms of assistance to the liberation movement” (p. 78). The Muslims who had been trained in Malaysia came back and the BMLO under Chairman Rashid Lucman encouraged them to organize training camps in Mindanao and Sulu. Norodin Alonto Lucman claims that by 1971 “an estimated 30,000 Muslim men and women in Mindanao were trained by the Blackshirts (later the BMA) in basic

⁷⁵ Among others: Ibrahim Abdulrahman, Abdalbaki Abubakar, Mahid Mutilan, Khalifa Nando, and Hashim Salamat (Kreuzer 2003: 25).

⁷⁶ Represented by Congressman Rashid Lucman (Maranao), Governor Sheikh Abdul Hamid Kamlian (Tausug), and Senator Salipada Pendatun, the brother-in-law of Governor Udtog Matalam, the founder of the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) (Maguindanao).

weapon-handling and guerrilla warfare” (Lucman 2000: 304). At the beginning of the 1970s, the violence in Mindanao escalated because of the formation of Christian and Muslim private armies plus the involvement of the AFP and the police in land and political conflicts. Senator Mamintal Tamano claimed that “anarchy” ruled in Cotabato at this time, schools closed, people fled the area, and hundreds were killed. In June 1971, a Christian militia, the Ilaga, killed about 68 Muslim civilians in a mosque in North Cotabato. According to some eyewitness accounts, they were helped and protected by the AFP. The tragic event became known as the “Manili Massacre” since the incident took place in *barangay* Manili in Carmen, Cotabato.

The election season did not help matters in Mindanao, as more and more Christian politicians took over political positions under Marcos (Kreuzer 2007). Muslim leaders, during an election campaign in Lanao del Norte, declared *jihad* against the Ilaga — who were seen as a threat to the Moros’ existence — and killed 22 policemen in October 1971 (Yegar 2002: 256). The Tacub Massacre followed in November 1971, when AFP soldiers killed 38 Maranaos on their way home after voting. Around this time, the famous private army of Congressman Mohamad Ali Dimaporo, the Barracudas, came into being after Ilagas killed relatives of him in Lanao del Norte. Dimaporo among others blamed Governor Arsenio Quibranza of anti-Muslim activities in the province. Imelda “Angging,” Quibranza’s daughter, later became the wife of Abdullah Dimaporo, the son of Ali Dimaporo, ostensibly to pacify their *rido*. Conflicts between the Barracudas, Ilagas, and military outposts led to the occupation of Maranao ancestral domains by Ilagas in Lanao del Norte, giving rise to liquidations and about 50,000 refugees (Gonzales 2000: 113).

In the same year the governments of Kuwait, Libya, and Malaysia, and the Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), with its Malaysian Secretary-General Tunku Abdul Rahman (1971-1973), “which was still angry with Manila for plotting to destabilize Sabah” (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 61), blamed the Philippine government of genocide against the Muslims in the Philippines, appealing for UN intervention (Yegar 2002: 257). Libya sent monetary help to the Muslims via Rashid Lucman. To defuse the international tensions, Marcos invited ambassadors from several Muslim countries and conducted a tour with them of the southern Philippines to demonstrate that the conflict was a land conflict and not religious at the core; the ambassadors agreed.

In September 1972, Marcos, under pressure from the opposition, and facing an economic crisis and the upcoming elections, utilized the conflict in Mindanao as an excuse to declare

martial law, which had been secretly planned since 1965 (Celoza 1997: 46, 32). Opposition leaders like Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino were imprisoned. Rashid Lucman fled to Sabah, where he enjoyed the protection of the Malaysian government.

Earlier in 1971, Misuari held a conference in Zamboanga with some of the Malaysian trainees, members of the youth wing of the MIM, and many *ulama* in leadership positions. The conference demanded an Islamic Republic under *sharia* law and denied that the traditional leaders were spokesmen for the Bangsamoro (Yegar 2002: 268). Misuari thus planned a “coup d’état” supported by Malaysians headed by Tun Mustapha, “who claimed his paternal lineage from the Sultans of Sulu” (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 22) and with whom Misuari talked about a “Republic of Sabah.” In 1972, Misuari went to Libya to “follow up the promises of the Libyan government” (Che Man 1990: 78); later on, Rashid Lucman complained that he never sent Misuari as his representative. Instead of promoting the BMLO, Misuari introduced the MNLF and found support for it on the part of the Libyan government. Che Man speculates that the Libyan government preferred the MNLF to the traditional elites and further “would not want their funds to be used ineffectively by some politicians whose reputation for probity was poor” (ibid.: 79). Members of the BMLO accused Libyan Foreign Minister Ali Abdussalam Treki and Nur Misuari of having diverted money and weapons that were intended for the organization. They also claimed that Misuari could only have declared himself chairman of the MNLF with the money intended for the BMA and the help of his partners from Libya and Malaysia (Lucman 2000). The temporary “[u]nity of Moro leaders” under the leadership of the BMLO was thus diverted. Some *datus* joined the revolution under Misuari, while some of the political clans returned to the outstretched arms of Marcos, accepting government positions, bribes, and favors showered by a beleaguered regime. The BMLO leaders started to cooperate with the government, arguing that they would “lay the basis of the legitimacy of the Bangsa Moro Struggle” in national politics (Che Man 1990: 79).

In October 1972, seven Maranao groups formed the Mindanao Revolutionary Council for Independence. Under the leadership of several *ulama*, they launched their first major attack by occupying MSU in Marawi City; 74 people were killed and many Christian families fled. The AFP later on defeated the organization (Yegar 2002: 259). After this incident most, but not all, guerrilla groups unified under the loosely and relatively un-hierarchically structured MNLF,⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Basically, the MNLF was divided into a political and a military part. The politics were handled by a Central Committee with 13 members and Nur Misuari as Chairman, operating from Sabah and later on Tripoli in Libya. The

which, supported by Libya and Tun Mustapha, appeared to be one of the strongest of several Muslim organizations (Abreu 2002: 4; Kreuzer 2003: 29; Yegar 2002: 341).

In 1973, Marcos started to lure Muslims away from the rebellion. He announced that he would pardon rebels and support them economically when they surrendered. He also applied several suggestions made by Senator Mamintal Tamano in order to appease the Muslims. Thus the Islamic Amanah Bank was established, the prohibition on the historic barter-trade between Philippine Muslims and Borneo canceled, infrastructure and electricity projects funded, aid for refugees provided and the Institute for Islamic Studies at UP founded. Muslims were appointed to government positions, Muslim holidays were recognized, and finally the Muslim Personal Law and the implementation of *sharia* courts were codified in 1977 (Angeles 2001: 191; Yegar 2002: 279).

In 1974, the Sultans of Buayan, Maguindanao, Sulu, and the *Pat a Pangampong*, forming the 19 Royal Houses of Mindanao and Sulu, elected Rashid Lucman to be the second Paramount Sultan (Sultan Qudarat was the first) to represent them and Marcos recognized him as such. Brunei, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia saw this as a positive step toward peace in Mindanao (Lucman 2000; Yegar 2002: 280). However, the wish to have more autonomy for the sultanates, which replaced the demand for independence made by the MNLF, was not granted by the Marcos government. Sultan Rashid Lucman, Macapanton Abbas, and Salipada Pendatun left for Saudi Arabia under the invitation of Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Minister of National Defense and now Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. The wife of Rashid Lucman, Princess Tarhata Alonto Lucman, was forced to resign as Lanao del Sur Governor by President Marcos on charges of aiding the rebellion. In Saudi Arabia Lucman and Pendatun tried to re-unite with the MNLF but were not successful. Sultan Rashid Lucman died in Riyadh in 1984.

Afraid of an Arab oil embargo (Santos 1999), President Marcos agreed in 1975 to the demand of the OIC to engage in peace talks with the MNLF in order to find a political solution. The year before, Marcos was assured by the Fifth Conference of Muslim Foreign Ministers that “the territorial integrity of the Philippines was a nonnegotiable principle” (Yegar 2002). Under

BMA was the military arm, which reported to the Central Committee; it was divided into three divisions, according to the main Muslim ethnic groups, the Maguindanaos, Maranaos, and Tausugs. The loose structure led to the strong role of regional commanders, sometimes acting according to their personal wishes. Sometimes also independent units carried out tasks for the MNLF. Fighters came and went. Estimates of the MNLF's size vary from 5,000 to 30,000. Women were engaged, mainly for recruitment propaganda, communication, supplies, medication, and arms. They also cared for the widows and orphans of MNLF fighters, collected donations and did clerical work (Yegar 2002: 269ff.).

pressure from Indonesia and Malaysia, both countries having problems with their own minorities, the OIC rejected the claim to independence formulated by the MNLF. In 1975, Abul Khayr Alonto⁷⁸ emphasized in an interview that the MNLF had abandoned its goal of obtaining independence and now wished to establish a federative autonomous state under the Philippine government (Yegar 2002: 286, 302). Two years later, at the Eighth Islamic Conference in Tripoli, the OIC granted observer status to the MNLF “as the legitimate representative of the Muslim movement in the Philippines” (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 63).

The negotiations between the Marcos government and the MNLF started in 1975 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and ended in 1977 in Tripoli, Libya. The Tripoli Agreement of 23 December 1976, provided for autonomy. Mercado writes that with this agreement, “[t]he environment of war was transformed into a hope-filled expectation for an enduring peace settlement in the southern Philippines” (Mercado 2008: 233ff.). The MNLF’s demand had been to include all of Mindanao, Palawan, and Sulu (23 provinces and 17 cities) into the agreement. Instead of this, Marcos sent his wife Imelda to Libya where she succeeded in convincing Muammar al-Gaddafi, the representative of the OIC and a principal supporter of the MNLF,⁷⁹ to sign an alternative agreement (Proclamation No. 1628). This new agreement reduced the actual demand of the MNLF to 13 provinces⁸⁰ and 9 cities, based on the agreed ceasefire in those regions between the MNLF and the government (Abreu 2002: 4). The MNLF backed out of the agreement when Marcos declared that the implementation would be dependent on a plebiscite (Presidential Decree No. 1092, 1977). Marcos, nevertheless, based on Presidential Decree 1618, created in 1979 the Regional Autonomous Government in Western and Central Mindanao⁸¹. The

⁷⁸ He was the Vice-Mayor of Marawi in 1971 until he joined the MNLF and became a Deputy Commander. Abul Khayr Alonto joined Misuari during the time Tarhata Alonto Lucman was Governor, with the aim of replacing the traditional political leadership and freeing the Bangsamoro people. Abul Alonto, himself a son of Abdul Gafur Madki Alonto, the brother of Tarhata, was later accused by the Lucman-Alonto family in the downfall of Tarhata Alonto Lucman, who had quit her post after Marcos accused her of aiding the rebellion, and the provincial government. After Tarhata resigned, a military governor was placed in the post. Abul Khayr Alonto surrendered in 1978, under Marcos, and was appointed speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the autonomous districts, which by then had been created. Under Ramos he became Ambassador to Nigeria.

⁷⁹ According to Vitug and Gloria (2000), Libya supported Nur Misuari because it “wanted to make Misuari another Arafat through Ali Abdussalam Treki, Libya’s foreign minister, who had succeeded at that time in getting Arafat to speak before the UN” (pp. 32-33).

⁸⁰ Basilan, Davao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Palawan, South Cotabato, Sulu, Sultan Kudarat, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur.

⁸¹ The area comprised Region IX (including Western Mindanao with the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur: its government had its main seat in Zamboanga City) and Region XII (including Central Mindanao with the provinces of Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat: its government was in Cotabato City). Thus, the Regional Autonomous Government in Western and Central Mindanao finally only included ten provinces and seven cities. Davao del Sur, Palawan, and South

government consisted of 13 District Governors – six Muslims and seven Christians (Yegar 2002: 307). The MNLF returned to warfare but with less intensity than before the ceasefire. The support of Tun Mustapha of Malaysia ceased, several *datus* and rebels surrendered, and some accepted positions in the new government (Kreuzer 2003: 30).

These developments led to a split in leadership of the MNLF under Vice-Chairman Hashim Salamat in December 1977. In 1984, Salamat changed the name of his faction to Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to underscore an Islamic perspective as central to the Bangsamoro movement. He petitioned the OIC and the Muslim World League to oust Misuari from the MNLF leadership, and accused Misuari of driving the MNLF away from an Islamic basis toward a Maoist orientation and of monopolizing the organization's decisions, and plannings (Abreu 2002: 5). However, the basic line of the MNLF can hardly be seen as Maoist but was nationalistic and secular, a direction that nevertheless was in opposition to the explicitly Islamic orientation of the MILF (ibid.: 3).

Sultan Rashid Lucman first supported Salamat⁸² but later on revived his own group, the BMLO, which was, after Lucman's death, under the leadership of Macapanton Abbas. Its Supreme Council elected Norodin Alonto Lucman as caretaker Chairman. However, the group was said to cooperate with the government and to campaign for surrender and was thus rejected by the hard-core rebels. Another group was formed around 1982: the MNLF-Reformist Group (MNLF-RG), which was mainly composed of Maranaos under Dimas Pundato, a former MNLF Vice-Chairman (Yegar 2002: 350). The MNLF-RG also wanted an Islamic state, but it was “dominated by traditional Maranao aristocrats with a secular education” (Gonzales 2000: 117). Thus, the MNLF split and new groups formed around leaders from the different major ethnic groups. The MNLF-RG was dissolved when its leader accepted a government position in Manila.⁸³ Among the major rebel groups, only the MNLF and the MILF continued to exist, and only the MNLF was recognized by the OIC.

Salamat moved the headquarters of the MILF in 1979-80 to Pakistan. About 500 of his men were trained in Afghanistan (Kreuzer 2003: 30; Yegar 2002: 311), where they fought against Soviet forces, and were financially supported and supplied with weapons by the sponsors of the

Cotabato were not included because of the plebiscite.

⁸² Gonzales (2000) writes that the split of the MNLF was forced by Senator Salipada Pendatun and Representative Rashid Lucman, “who were seeking to control the MNLF”. As a reaction to reports of his replacement, Misuari expelled leaders with elite backgrounds, among them Hashim Salamat, who had been “groomed to replace Misuari,” and Abul Khayr Alonto (p. 116).

⁸³ He became executive director of the OMA.

Afghan *mujahideen* (Yegar 2000: 344). In Mindanao, they built their own training camps, which were more religious than those of the MNLF. Women's, youth, and *ulama* organizations were set up and members of the Bangsa Moro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) were recruited.

Over the years, the MILF developed an organizational system that can be seen as a parallel government. The group's structure is patterned after that of a republican government with executive, legislative,⁸⁴ and judiciary branches.⁸⁵ Its highest policy-making body is the Central Committee. There is a department of political⁸⁶ and military affairs, which supervises the BIAF⁸⁷. Like the MNLF, whose women's division is called the Bangsa Bai Women's Auxiliary Forces,⁸⁸ the BIAF includes a women's group, the Bangsa Moro Women Auxiliary Brigade (BMWAB), who attend a military crash course. The women mainly handle kitchen and medical work but each of the six BIAF divisions has one division of armed women fighters — “for every battalion a company and for every company a squad” (Abreu 2002). Some of the members of the BMWAB are contract workers abroad, sending money to the MILF. The BMWAB has regular meetings and schooling, but its decisions have to be approved by the Central Committee. The behavior of women in the MILF is regulated according to *sharia* laws.

⁸⁴ The legislature is the *Majlis-as-Shura* or Consultative Assembly, with 80 members, including permanent members from the Central Committee and regular members from the MILF's 13 regional commands. The representatives from the women, youth, business, professional, and non-Muslim sectors, which maintain large organizations by their own, are recommended by the *Majlis* and confirmed by the Central Committee.

⁸⁵ The judiciary is characterized by the *sharia* system; its highest unit is the Islamic Supreme Court. At the village level there is the Barangay Reconciliation Committee, which is headed by an *ustadz* together with a traditional leader who is well versed in the *adat* (customary-law). It handles cases where no fines would have to be paid and capital punishment is not applicable; these include land disputes; violence against women, including wife beating and sexual harassment, and local conflicts that are not *rido*. The next level are the district and municipal *sharia* courts (which can handle cases where fines would be imposed) headed by an *alim* (religious scholar), who usually has an education from abroad and is not involved in cases of bribery. The Supreme Court handles cases that involve the death penalty by public execution as well as those involving *ridos*.

The Bangsamoro was initially imagined by the MILF as an Islamic state. It would have had an executive under a chairperson addressed as *Amir*, as legislative body the *Majlis-as-Shura*, and its judicial body would be the *sharia* system of courts. Everybody in an Islamic state is imagined to be equal before Allah, and the Islamic state would have been a *khalifat*, which means that man is only a vice-regent of Allah on earth. The MILF knew that not everyone would accept Islamic law immediately. Thus, in 1980 they established a 20-year Four-Point Program. One point is gradual *da'wah*, Islamization. By 1998, the MILF had about 7,000 *da'wah* workers who practice in schools and colleges, among government workers and professionals as well as among non-Muslims. (Abreu 2002: 17).

⁸⁶ Included in the department of political affairs are the *Dawa'h* Committee, the Committee on Education, the Information Bureau, the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Internal Security.

⁸⁷ “Each local committee from the barangay (village) up to the district level has corresponding subcommittees on *dawa'h*, education, information, finance, and internal security. Each committee has a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer” (Abreu 2002). The military training includes physical and spiritual training. The *mujahideen* are required to take up subjects like Islam, Qur'an recitation, history, and tradition, and are given a basic orientation in human rights, national and international situations, and the GRP-MILF peace process.

⁸⁸ For more detailed information on women in the MNLF, see Angeles (1996) and Siapno (1995).



Picture 6: MILF Majahidat, Camp Bushran, Butig, 1999

Photo provided by Norodin Alonto Lucman.

At the end of the 1970s, from his exile in the US, Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino continued to seek partners in his opposition to Marcos and at the same time sought to offer a possible solution to the “Mindanao Problem.” He talked to Rashid Lucman, Nur Misuari, and Hashim Salamat, urging them to find a common solution. Only Salamat, at this time in Egypt, refused. Aquino advocated full autonomy for Muslim Mindanao, including legislative powers, an educational network, local government, and security forces (Yegar 2002: 319). The plans died with Aquino’s murder in 1983 at the Manila Airport. Meanwhile, the influence of Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini grew and the country refused to support Rashid Lucman, who had come to Iran on the invitation of Ambassador Rafael Ilete, but agreed to support Nur Misuari and the MNLF. In 1980, the MNLF opened an office in Teheran, which was officially recognized as an embassy. Iran

declared that they would stop oil exports to the Philippines to put pressure on Marcos, an achievement of the MNLF that even the BMLO praised. Iran also acquired arms from Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) storehouses in Syria and gave them to the MNLF. The support of Iran was an important factor for the survival of the MNLF since the Libyan support decreased in the end of the 1970s. Iran advocated the MNLF demand for independence of the 25 districts of the southern Philippines, whereas states like Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states were in favor of autonomy based on the Tripoli Agreement.⁸⁹

In 1986, the “people power” movement ousted Marcos and paved the way for a new President, “Ninoy” Aquino’s widow, Corazon “Cory” Aquino (1986-1992). In Lanao del Sur, Marcos crony Mohamad Ali Dimaporo was replaced by Tarhata Alonto Lucman as Governor and by another Alonto, Domocao “Jun,” as head of MSU. The Alontos and Lucmans had been part of the anti-dictatorship movement and were close to the Aquinos (Lucman 2000; Gonzales 2000: 120). President Aquino’s government followed up “Ninoy’s” earlier intention to recognize Muslim autonomy and planned to have a meeting with the three major Muslim groups, the MNLF, the MILF and the BMLO/MNLF-GR. Only the delegates of the BMLO showed up, and Aquino did not recognize them as representatives of all Muslims (Yegar 2002: 331).

The MNLF and the MILF were still refusing negotiations when the Constitutional Committee in 1986 decided to include a clause in the new Constitution which granted autonomy to Muslim Mindanao “within the framework of . . . the national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines” (Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Art. 10, Sec. 15), provided that the majority of the people in the Muslim areas ratified the autonomy in a referendum. Nur Misuari claimed independence and was convinced to return home to the Philippines in 1986, when he met with Aquino and agreed to a ceasefire and renewed negotiations under the auspices of the OIC. Hashim Salamat and the MNLF-GR did not feel obligated by this agreement. The MNLF-RG started guerrilla attacks against soldiers and there were clashes between the MNLF and the MILF. Many Christians did not agree with Aquino’s politics and feared a Muslim secession, leading to the formation of a Christian Liberation Army (Yegar 2002: 332). During the negotiations, Misuari, under pressure from the OIC, agreed to autonomy but refused to accept a referendum, since this would reduce Muslim Mindanao to those districts where Muslims constituted the majority. The MNLF demanded that autonomy for the

⁸⁹ Even though Saudi Arabia did not support independence, it was disappointed by the non-fulfillment of the Tripoli Agreement and provided USD 250 million to the MNLF in the 1980s (Yegar 2002:321).

districts agreed upon in the Tripoli Agreement be granted not through constitutional but through political means. The Constitution was ratified in the Muslim districts even though the rebel groups boycotted it. In 1989, Aquino, against the will of the MNLF and MILF, signed a bill that granted autonomy to 13 provinces and nine cities, according to the Tripoli Agreement, under the condition that those areas ratified it in a referendum. In the referendum only Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi voted to be included into the ARMM. Marcos's official opponent, the Maguindanao Zacaria Candao, became the first ARMM governor (1990-1993), he and other *datu* politicians quickly arranged their participation in the corrupt patronage-politics of the Philippine system (Kreuzer 2003: 33).

The MNLF returned to guerrilla fighting. Around the end of the 1980s, Abubakar Abdurazak Janjalani founded the Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters, also known by its Arabic name al-Harakatul Islamia and as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) (*abu sayyaf* means the sword bearer).⁹⁰ He was born in Basilan and, with the help of an MNLF scholarship, educated in Libya, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. He was trained by the PLO in Libya and fought in Afghanistan. The goal of the ASG was to establish an independent Islamic state, and its means of pursuing the goal was to terrorize the Christian population.⁹¹ The ASG believed that Nur Misuari had betrayed the Muslims by entering negotiations with the government. The group at this time counted between 100 and 1,000 members, sometimes joined by MNLF or MILF fighters who were opposed to Misuari or Salamat (Yegar 2002: 344).

In 1992, peace-negotiations between the MNLF and the government were revived, this time with the new President Fidel Ramos (1992-1998). The MILF and Abu Sayyaf continued their attacks (ibid.: 339). The role of the OIC decreased at this time, as Vitug and Gloria (2000) comment: "After keeping the flames burning for the MNLF for more than 20 years, the OIC also finally became weary of this never-ending conflict" (p. 67). Other problems, like the conflict in Bosnia, caught their attention.

b. The Final Peace Agreement (FPA) and the MILF Rebellion

On 2 September 1996, the MNLF and the Ramos government signed the Final Peace Agreement (FPA). The agreement covered into two phases, the first of which was to last three

⁹⁰ Janjalani was killed in December 1998.

⁹¹ Between 1991 and 1995, "Abu Sayyaf carried out 94 abductions, 75 explosions, 58 robberies, 50 murders, 24 cases of arson, 12 raids, 9 demolitions, and other acts of terror in the course of which a total of 165 people were killed and 331 wounded" (Yegar 2002: 346).

years. It set up a Special Zone for Peace and Development (SZOPAD),⁹² to be supervised by the Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), which was composed of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and three Deputies: one each representing the Muslims, the Christians, and the cultural communities. The President appointed them. Misuari as overseer had three years to convince the Christian, Muslim, and Lumad inhabitants to join the ARMM in a referendum to be held in 1999. Meanwhile the ARMM would have the shape that was decided on in the 1989 referendum under Aquino. About 7,500 MNLF fighters joined the AFP or the Philippine National Police (PNP), and development plans for the next three years were implemented.⁹³ In the second phase, the ARMM's Executive Council, legislative assembly, administrative system, and judiciary; its relation to the national government; its role in education; its use of *sharia*; and the establishment of a special regional security force were all to be determined based on the agreements made in the FPA.

Christian groups, afraid of a takeover by the MNLF, formed armed groups. Protest demonstrations against the peace agreement were held and the opposition in Manila warned to call on the Supreme Court (Kreuzer 2003: 34). Moreover, the Senate accused the Ramos government of "bending [over] backwards for a rebel organization that they felt did not deserve the attention and pampering it was getting" (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 56). The outcome of this resistance was that the authority of Misuari and of the SPCPD was limited and directly dependent on President Ramos.

Misuari stayed in Manila more than in Mindanao and the development projects did not work as expected. That failure disappointed many rebels from the various ethnic groups, many of whom went over to the MILF, which did not believe in autonomy but demanded the removal of the central state system and its replacement with a federal system; one of the federal states would

⁹² The SZOPAD covered the provinces of Basilan, Davao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Palawan, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and the cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian, Puerto Princesa, and Zamboanga.

⁹³ In a Tripartite (government, MNLF, and OIC) review of the FPA from 1996, Deputy Presidential Peace Adviser Nabil Tan said in March 2009 that Phase One was fully implemented: the integration of former MNLF fighters into the AFP and PNP and livelihood, educational, health, and other development programs in the area. These community interventions not only contributed to the improvement of access to basic services and economic opportunities, but are seen as having served as catalysts for grassroots consensus-building, dialogue, and understanding. But there are still five issues from Phase Two that remain to be settled: (1) *sharia* and the judiciary, (2) a unified regional command, (3) education, (4) economic and natural resources, and (5) the political system and the right to representation. The government and the MNLF are to hold further discussions on these issues. The "Noynoy" Aquino government announced on 2 September 2010 that it intends to complete the implementation of the said agreement within its term (OPPAP 2010).

be the Bangsamoro homeland. The native inhabitants of Mindanao, excluding those coming after 1935, would decide in a plebiscite if they wanted to be part of the homeland. Clashes between the AFP and the MILF, which was militarily stronger than the MNLF, became more frequent, mainly in Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao but also in Basilan, Cotabato and Zamboanga. Kidnapping for ransom became a major source of income for the MILF (Kreuzer 2003: 37; Yegar 2002: 344).

Negotiations between the MILF and the government started in 1997 under Ramos. They were frequently interrupted by several military clashes, sometimes provoked by the AFP when the negotiations needed to be restarted, or by the MILF when they were not satisfied with the results (Kreuzer 2003). The most severe violent conflict under Ramos happened in June 1997 when the AFP attacked Camp Abubakar as a reaction to several abductions and assaults by the MILF or groups connected to the MILF in Mindanao (Jubair 2007: 72; Kreuzer 2003: 36ff.). Only after the all-out war in 2000 under President Joseph Estrada (1998-2001) did the peace talks with the MILF collapse completely. In 1998, the Estrada government ratified the 27 August Agreement of Intent, which underlined the necessity to conclude the conflict via negotiations.⁹⁴ In 1999, the Estrada government acknowledged seven of the MILF-controlled camps in Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, and North Cotabato (among them Camp Abubakar) as the MILF's main camps and declared them to be development and peace zones (Kreuzer 2003; Vitug and Gloria 2000: 146).⁹⁵ Most of these camps share common borders, thus making it one single area.⁹⁶ The MILF territories were not predominantly military camps but clusters of villages. Due to lack of any alternative term during the peace negotiations, they were referred to as camps.

Camp Abubakar, which was the main camp of the MILF before its destruction in 2000, developed and grew after 1981 until it comprised an area of 5,000 ha. Included were several villages, "where mass supporters of the Islamic revivalist force, more than 90% of whom are Moro peasants, live and have their means of livelihood and subsistence" (Abreu 2002: 24). In

⁹⁴ The notion of an Islamic state was not debated at the negotiating table. Vitug and Gloria (2000) comment that the MILF might talk publicly about it, but did not present it during peace talks any longer "realizing how extremely the government and media can react to the idea" (p. 145).

⁹⁵ Abreu wrote in 2002 that the MILF had 13 major fixed camps and 33 secondary camps, which are said, when taken altogether, to be larger than the province of Lanao del Sur (Kreuzer 2003).

⁹⁶ Camp Abubakar covered the towns of Barira, Buldon, and Matanog in Maguindanao, and Kapatagan and Balabagan in Lanao del Sur. In the north, the camp shared a common border with Camp Busrah, the other main camp at this time, in Lanao del Sur. The northern border of Camp Busrah is shared by Camp Bilal in Lanao del Norte. The same structure can be found to the south and east of Camp Abubakar. It borders Camps Badre, Darapanan, and Omar Ibn Al-Khatab in Maguindanao to the south and Camp Rajamuda to the east, in North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat (Abreu 2002).

1995, the camp had a population of 146,311 people, 65% of them Iranon, 25% Maranao, 3% Maguindanao, and 7% from other groups. Most of the villages also had a minor Christian population and some villages were supporters of the MNLF. The inhabitants tilled the land, ran shops or small business. Schools for Islam, the military,⁹⁷ and agriculture as well as an arms and ammunition factory and a prison were established. The MILF founded a court and taxation system. One of its payers, a South Korean enterprise, started “the MALMAR irrigation project in North Cotabato” (ibid.: 22). However, landlordism existed in the camp. One government official managed about 1,000 ha of corn and coconut farmland for his clan. The MILF does not have radical land reform as part of its program. Islam recognizes the right to private property, as long as the relationship to the workers is not oppressive. The landowners also had to pay more *zakat*, charity payments for the needy.

Locals from Camp Abubakar praised the MILF for bringing peace and order to the area, mainly by reducing *ridos*. Criticism could be heard from outsiders concerning women’s rights. Professor Rufa Cagoco-Guam relates the case of a Maguindanao woman raped by a distant relative who sought help from an MILF *sharia* court (1999). The rapist was found guilty, but the relatively small fine he had to pay (PHP 30,000) did not reach the victim but was kept by the *ulama* deciding the case. A newspaper article from 2002 blamed *ulama* groups for having punished three women who violated the dress code by daubing their heads with enamel paint (Unson 2002).⁹⁸ Non-MILF interviewees from Marawi City in 2008 referred to members of the MILF as having executed acts like these. The rebel group did not officially sanction the culprits. The practices were stopped because of a public outcry against them.

The final goal of the MILF camps was to make the group financially self-sufficient. This was especially important because fund-raising after the 1970s became more difficult. Vitug and Gloria (2000) explain: “The emergence of radical Muslim groups that oppose and threaten existing governments has led to tighter security measures, including stricter monitoring of fund raising activities.” (p. 118). Consequently, the MILF received its main financial support from sympathizers working overseas and the local Muslim communities, giving the *zakat* to the MILF (ibid.). By recognizing the MILF camps as the government peace negotiation team had done for “purposes of ceasefire implementation and coordination” (Santos 2005: 8), an “embryonic Bangsamoro sovereignty” (ICG 2004: 6) was acknowledged. The negotiations continued while

⁹⁷ The two first military academies founded by the MILF were Abdulrahman Bedis and Ibrahim, both located in Camp Abubakar. Graduates of the training courses received a certificate of completion (Abreu 2002: 30).

⁹⁸ Article provided by Vivienne Angeles.

peace zones in which development projects were to be realized were established in the ARMM. However, at the beginning of 2000, Estrada changed his policy toward the MILF, no longer treating it as an equal negotiation partner but instead systematically connecting it to Abu Sayyaf and criminal groups (Kreuzer 2003: 38). Attacks by the AFP increased, officially not against the MILF but against criminal groups, abductors, and terrorists (ibid.: 38). The head of the government negotiation team was replaced: Edgardo Batenga broke with the policy of his predecessor and refused to recognize the MILF camps. A bounty was set on the heads of the MILF leaders, accusing them of having taken part in assaults in Manila and other places in the Philippines (ibid.: 39).

After the death of his godson, First Lieutenant Don Alfonso Javier, who was killed in Kauswagan (Lanao del Norte), Estrada “in a fit of rage” declared all-out war on 20 March 2000. Around 15 June 2000, the peace talks broke down. In response, the MILF declared “all-out jihad” (Jubair 2007: 77). The AFP supported Christian vigilante groups like the Alliance of Christian Vigilantes for Muslim-free Mindanao and the Spiritual Soldiers of God. Many violent incidents occurred, including torture of civilians. There were about one million refugees; villages were destroyed; children were taken out of school; people were forced to sell their capital goods, houses or lands, or to take out loans; and many people suffered from malnutrition. More MILF camps came under attack and finally, on 9 July 2000, Camp Abubakar, which was considered by the MILF not a military camp but a “Muslim community,” was defeated, which fragmented the guerrilla movement.⁹⁹ This fragmentation further increased after the death of Hashim Salamat in 2003 (ICG 2004: 3; Jubair 2007: 81). The victory was celebrated inside the camp by the army and the President with alcohol and the national food, roasted pig. Muslims perceived this act as an offense against their religion (Reese and Werning 2006).

At the end of 2000, the government offered an amnesty for MILF members. Nevertheless, before Estrada could find a solution to the conflict in the south, he had to deal with corruption accusations, attacks from the opposition, and major protests in Manila. EDSA II¹⁰⁰ was in full rage and on 20 January 2001, Estrada was ousted from office and replaced by his Vice-President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Like Presidents Aquino, Ramos, and Estrada before her, Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-10)

⁹⁹ In 2009 the MILF declared that it had actually “abandoned fixed camping since 2001 in favour of highly mobile tactics” (Khaled Musa in *Sun Star Davao*, 3 May 2009).

¹⁰⁰ EDSA II refers to the protests against Estrada which largely took place on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, like the earlier protests against Marcos.

started her term with using peaceful means with the Muslim rebels, following an “all-out peace” strategy. For the first time, the government’s peace negotiation team was composed of people having Mindanao affiliations (either having been born there or being married to a Mindanaoan), and was not headed by a military officer but by a civilian, Jesus Dureza¹⁰¹ (Cagoco-Guiam 2003: 6). The negotiations, which under Estrada took place in the Philippines, now again involved OIC members, and so the meetings took place in Libya and Malaysia. On 31 March 2001, President Arroyo signed RA No. 9054, which was an amendment of RA No. 6734. The act aimed to strengthen and expand the ARMM. On 22 June, the Agreement on Peace between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the MILF was signed in Tripoli. It included an agreement on a monitoring team with representatives of the OIC to observe the implementation of all GRP-MILF agreements, MILF-led development projects, and financial assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). It was also agreed that the issue of ancestral domain had to be discussed. Both parties signed the Manual of Local Monitoring Teams (LMT), which also provided for the inclusion of local NGOs (Arguillas 2003: 15) and Instructions for the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH), a committee constituted out of MILF and GRP members that was responsible for the observance of human rights in accordance with the agreement.

On 14 August 2001, a referendum was held in 15 provinces and 13 cities¹⁰² in Mindanao, again based on the Tripoli Agreement, after the passage of the Expanded ARMM Law (RA No. 9054). The goal was to determine if the four ARMM provinces were in favor of the amendments to RA No. 6734 and if the residents of the other provinces wanted to be included in the expanded ARMM. Only the province of Basilan (excluding Isabela City, which is part of Region IX, Zamboanga Peninsula) and Marawi voted for the inclusion into the autonomous region. The MNLF and MILF boycotted the plebiscite, “claiming it was unfaithful to the provisions of the 1996 FPA and rendered the autonomous region ‘less autonomous’” (Cagoco-Guiam 2003: 7).

On 26 November 2001, the MNLF Governor Nur Misuari, together with his nephew,

¹⁰¹ Dureza’s negotiating team included two women: Emily Marohombsar, who was also a member of the negotiating team under Estrada, and Irene Santiago of the MCW; and two government officials: Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema (also then Secretary-General of the MNLF Executive Committee) and then ARMM Vice-Governor Mahid Mutilan.

¹⁰² The plebiscite was held in the provinces of Basilan, Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Palawan, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and the newly created Province of Zamboanga Sibugay, and in the cities of Cotabato, Dapitan, Digos, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Kidapawan, Koronadal, Marawi, Pagadian, Puerto Princesa, Tacurong, and Zamboanga.

started a rebellion in Sulu and Zamboanga City, attacking AFP camps and killing over 50 people. He argued that the 1996 FPA had not been implemented by the GRP. The attacks happened during the expanded ARMM elections in which Parouk Hussin, a member of the MNLF, and Mahid Mutilan from the religious OMPPIA Party were elected as Governor and Vice-Governor. Misuari's attacks thus occurred when he was about to lose his governorship and after he had been ousted in April 2001 from the MNLF chairmanship by the Council of 15 (among them Parouk Hussin and Muslimin Sema, who in succession replaced Misuari as heads of MNLF). After the attacks on the camps, Misuari fled to Sabah where Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed ordered his arrest. He was extradited to Manila and imprisoned at Santa Rosa detention center, facing rebellion charges. While imprisoned he nevertheless ran for Sulu Governor twice (and lost) and supported Arroyo's election in 2004 "in exchange for promises that he would be pardoned and freed" (Jacinto 2008). On 25 April 2008, he was given conditional freedom on a bail of PHP 50,000. When freed he started peace campaigns in Mindanao, gathered former supporters around him, and fraternized with the Sultan of Sulu and Sabah, discussing claims of ancestral domains by the MILF. On 3 December 2009, a Makati Court ruled that Misuari was not guilty of staging the rebellion in 2001.

After the 11 September 2001 attacks in the USA, the policy of the Philippine government changed and peace talks slowed down. In October 2001, Memorandum Order No. 37 provided for an "anti-terrorism policy" stating, "Whereas the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States of America brought to the fore of international consciousness the threat of terrorism . . ." The government approved 14 measures¹⁰³ to be taken "in connection with its commitment to cooperate in the international struggle against terrorism." One month later, on 20 November, Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo and Bush signed a joint statement reaffirming bilateral relations. Setting historical political developments aside, "[b]oth Presidents acknowledged poverty as a contributing factor to terrorism and thus the necessity of promoting economic growth and development" (Tyner 2005: 73). Trade relations were strengthened after this and Arroyo was "rewarded" by Bush by allowing increasing quotas on the US imported textiles and

¹⁰³ The measures were the following: commitment to preventing and suppressing terrorism in all forms within the territorial boundaries of the Philippines; supervision and implementation of policies and actions of the government against terrorism; intelligence coordination; an internal focus on terrorism; accountability of public and private corporations and individuals; synchronizing internal efforts within a global outlook; legal measures; promotion of Christian and Muslim solidarity; vigilance against terrorists and their supporters, equipment, weapons, and funds; contingency plans; comprehensive security plans for critical infrastructure; support of overseas Filipino workers; modernization of the AFP and PNP; media support; and political, social, and economic measures.

by granting huge financial credits to the Philippines for private investments (ibid.: 73). The USA also provided USD 30 million for development projects in the southern Philippines, “pending a peace agreement” between the MILF and the government (ibid.: 111). The US position of being a neutral peacemaker, however, can be debated. In 2002, under the Visiting Forces Agreement about 600 U.S. soldiers were sent to the Philippines on a non-combatant mission in order to support AFP troops. The government in the same year, with the argument that the MILF had to prove its sincerity (Cagoco-Guiam 2003: 8), officially suspended the peace talks. The facts show the dual strategy of the USA: on the one hand, it officially supported the peace process between the two parties; on the other hand, it provided developmental and military assistance to the Macapagal-Arroyo government in order to marginalize ASG¹⁰⁴ and JI members (US Department of State Country Reports on Terrorism 2008). This policy is explained in the 2008 U.S. Country Report on Terrorism, which stated that the Philippines as well as Malaysia and Indonesia are forming a “terrorist transit triangle” region. According to that definition, although there are only a “few remaining terrorists in the Philippines,” the Sulu Archipelago and central Mindanao are considered as “safe haven[s] for terrorists”.¹⁰⁵

On 6-7 May 2002, back-channel peace talks started in Malaysia focusing on anti-terrorism and criminal strategies and development projects. A Joint Communiqué created the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group to isolate or interdict criminal syndicates and kidnap-for-ransom groups in Mindanao. The government also promised not only to pay for the homecoming of IDPs but also to give repair property that was destroyed in the 2000 all-out-war. The Bangsa Moro Development Agency (BDA) was founded and the officers of the Bangsamoro Development Council, a civil society organization, were asked to run it (according to the BDA’s homepage). Its task was to implement development projects that were partly funded by the World Bank or the Japan International Cooperation Agency in the Muslim areas.

These positive steps toward a solution of the conflict did not continue. The local Muslim

¹⁰⁴ The ASG had links to international terrorists, among others to Ramzi Yousuf, who planned the explosions at the New York City World Trade Center in 1993. Together with him they planned to murder Pope John Paul II in a suicide attack in Manila on 12 January 1995. Yousuf also planned a suicidal plane crash on the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) compound in Washington. He was accidentally discovered when a fire broke out in his Manila apartment; he fled but was later on imprisoned in the USA. Under Yousuf, Abu Sayyaf was sponsored by the Libyan and Syrian governments, the Palestinian organization Hamas, and the Lebanese Hezbollah; and by Iranian, Malaysia, Pakistani, and Saudi Arabian organizations linked to Osama bin Laden (Yegar 2002: 347). In reaction Ramos started an anti-terrorist campaign, among others, by talking to the PLO and to the Malaysian and Pakistan governments, demanding their support in the fight against terrorism (ibid.: 351). In 2009, its main leaders having died in military encounters in 2006 and 2007, Abu Sayyaf had approximately 350 members (Mogato 2009).

¹⁰⁵ This formulation can also be found in the 2009 report, under the Obama administration.

political elites, such as the Ampatuans, in the ARMM, did not favor the MILF, which meant a threat to their patronage-posts in the government. In addition, some Christian politicians in Mindanao did everything they could to reduce the influence of the MILF, among them North Cotabato Governor, Emmanuel Piñol, and Zamboanga City Mayor, Maria Clara Lobregat and her successor, her son Celso Lobregat. On 10 February 2003, the government negotiating team, then led by Jesus Dureza, presented to House Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin Drilon a draft FPA with the MILF that offered “enhanced autonomy” as a political settlement. This draft probably would not have been agreed to either by the opponents of the MILF or by the MILF itself. In an interview with *MindaNews* in May 2005, Iqbal explained that the MILF considered four possibilities of governance: federalism, a commonwealth, an association of free states, and independence (Arguillas 2007). Autonomy, on the other hand, was not part of their agenda.

On 11 February 2003, a military campaign, the Buliok offensive targeting the new headquarters of the MILF, was launched in North Cotabato by the AFP at Eid al-Fitr, with the stated intention of attacking not the MILF but “criminal elements” like the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang (Jubair 2007: 86; Kreuzer 2003: 46; Santos 2005: 9). *MindaNews* reported that military officials later “admitted the operations were against the MILF” (Arguillas 2009c).¹⁰⁶ The attacks outraged the MILF and the military conflict started anew with guerrilla and terror attacks resulting in about 100,000 refugees, damage to the local economy, and several civilian and military casualties. Some hardliners, like Congressman Celso Lobregat, wanted to declare the MILF a terrorist group, in order to cut its international financing. The Macapagal-Arroyo government set a bounty on the heads of leading MILF members, accusing them of responsibility for twin bombings in Davao City that killed 38 people and wounded about 200 (Jubair 2007: 85). Later, Defense Secretary Joel Reyes and Brigadier General Victor Corpuz, chief of the Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, were accused by mutineers of having ordered the bombings in Davao themselves. The government then promised to drop the charges against the MILF leaders (ibid.: 85). As with Estrada before, the government set conditions for restarting the peace-talks that could not be fulfilled by the MILF, including the demand that the MILF turn in those people who had been involved in terrorist attacks.

In July 2003, Washington voiced its concern that the “rule of law” in the Philippines be

¹⁰⁶ NGOs claimed that behind the attacks was the desire to control the 200,000 ha Liguasan Marshes, which are said to contain oil and where the MILF has its main camps. Governor Piñol, one of the main opponents of the MILF, was the chairman of the Liguasan Marsh Development Council (Kreuzer 2003: 46).

strengthened since peace process was being postponed and the money that had been designated for it was being shifted to other programs (Tyner 2005: 111). Minority leader Aquilino “Nene” Pimentel, Jr., in reaction to the possible reallocation of funds, demanded that Malaysia be replaced with the USA as facilitator for the peace talks. According to Tyner, the Macapagal-Arroyo government was in a difficult position, as it had to broker a peace settlement but not to appear soft on terrorism. The USA never defined the MILF as a terrorist group, although it did so with the New People’s Army (NPA), and the Abu Sayyaf and the Rajah Solaiman groups. However, there were reports that the MILF had connections with the JI and al-Qaeda.¹⁰⁷ In addition, Southeast Asia was defined as the “second front” in the “War on Terrorism” in 2003 and 2004. This intensified the pressure on the Philippines as a member of the “coalition of the willing”¹⁰⁸ to act against terrorism, not only in Iraq but also on its own soil.

At the request of the U.S. State Department, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) was engaged between 2003 and 2007 in facilitating the peace process between the Philippines government and the MILF, with funding from the Congress after both the GRP and the MILF requested U.S. assistance to end the conflict. The intention was through a peace agreement to prevent international terrorist groups from exploiting the conflict in the Philippines. The USIP reported that, after the early support of the rebel groups in Mindanao by countries such as Libya and Malaysia ended, “the MILF agreed to train JI and al-Qaeda fighters in return for financial support and arms. The camps also offered JI and other terrorist elements a sanctuary in which to rest and hide. Many of the fighters married and settled in Moro areas, blending into the population” (USIP 2008).

In spite of the USIP’s support, a peace settlement could not be reached because of the many difficulties the organization encountered. These included the opposition of the Malaysian government to an American presence at the negotiating table, and the suspicion on the part of Moros of an infiltration of the MILF by the US government via the USIP. Because the peace institute lacked a permanent base in Mindanao, communication with the GRP, the MILF, and Philippine civil society was difficult. The composition of the government’s negotiation team

¹⁰⁷ On the debate on the question of the MILF relationship to terrorism and the possible problems involved in not distinguishing them from terrorist movements, see ICG (2008, 2008a, 2005, 2004); Klitzsch (2006); and Lucman (2008).

¹⁰⁸ The Philippines joined the “coalition of the willing” in March 2003 but withdrew its soldiers from Iraq between March and June 2004 because of a kidnapped Filipino truck driver whom the kidnappers threatened to kill. Allies in the coalition were outraged about the withdrawal and Filipino politicians feared consequences for development aid funding. However, the kidnapped Angelo de la Cruz became a national hero, symbolizing the struggle of over 7 million overseas workers, about 1.4 million of them in the Middle East.

changed frequently and the Moro leadership had divergent perspectives. The USIP also mentioned lukewarm support for an effective peace agreement by senior GRP officials, which they said hampered the efforts of the negotiators. Finally, “corruption and criminality among the Moros, exacerbated by centuries-old clan loyalties, created other hurdles” (USIP 2008). In 2007, the US Congress ended the institute’s funding and thus the project ended without having reached an FPA. In 2008 the situation in Mindanao escalated, and the USIP predicted that if the conflict in Mindanao returned to violence, terrorist groups, like the ASG or the JI, would likely exploit the situation to infiltrate and destabilize the Philippines (USIP Special Report 2008). The US government did not itself join peace talks and it was only in March 2008 that the US-Ambassador to the Philippines for the first time officially met with the MILF leadership. This was a public change of strategy, as before the US government would not negotiate with “terrorists,” leaving the issue to the USIP.

On 13 July 2003, Hashim Salamat died from a heart attack in Butig, Lanao del Sur. The MILF hid this from the government but agreed to a ceasefire on 19 July 2003. Shortly afterwards, Al-Hadji Murad Ebrahim was elected as new Chairman of the MILF, which was “viewed as a ‘swing’ to a more pragmatic and ‘lay’ style of Moro leadership . . . contrasted to what seemed to be the previous ‘religious’ slant within the MILF leadership” (Mercado 2008: 242). Military skirmishes, even though on a lesser scale that was explained by the presence since 2004 of the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT), continued on and off and so did the peace talks.

II. The “No War, No Peace” Environment

A. Theoretical Approach

1. Definition of Terms

The Muslim regions in Mindanao are frequently defined as a “no war, no peace” environment (see, e.g., MacGinty 2006: 111; MacGinty, Muldoon, and Ferguson 2007).¹⁰⁹ According to Dennis Dijkzeul, societies which are defined as “no war, no peace” can be described as being involved in a situation “where neither positive peace nor full-out war occur

¹⁰⁹ In relation to Mindanao, it seems to be more appropriate to use the term in relation to the environment rather than the society since not only is the local society involved, but there are local as well as national players involved in the creation and maintenance of the local situation.

but where violent conflict may recur anytime” (2008: 15). He further argues that these societies can be characterized by their reproduction of conflict-generating institutions.¹¹⁰

As stated, our main research assumption is that a “no war, no peace” society continuously reproduces institutions, such as structures, formal organizations, informal groupings, and norms and values that generate conflict potential within a society, as well as within and among neighboring states. This reproduction of conflict potential undermines democratic transitions, economic development, and peacebuilding. Moreover, such reproduction usually implies strong normative disagreements within society, among or within groups, and the social exclusion of certain groups. Therefore, the taken-for-granted nature of institutions may erode and sometimes informal or weak institutions may become more prevalent. Other institutions, for example, ethnic or religious ones may reify. (ibid. 24)

The “no war, no peace” situation related to the Mindanao conflict reproduces institutions that undermine peace-building. It implies that normative disagreements among or within groups lead to a weakening of formal institutions. However, this is only one characteristic trait of the situation. Additionally, there are counteracting agents creating structures of peace, democracy, and economic development. Several international, national, and local NGOs and People’s Organizations (POs), peace agents, women’s organizations, etc. (see Abubakar 2007) attempt to strengthen if not peace then at least the peace process and the ceasefire situation. Demands have been made to institutionalize the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) as the “Department of Peace,” and to maintain the ceasefire in the form of peace zones and development projects. So far, the MILF itself has signed several peace zone agreements in order not to involve certain communities in violent conflicts. It established the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA), which is responsible for local development, and signed a document promising to help the government capture criminals, such as kidnappers, in the area of the MILF. In a recent (2009) agreement, the MILF and the AFP committed themselves to providing civilian protection and avoiding collateral damages.

Government officials are likely to be entangled in war- as well as peace-strengthening measures. In 1996, the Ramos government and the MNLF signed the Final Peace Agreement (FPA), which called for post-war and development projects in the Muslim areas. On the one hand, government officials build peace and development based on the 1996 agreement and take part in peace negotiations with the MILF. On the other hand, some politicians, mainly those from

¹¹⁰ Institutions, according to Dijkzeul (2008), “constrain and enable human action,” for example by providing moral or cognitive frameworks for interpretation or action (pp. 21ff.). This can be realized by formal (e.g., state bureaucracies, NGOs) as well as informal institutions (e.g., warlords, patronage). Institutions can be reproduced consciously as well as unconsciously.

Mindanao who would lose land area by a final comprehensive agreement or those forming the opposition using the Mindanao issue to mobilize against the president, are frequently involved in verbal abuse or tactical resistance against peace agreements between the government and the MILF. The military and, in some cases, paramilitary groups are ensnared in violent conflicts with rebels and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Sulu Archipelago.

It is thus a specific characteristic of the present Mindanao “no war, no peace” situation, besides the permanent threat of a new outbreak of violent conflict being initiated by the government, the army, the MILF, the MNLF, the Abu Sayyaf, local clans, warlords, or criminals, to have conflict-, as well as peace-generating institutions. But even though periods of ceasefire have lasted for years, for example from 2003 to 2008, thus providing time to strengthen peace-building mechanisms, an overall environment remains that can be found in situations of war. This is described by MacGinty (2006) for similar cases as being characterized by

inter-group tensions and systematic discrimination against out-groups, widespread insecurity arising from the presence of armed groups, grinding poverty with few prospects for economic advancement, militarism, poor provision of public goods and a profound disconnection between government and people. (p. 2)

Although, direct violence might be absent for some time, the characteristics of a war environment remain (see also Richards 2005: 6). The outbreak of violent conflicts is then only the manifestation of the above-mentioned characteristics. MacGinty explains that such “no war, no peace” situations might be found following a formal end of conflict in which no positive peace has been achieved and also “in cases of stalled peace processes, wherein the antagonists have failed to reach a comprehensive peace accord but the peace process and its ceasefire assume semi-permanence” (2006: 4). Such a situation brings about one major problem. It might become chronic in case the peace process is “more comfortable than war, but this comfort brings with it little urgency to push for a far-reaching peace settlement.” MacGinty concludes that, in this case, the peace process might become a “comfort zone” (ibid.).

In the following section, I discuss how far conflict- as well as peace-building efforts in a “no war, no peace” situation are consciously and unconsciously institutionalized and sometimes even instrumentalized among concerned groups, and for what reasons. Additionally, I consider when the institutionalization of conflicts means that they are automatically reproduced or imply a potential for the limitation of violent conflicts, as in the case of the Joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH). MacGinty warns that such institutionalization might

merely lead to an absence of violence but not to a positive peace.¹¹¹ This is so because an agreement might be to the liking of international groups but not much appreciated locally. This appeared to be the case after the creation of the ARMM at the beginning of the 1990s and the FPA of 1996, which did not include the MILF in a possible solution. The task is thus not only to stop violence but also to create positive peace by solving the root causes of the problem and to provide prospects for the future. This in the Mindanao case is mainly a question of “ancestral domain,” governance, and economic development.

2. De-Embedding and Alternative Structures

Christoph Zürcher describes the process leading to the rebellion of an ethnic group as “de-embedding” (“Entbettung”) (2004: 102). He defines four steps towards a de-embedding. “The steps of de-embedding are the loss of the cohesiveness of state institutions, loss of the legitimized monopoly on violence, access to necessary resources to organize violence and finally the creation of internal coordination within the violence-prone groups.” (ibid.: 105).¹¹² All four elements can be found within the Muslim rebellion starting in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The Philippines are ruled by elite families who occupy the state system and have transformed it into an instrument of multi-dimensional leadership (Celoza 1997: 22; Kreuzer 2007: 20). When applying Weber’s theory of statehood, one can talk about an uncompleted monopolization of violence,¹¹³ which is characterized not by a lack of law enforcement mechanisms but by political elites using state mechanisms for their own purposes. This leads to a privatization of the executive, for example in the establishment of private armies (Kreuzer 2007: 20). In the 1960s and 1970s, those could partly be justified via the Constitution as Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces (Kraft 2010: 188). Conflicts over land and political influence became consequently more violent in Mindanao, fueled by settlement programs and political fractionalizations under Marcos’s government.

¹¹¹ For a debate on the notion of peace, see MacGinty (2006), who defines peace as “the facilitation of non-exploitive, sustainable and inclusive social relationships free from direct and indirect violence and the threat of such violence” (p. 59).

¹¹² Translation mine. (“Die Schritte der Entbettung sind Verlust der Bindekraft staatlicher Institutionen, Verlust des legitimen Gewaltmonopols, Zugang für Gewaltorganisation notwendigen Ressourcen und schließlich Herstellung der internen Koordination innerhalb der gewaltbereiten Gruppe.”)

¹¹³ This concept of statehood is among others questioned by Klute (“Beyond the state. Tracing emergent forms of power in contemporary Africa”, lecture at the Goethe-University of Frankfurt, 10 June 2010), who supposes that the state according to Weber is only one structure among many that opt for a domination of the others.

Muslim Filipinos felt neglected by the central government. After the Jabidah Massacre, international help was offered first by Malaysia and later on by Libya. With the assistance of the Muslim royalties and international support and funding, young educated Moros acquired the logistics and a philosophy, which, if it did not unify, at least activated huge numbers of people from the various Muslim ethnic groups and classes under the umbrella of the demand for a Bangsamoro homeland. This was to be established in the defense of Islam and the democratization of wealth, providing a possible counterforce to what was perceived as Filipino colonialism. The notion of Moro identity, used before only by non-Muslim Filipinos, thus became a reality, unifying several Muslim ethnic groups in rebellion.

Artur Bogner explains that the development of homogeneous ethnic groups, through violence with outside groups, becomes increasingly possible through an uncompleted monopolization of legitimized violence. He refers to Weber's conception of statehood as involving the "monopoly on the legitimate use of violence," but he adds a "diachronic dimension" ("diachronische Dymension"), thus talking more about a process of monopolization than about a monopoly as such (Bogner 2004: 65). The incompleteness, he concludes, can lead to a situation in which neither the traditional nor the modern institutions are capable of providing a feeling of physical security (ibid.), which then can lead to a homogeneous ethnic group filling the gap. However, assuming that the Mindanao conflict and the Moro identity were the result of a lack of a monopoly on legitimized violence is of limited explanatory utility. The reason why the conflict broke out is rather a culmination of various incidents, structures, and historical wrongs, as discussed above.¹¹⁴ In addition, Georg Elwert explains the development of a collective ethnic identity primarily as a reaction to ascriptions from outside: "The self-ascription of a collective identity is not an act of free will. It is a reaction of defense, alienation, dependence or adoption of ascription" (Elwert 1989: 449).¹¹⁵ The "Moro" identity was the adoption of an ascription from outside and can hardly be understood as homogeneous, but rather is a constructed identity that is mainly applied on a transnational but not on the local level. Patricia Horvatic, for example, writes that the Samal, a Muslim ethnic group from Tawi-Tawi, has three identities: they are Samal on a local level, Filipinos on a national level, and Moros on a transnational level (2003). In brief, even though the MNLF and the MILF might be the biggest Moro collective groups in the Philippines; this does not mean that these groups are homogeneous ethnic groups. Local ethnic

¹¹⁴ For a general approach to causes of conflicts, see MacGinty (2006: 86).

¹¹⁵ Translation mine. ("Die Selbstzuschreibung von kollektiver Identität ist kein Akt des freien Willens. Sie reagiert in Abwehr, Distanzierung, Anlehnung oder Übernahme auf Fremdzuschreibungen.")

identities like “Maranao” or “Maguindanao” remain of primary importance and even these become marginal when confronted with clan or family loyalties. The Mindanao conflict thus cannot be defined as an ethnic conflict — as it is in several publications (see, e.g., Trijono and Djalong 2004) — and the Moro identity cannot be equated with a homogeneous ethnic group. It rather was inserted into a process of convergence of interests: a constructed collectivity as a vector of a desired national and/or religious identity.

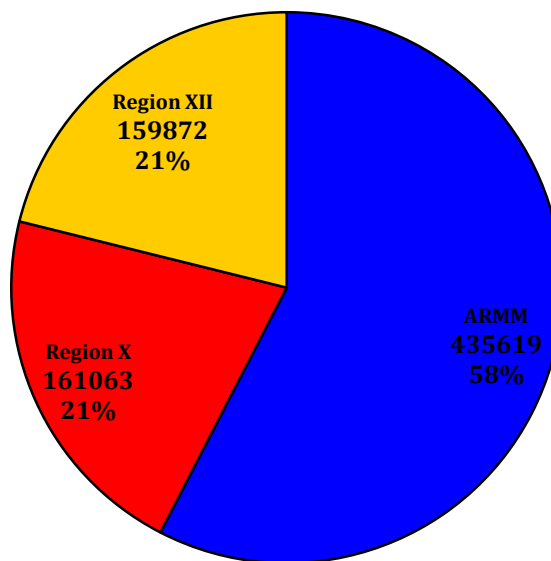
The rebellion thus led not to the de-embedding of an ethnic group but to the strengthening of oppositional structures, like rebel camps. In addition, state-supported alternatives developed, such as sultanate structures. Muslim as well as non-Muslim conflict-prone groups, apart from rebels, developed, like warlords who profited from the conflict situation, being involved in illegal businesses like drugs or weapons, and landlords and politicians not wanting to lose their advantages. All of them strengthened what Elwerts calls the “markets of violence.”

3. Markets of Violence

The Muslim regions already were among the poorest in the Philippines when the Americans colonized the country (Kreuzer 2003: 16). The economic situation tremendously worsened in comparison to other regions in the Philippines after the declaration of martial law and the outbreak of the MNLF rebellion (Rasul 2003: 144a). Every escalation of the conflict in the Muslim regions led, under the Marcos regime in the 1970s and 1980s; under Aquino and Ramos in the 1990s; under Estrada in 2000; and under Arroyo in 2003, 2007,¹¹⁶ 2008, and 2009, to massive evacuations and economic breakdowns. For example, during the “all-out war” in 2000, there were about one million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Hundreds of villages had been destroyed and more than half of the families in the affected areas took their children out of school. About 50% of the population was to sell their means of production, like animals or gears. In addition, 21% had to sell their houses and their land and about the same number had to obtain credit to be able to survive (Kreuzer 2003). When the latest conflict was over and a ceasefire was officially restored, the total number of affected areas between August 2008 and July 2009 was about 435 *barangays*, 51 municipalities, three cities and eleven provinces in Regions X and XII and the ARMM. The total number of affected persons having to abandon the area was about 160,000 families (about 760,000 persons), the majority of which were from the ARMM. There

¹¹⁶ The conflict in 2007 mainly escalated in Sulu as part of the “War on Terror” focusing on the ASG. The MNLF became involved after a local family was killed in the course of an operation against “ASG members, [which] resulted in the displacement of up to 85,000 people” (IDMC 19 August 2008).

were 112 killed and 139 injured from encounters, and 268 dead and 31 injured because of illness at the evacuation centers. The highest numbers of deaths from encounters was in Region X (56), followed by the ARMM (30). Illness in the evacuation centers caused the highest number of deaths in the ARMM (225), followed by Region XII (25). About 4,000 houses were damaged and the cost of damaged properties was about PHP 250 million (approximately EUR 4 million).¹¹⁷ The total cost of assistance extended to IDPs in Mindanao was over PHP 370 million. The majority of that money was distributed by the government and specifically by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. NGOs, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and the UN system provided about 16% of the money. According to the Social Weather Station, self-reported poverty rose by 17 percentage points in Mindanao, from 45% in February to 62% in June 2009 (nationwide it rose by three points to 50%).



Graphic 2: Cumulative Total Persons Affected by the Mindanao Conflict, 10 August 2008–7 July 2009

Source: National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), Sitrep No. 86, 14 July 2009.

Since the conflict escalations with their negative consequences for the economy are frequent, parallel businesses are prospering, like illegal logging; trafficking in drugs, women, and children; kidnapping for ransom; bank robbery; smuggling; piracy; and the arms trade (Santos 2005: 17). The long-lasting conflict has thus developed a group with “pro-war interests,”

¹¹⁷ Of the total damage, about PHP 100 million was to infrastructure and PHP 150 million agricultural.

including criminal elements, warlords but also “big landlords and agro-corporations, who feel threatened by all the peace talk about ancestral domain, agrarian-related issues, and land rights” (ibid.: 18).

Elwert (1999) defines structures in which profit is made out of a conflict situation as markets of violence. “These markets of violence exhibit a self-stabilized structure and owe their reproduction to a profit-oriented economic system which combines violence and trade as a means of access to commodities” (p. 85). Markets of violence prosper when “alternative income sectors come under pressure and for the most part lose their opportunities for reproduction with workforce and capital being absorbed by the — relatively — higher wages and profit opportunities in the violent market sector” (ibid.: 94). Kidnappings, for instance, are rampant in Mindanao. From June 2008 to November 2008, more than ten people, including a local television crew, were kidnapped in the southern Philippines; most were released after a ransom was paid. In Lanao del Sur, from January 2008 to June 2010, about 15 kidnappings were reported. Four were faculty members of MSU, three businessmen, six employees, one a foreign Muslim educator, and one a son of a Maranao poll commissioner. The victims were Filipino Christians, except one Korean and one Yemini, and just two Maranaos.

In some cases, people are kidnapped to put pressure on the person who is supposed to protect them, maybe to enforce an employment agreement, as for example in the case of the new MSU President. On June 26, 2008 Sherwin Nacua of the Biology Department of MSU in Marawi City was abducted for several weeks. Nacua, along with other faculty and students, was aboard a jeepney going home to Iligan City when armed men in Saguiaran, 15 minutes from the MSU Campus, stopped the car. Nacua was brought in a vehicle “towards Piagapo town, where an MILF camp holds base” (Gutoc 2008). The kidnappers were reportedly discontented employees of MSU who had been removed by the new administration of MSU President Macapado A. Muslim, installed in January 2008. Five groups tried to negotiate for the release of the kidnap victim. MSU put together an emergency team and a Crisis Management Committee headed by Provincial Governor Mamintal Adiong was founded. Additionally, the following groups and persons were involved in the negotiations: a local government unit of Piagapo, Marawi Mayor Fahad Salic, and the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group of the military and MILF. Details about the ransom were not given since politicians feared the same fate as Mayor Alvarez Isnaji from Sulu and his son, who had been imprisoned and accused of masterminding a kidnapping of a television crew when actually they were helping in the negotiations. The accusation against Isnaji, who

planned to run for ARMM governor in the 2008 elections under the banner of the MNLF, was proven wrong 22 months later (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 7, 2008).

In other cases, students might express their discontent over failed exams. One week after Nacua's abduction, another faculty member, Lolita Rodriguez, was kidnapped, supposedly by "disgruntled students who had failing marks." She was released days later. Another reason for kidnappings is to put pressure on a certain person. In 2010, the son of a Maranao poll commissioner was abducted and the kidnappers demanded the nullification of election results in certain areas of Lanao del Sur. The victim was later on freed, though the results were not changed. Kidnapping for ransom is another major reason, sometimes to pay for an electoral campaign, Ramadan expenses, car damage, or a debt for which the one being kidnapped or one of his relatives or patrons is held responsible. On 29 March 2010, a Korean businessperson and mining investor interested in chromite potentials in Butuan City and Ditsaan-Ramain, and a Filipino were kidnapped. Both were released after 56 days in captivity "due to a concerted effort of negotiations by tribal leaders, LGUs [local government units], the police and the military" (Gutoc 2008). On 16 October 2008, unidentified gunmen snatched a budget officer of MSU and brought him to the camp of a rogue MILF field commander. He was freed four days later thanks to the negotiations of a mayor. In July 2009, five employees of the Vicmar Logging Concession were kidnapped in Kapai. In October, a Filipino architect was abducted by kidnappers disguised as police officers who flagged down a passenger van, again on the Iligan-Marawi highway in Saguwaran. One month later, a trader who had debts in the area was kidnapped on the same highway. In January 2010 a Yemeni educator and member of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth was abducted by armed men in police uniforms in the parking place of the guest house of the Markaz al Sabab Bil Philippines in Marawi City. And on June 10, 2010, a Maranao Marawi University professor was abducted and freed three days later. He was kidnapped after his wife refused to pay the damage to the kidnapper-to-be's vehicle. The gas station attendant had refilled it with diesel, instead of regular gasoline.

Abductions are resolved with the help of local *datus*, the MILF, politicians, and the military. In all the cases described above, victims were unharmed when released. Carnapping and carabaonapping are also frequent. It used to be the *datus* of the area who were involved in tracing the culprits and negotiating with them. Usually a token amount was given for the return of the item. Today this money covers "the miscellaneous expenses" (Madale 1996: 121) incurred by the kidnappers.

Foreign aid money to the Muslim regions is another source of profit from the war situation. In an interview with an NGO in Marawi City, the participants complained that there are NGOs that are actually founded by the ARMM LGUs. There are no checks or balances and money from foreign donors can be used for political purposes, for example elections. For 2008, it was reported that the official development assistance (ODA) to the Philippines was about USD 9 billion (59% of ODA projects went to Luzon, 30% to Mindanao, and 11% to the Visayas). The bulk of the development funds involved infrastructures in mining areas in Luzon, paving the way for the entry of big companies. Further, Aids Watch Mindanao reports that the majority of the ODA funds that went to conflict areas is linked with the MNLF and the MILF. Areas in Mindanao involved in conflicts with the NPA, or in *ridos*, are neglected. Aids Watch Mindanao thus asked foreign donors to comply with their commitment in the Paris Declaration of 2 March 2005 to make aid more effective by involving recipient communities in decision-making and implementation of the aid.

Refugees of the combat between the MILF and the AFP constitute another possible source of income since they obtain their food in Marawi during their stay (Abreu 2002) and are thus susceptible to corruption that entails their having to pay for it. As a member of a local NGO stated:

After the 2000 all-out war there were about 150,000 refugees who were crowded here [in Marawi City]. There is a building here, which was crowded by refugees. And another group near my place. And it took more than one year to relocate them. And they really suffered under very distressful conditions. Because of the lack of support services from the provincial government . . . Even if there is help it goes to the wrong people. Even rice and medicine are not given to the people. But it ends up in places where it is sold. And even blankets. Even the relief goods coming from Saudi Arabia, it ended up in the markets, not in the hands of the refugees. So there is too much corruption in the distribution of the relief goods to the refugees. This is something that must be corrected and only the NGOs can do that. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

Drug pushing became rampant in Lanao del Sur. Reports from the organization Narcotics Command have said that Marawi ranked number two in drug addiction cases throughout Mindanao in 2009 and grabbed the top seat in 2010. According to Disoma (1999), Marawi City ranked third in the number of drug addicts in the Philippines in 1990 (p. 161). Because of the rule of silence, it is rather difficult to break down criminal syndicates. This rule is similar to the *omertà* code of the Italian Mafia¹¹⁸. Locally it is more likely explained by the concept of

¹¹⁸ Peter Kreuzer draws an analogy between Mafia structures and Philippine politics in general, which he defines as

maratabat, which includes a prohibition on a clan member speaking ill of another clan member. Those living from the markets of violence are usually well-armed and in some cases they become governmental officials based on their income, making it difficult to accuse them because of their positions.

4. Community Ceasefires: Peace Zones

Besides conflict-prone groups, there are also actors strengthening structures of non-violence in the form of cease-fire zones, or peace zones. Peace zones in the Philippines developed in 1988 and “must be understood within the context of the People Power movement that brought down Ferdinand Marcos’s dictatorship by peaceful means” (Avruch and Jose 2007: 51). When the peace talks between the newly installed Aquino government and the NPA broke down, peace organizations like the Coalition for Peace, an umbrella organization of more than fifty organizations based in all regions of the Philippines, changed their strategy. Instead of pushing the peace process through negotiations, they encouraged initiatives that would immediately relieve involved communities from the pressure of armed conflict. The outcome was that in southern Luzon, in the Bicol area, Naga City was declared a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality by the local non-governmental coalition Hearts of Peace. Shortly after that, other peace zones developed not only in Luzon but also, since 2000, in Central Mindanao. Communities that did not want to wait for the government to make peace organized the zones (Rood 2005: 24).

Not only have NGOs used the notion of peace zones, government officials have used it also. In 1992, the Aquino government declared children as “Zones of Peace” (Art. 10, RA No. 7610: the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act). The declared goal was to resolve armed conflicts in considering children as zones of peace — they thus should not be the object of an attack, are entitled to special respect, and should not be recruited into armed groups. The delivery of basic social services like health and education should be unhampered and children are to be “protected from any form of threat, assault, torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.” NGOs since then have repeatedly reported violations of this act, for example in the context of children being involved in civilian volunteer organizations (CVOs) that are being used as private armies in Maguindanao under the leadership of powerful *datus* (see Camacho, Puzon, and Ortiga 2005). The situation is complex: on the one hand, in 2008 the MILF was accused of using child soldiers (Coalition to Stop the Use of

involving “criminal governance” (2009), in particular in the formation of private armies.

Childsoldiers 2008). The AFP on the other hand was charged by the Davao Children's Rehabilitation Center with justifying the killing of children via aerial bombings in Datu Piang in September 2008 by defining them as child soldiers.

The Ramos government financially supported "bottom-up"¹¹⁹ peace zones. Whereas the funding strengthened some communities, it had the opposite effect than intended on others. Thus in communities that were only loosely structured, the governmental support led to the instability of the community because of local rivalries, the waste of money, and the fear that the NPA might understand this funding as an effort by the government to win over the communities (Avruch and Jose 2007). The notion of peace zone was also applied in the 1996 FPA, which declared 14 provinces and nine cities Special Zones for Peace and Development (SZOPAD). In addition, Estrada employed the term and declared main camps of the MILF as peace zones, which nevertheless were attacked in the 2000 all-out war. Avruch and Jose add that during this war the Estrada government declared areas taken over by the AFP after combat with the MILF as peace zones; they were thus "pacified." As a reaction to such governmental efforts other notions, like "space for peace" and "peace pact," were developed on the grassroots level (see Iyer 2004: 12; Neumann 2009: 24; Rodil 2003: 183). These different notions also partly define different approaches. Thus "sanctuaries for peace" are those areas that do not provide for any AFP or MILF presence (camps, foot patrols, etc.), whereas "spaces for peace" do not involve such a demand. In 2005, the majority of these protected areas in Mindanao were in the second category (Avruch and Jose 2007: 5). The basic idea of peace zones being organized by communities, however, remained the same: an area where no violent conflict occurs.

The all-out war under Estrada led to a second wave (2000-2004) of peace zones in which about 82 zones were created, the majority of them in Mindanao (ibid.: 54). For example, the community of Kapatagan in Lanao del Sur was defined as a peace zone after it was devastated by the all-out war, apparently because the inhabitants were believed to be supporters of the MILF. A project pushed by local leaders resulted in the signing of a security agreement by LGUs, the military, the MILF, and peace advocates. In addition, a local committee was established to settle *ridos*. The national and local governments, and local and international organizations, helped to provide infrastructures like roads and buildings, livelihood, gender programs, and basic services — "projects that were sorely lacking in this former no man's land" (Uy 2008). Mrs. Raida Maglangit, mayor (2001-2010) of the predominantly Maranao Muslim Kapatagan, under whose

¹¹⁹ "Bottom-up" peace zones are peace zones that derive from grassroots initiatives.

administration the project was implemented, commented that it was difficult at first for the people to put their guns aside and keep the peace. “But when they saw that many investments were coming in nobody complained anymore” (ibid.). Certainly, one cannot take such an affirmation for a confirmation and further research has to show how the peace zones concept worked out in Kapatagan.

Peace zones such as the one in Kapatagan or the ones in Barangay Nalapaan, Pikit, Cotabato (a Peace Zone since 2001, see Neumann 2009, and Rodil 2003: 187), a *barangay* which comprises a mixed population of Muslims, Christians, and Lumads, became possible through the involvement of several different organizations, the church, and local leaders establishing connections to the AFP and the MILF. Peace zones are usually accompanied by economic and gender development programs being initiated by local and international NGOs. One characteristic which was identified by Iyer in his research on several peace zones is that the *barangay* officials were given “a lot of power” by the community in order to settle conflicts, including the power to sanction violations of the peace (Iyer 2004: 37). Elite structures were consequently strengthened.

Rodil (2003), writing on the Maladeg peace zone in Sultan Gumander, Lanao del Sur, explains that *ridos* were the main reason for creating a peace zone in this area, which nevertheless did not carry this name when it was founded in 1978. The inhabitants created a committee to solve their local conflicts. In the *barangay*, the Council of Elders and the committee prohibited and controlled armed conflicts, gambling, the use of drugs, and any form of criminality. In case a conflict breaks out, they mediate and, unlike traditional mediators, they do not demand 30% of the settlement sum (p. 199).¹²⁰

Nevertheless, the sanctions for breaking the peace in the zones which have so far been reported have been applied in times of ceasefire or concern the settlement of *ridos* or other local conflicts. In case of a full outbreak of war, the peace zones can again be involved. In 2003, when the headquarters of the MILF in Buliok were attacked, a community that was a peace zone became involved in the conflict and relief had to be given to IDPs rather than support long-lasting peace-building (Rood 2005: 26). Another case was the one of Kauswagan in Lanao del Norte, the site of countless incidents between the MILF and the AFP as well as attacks on the Christian population by the MILF. In 2001, Christian and Muslim leaders gathered and formed an organization (Pakigdait) that adopted a five-year peace-building program for the municipalities of

¹²⁰ Bula (2000), however, writes that among Maranaos there are different types of conflict mediators, and while most of them would help in solving the conflict, there is only one type that is hired (p. 30).

Kauswagan, including a “Week of Peace,” consisting of inter-religious dialogue involving women and youth and local officials. However, there was not any agreement with the MILF or the AFP. On 18 August 2008, Commander Bravo, member of the MILF, attacked Kauswagan and nearby Christian communities, resulting in many dead and injured.

Hannah Neumann presented at the International Sociological Association Forum of Sociology in Barcelona, on 5-8 September 2008, a paper which argued that “[i]f we can train people for war, we can train them for peace,” referring to the communication theory of Jürgen Habermas as a theoretical basis for creating peace (see also Neumann 2009). Since communication has helped to establish peace zones and thus to settle inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts, it has to be considered if these special areas are to be regarded as sufficient for solving the Mindanao conflict and creating a “positive peace.” The Mindanao problem is a political one and not, in the first place, a problem of ethnicity or religion. Frequent events like summits or weeks of peace involving different ethnic groups and religions, especially since 2000, are one example of the possible strengthening of the culture of peace and inter-religious understanding on the grassroots level. For example, a Summit of Peace was celebrated in September 2008, in Iligan City, shortly after mass demonstrations, initiated by, among others, the mayor, against the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domains (MOA-AD) and the attacks by lost commands (sub-commands that act without the official orders of the MILF head command) of the MILF on villages in Lanao del Norte. Christian and Muslim politicians from Lanao gathered and the mayor of Iligan City, Lawrence Lluich Cruz, announced that MILF stands for “Marawi Iligan and Lanao Friendship.” Peace zones, summits, conferences, and inter-religious dialogues are valuable in providing a platform for the further establishment of peace in the area. However, without a Comprehensive Peace Agreement and thus a political solution between the government and the MILF, no satisfying solution can be achieved. The main effect of the establishment of community-built peace zones, which Soliman Santos defines as community ceasefire agreements (2005a), is the institutionalization of the “no war, no peace” situation in form of ceasefires.

5. Case Study: MSU Marawi

One example of the interrelations between the local and the national levels of conflict is the situation of MSU Marawi. The MSU System is the country’s second largest state-funded

educational institution. Marawi is the site of the main campus among seven autonomous MSU campuses all over Mindanao. When it was founded in 1961 (RA No. 1387) it had the

unique mandate to address three challenges — quality education for academic excellence, preservation of the cultural heritage of Mindanao, and responsive peace education for Mindanao and the country. It is the only University directly charged by the government to advance the cause of national unity and actively pursue integration through quality education. (MSU, Annual Report, 2007)

These goals are still unrealized. Quality education, for example, is difficult to achieve, as for instance books are lacking. Receiving money for the university depends on the so-called “political clout” of the university president. Dr. Emily Marohombsar, the former President of MSU Marawi (1993-1999), describes the dependence of the MSU President on Manila:

You have also to have political clout. Because you get your budget from Manila from the national government, and then you go to the Congress to defend your budget. The congressmen and the senators. If you do not have connections there you will have difficulties. You have to defend your project and justify it. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

Beside political connections to Manila, local connections are also important for the president to run the university effectively. Thus, it is an advantage if the president comes from an influential family and clan. Marohombsar’s father had been governor and a military man and her husband had been vice-governor, a congressman, and a commissioner. With this background, Marohombsar could introduce entrance exams at MSU against the protest of influential parents, to elevate educational standards:

But so many people did not like this [entrance exams]. So many politicians came to me, so many important people in Mindanao came to me, they said why are we not admitted, this is a government institution, you cannot turn down our children. So I have to explain to them very well the purpose of the program. Because of the respect for me, so they accepted the program. (ibid.)

Family and clan influence also help to protect the teachers at MSU:

Emily Marohombsar: There is an incident I would like to tell. During my time. Some teachers were so scared of failing students, because whenever the students failed, especially the Muslims students, they threatened the teachers, and they tell them: you give me five [referring to an F grade] and I give you forty-five [referring to a handgun]. The faculty members get so scared. There was a student and he said to the teacher I have security force, search for security training! And I was told that he threatened Miss so-and-so and so I said, what will happen to people like you, if we allow you to graduate in the university when you go out and practice your profession you will be a very corrupt official, you will be just like, you will be [promoting terror, changing votes]. And we do not want this kind of students. We do not train you for this. I said. Do not think that when you kill this teacher that I

cannot find you. You cannot hide anywhere in this place. We will find you. And so he was so scared. I am advising you stopping to threaten this teacher and enroll in this subject again. He did and after his graduation he came to me and said: Ma'am, I want to apologize I believe in what you told me and now I have graduated and at least I have learned something. And I tell the teachers, after you gave the grades, you can leave the campus immediately, if there is any student complaining send them to me. I will answer them.

Birte Brecht: Did you ever feel scared about this?

EM: No. It is just a matter of having the guts. Because when people realize that you mean business . . . (ibid.)

Regarding the peace and order situation, not only family and clan connections but also connections to the military and paramilitary sector are advantageous. Thus, Marohombsar could resolve kidnapping incidents at the university:

You know, we would like to go out and share what we have in the university with the people in the communities. But sometimes it is really difficult to penetrate the communities because of the peace and order. There were times, I think twice, when our faculty of the university was kidnapped . . . I was in Manila when that happened and I called up my chief security. "Did you know already? Did you discover who kidnapped them?" He said: "Yes." And I said: "Give them an ultimatum, give them 24 hours to return the people kidnapped, or we are going there and we are going to get their families." When I arrived they were already released. (ibid.)

Marohombsar said the government was regarded as an "employment agency," with the MSU President needing to have the ability to turn people down. In a society in which there is little social security, a high rate of unemployment and poverty, where the family and the clan are the ones to rely on, and where it is the *maratabat* of a well-to-do clan member to take care of the other clan members,¹²¹ it is risky to turn down someone who is requesting help. If a request is turned down, feelings can be hurt and there can be revenge.

Birte Brecht: Why did they kidnap? They wanted to have money?

Emily Marohombsar: Money, and I also think positions.

BB: Jobs?

EM: Didn't you know that the people think we are an employment agency of the government? And that people think that we have so much money for employment so everyone wants to get to be appointed as security guard, as . . . Even though they are not qualified. That is one problem that usually faces the president of the university. How to accommodate people who want to be employed. How to turn them down. If you turn them down then they may give you problems.

BB: You turn them down and then they kidnap?

¹²¹ As one *datu* stated, well-to-do families tend to shelter their family members from the "humiliation of poverty" because of their social standing in the society. The clan therefore becomes a source of employment, social benefits, and protection that the government cannot provide.

EM: That is right. Or they threaten to burn buildings.

BB: Did you have a lot of security?

EM: . . . I had a very good one. At that time we did not have very many soldiers at the campus. Right now there are very many soldiers at the campus. But at that time, no. We depended on our security, which was very good. And then I have also people in the university who are influential in different parts of the province.

BB: So they could protect you.

EM: Oh yes. (ibid.)

Presidential attributes like political clout, support of an influential clan or family, and military influence have an impact on the financial, educational, and peace and order situation at MSU Marawi. They can also be misused in order to serve the political agenda of a president, or if the president doesn't have these qualities, the peace and order situation can become quite difficult. In 2005, Arroyo ignored the list of nominees for the MSU presidency and picked an interim president. Ricardo De Leon, a Christian and retired general, had to "clean [up] the mess in the institution" (Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), September 13, 2005) concerning "squatters, firearms, drugs, and officials occupying portions of the MSU compound" (Bucay 2009). Being a former police general, De Leon used the threat of arms and his contacts in Manila to bring back peace and order to the university. And even though he was welcomed with protests, and the fear of a militarization of the campus, De Leon, visiting the campus for the first time with the support of the Philippine marines, succeeded to maintaining his position and in "cleaning up" the campus. No kidnappings were reported during his time at MSU and the faculty named him "Daddy Pres," appreciating that he had no political agenda.

The President of the Philippines appoints the President of MSU. This means that there is a ranked list of nominees for the presidency of MSU, chosen by a Malacañang (Office of the President of the Philippines)-authorized search committee, and the final decision belongs to the head of state. Of former university presidents, it had been reported that they politicized their employees in order to stay in office. De Leon did not do such a thing, being an acting president. That his presidency was quite peaceful can be further traced back to the following facts. Firstly, his contacts with the Philippine President's office helped in raising funds for projects at MSU. Secondly, because of his connections to the military, people did not dare to challenge him, even though there were criticisms that he discriminated against Muslims and that, being a general, he did not have the academic credentials needed for the presidency of a university. Thirdly, he is not a Maranao, which means there are no relatives demanding that he should care for them by

providing them with jobs, and he does not feel responsible for helping non-relatives to share his advantages.

The peace and order situation in MSU Marawi is difficult; violence and markets of violence are all over the place and traditional social structures and thus pressures are strong, in large part since there are few alternatives. Leadership of the educational sector is not an exception to political influences, since the presidency of the university is chosen in Manila. The installation of a Christian police general as interim university president to bring peace and order to the campus in a Muslim-dominated area was a radical decision by the president of the Republic of the Philippines. In any case, it gave fuel to rumors of a cultural colonization policy and Maranao suspicions about the real purposes of the national government.

B. Why the Situation Remains: The Failure and Success of Peace Talks

There have always been two options while the problem remains unresolved: the peace process or war.

—Mohagher Iqbal in Gomez 2010

1. Ceasefire or War: The Importance of Peace Talks

In this section the Muslim areas in Mindanao, particularly Lanao del Sur, will be shown to be characterized by a “no war, no peace” situation that frequently manifests itself as one of war. Since the 1970s, the region has often been defined as a conflict environment, a broad characterization usually understood to mean violent conflict. The advantage of describing the region instead as a “no war, no peace” environment is that the situations before and after violent conflicts as well as peace-building initiatives are included in the analysis. Furthermore, according to Dijkzeul, “no war, no peace” societies develop their own dynamics and characteristics and are hence “social phenomena in their own right” (2008: 17). Moreover, Heike Schmidt also writes that, in order to understand violence, one has to investigate the times when there is neither war nor peace, “because it is here that sense is being made of memories, experiences, and the perceived threat of violence” (1999: 225).

In Lanao, violent conflict occurs on two levels. On the national level, it signifies the Muslim rebellion. Whereas the conflict officially started at the beginning of the 1970s, the “no war, no peace” situation in Mindanao is the result of a back-and-forth between peace negotiations in times of ceasefire and war since 1975 when the peace negotiations between the Marcos government and the MNLF started. On the local level, conflicts might result in a family or clan

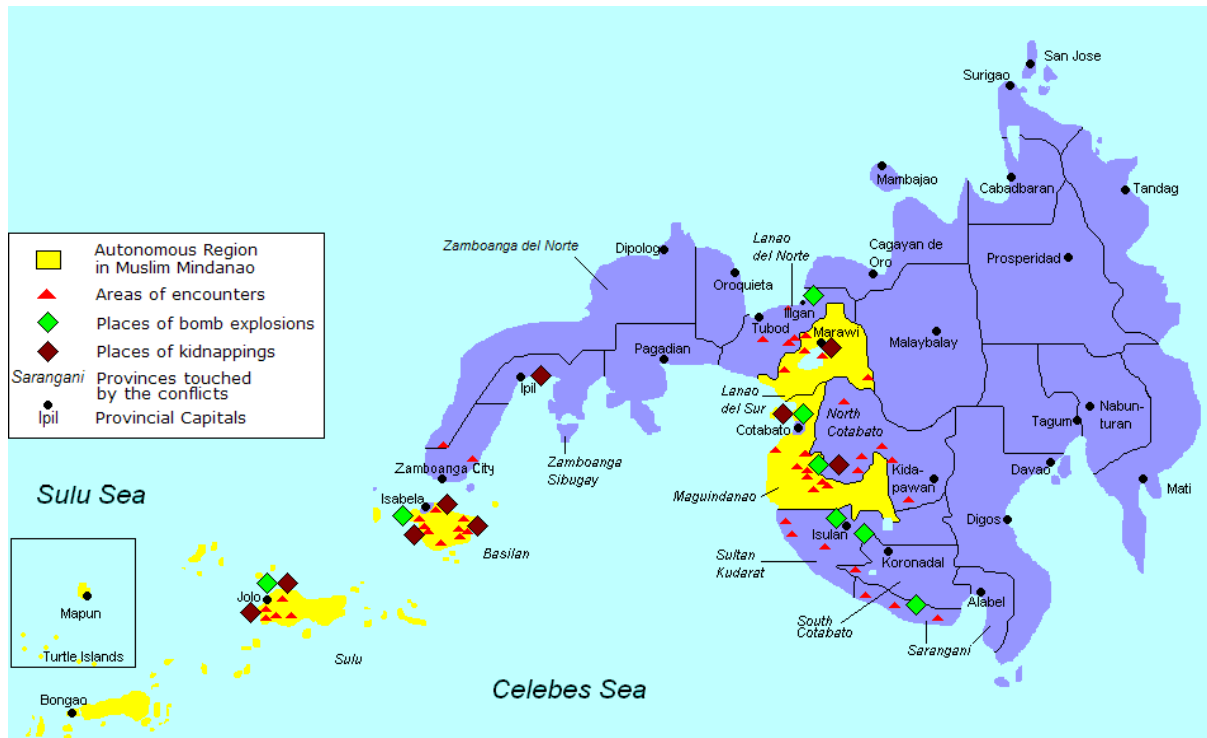
feud, a *rido*. *Ridos* break out when the *maratabat* or honor of a person, family, or clan is spoiled and neither family nor clan can be pacified by other means. A *rido* may be interrupted and ended by conflict-settlement initiatives. It may also linger for many years until it erupts again. Families involved into a *rido*, especially in times of ongoing negotiations after a murder case, are engaged in a “no war, no peace” situation with the adverse family. There might be certain areas the family members cannot transgress: they might not be able to go to work or send their children to school, and in case the settlement does not work out a violent conflict can break out anytime.

While *Ridos* can nevertheless ideally be settled via institutionalized measures with the help of mediators, the national conflict on the other hand has been lingering for more than 30 years and instead of a common solution being found, the ceasefire environment has merely been strengthened. Family feuds and the Moro rebellion are different conflicts, and the one cannot be explained by the other, but the two levels of conflict sometimes have similar sources — for example, land conflicts — and they influence each other in some respects, which will be shown below.

Within the “no war, no peace” situation being connected to the national conflict, some places are less directly affected and some more affected by violent conflicts. However, it can generally be said that the whole Muslim region is affected, although this may only be through economic consequences and the markets of violence. There are special zones of peace and there are also other places that are not officially declared as such but that will only be randomly included in direct combats. Marawi City is mainly protected from direct clashes (Abreu 2000: 9), even though there have been incidents and the rebellion in the 1970s had its starting point on MSU campus. Marawi nevertheless has to deal with the consequences of combat: the increased presence of the military; checkpoints; red alerts; IDPs; and injured and killed relatives. The area hence has thus for many years been involved in a “no war, no peace” situation. This means largely the absence of positive peace because of the development of structures that define a war environment even though direct combat is absent.

The figure below shows major combat zones — mainly between the MILF and the AFP, but also between the MNLF or the Abu Sayyaf Group and the AFP (especially in Sulu and Basilan) — from August 2008 until August 2009. The ARMM regions, except Tawi-Tawi, are all integrated into the combat. Major hotspots include Maguindanao and Basilan, and also northwestern Lanao del Sur and western Jolo. Outside of the ARMM the combat areas include North Cotabato, northern and southern Lanao del Norte, western Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat,

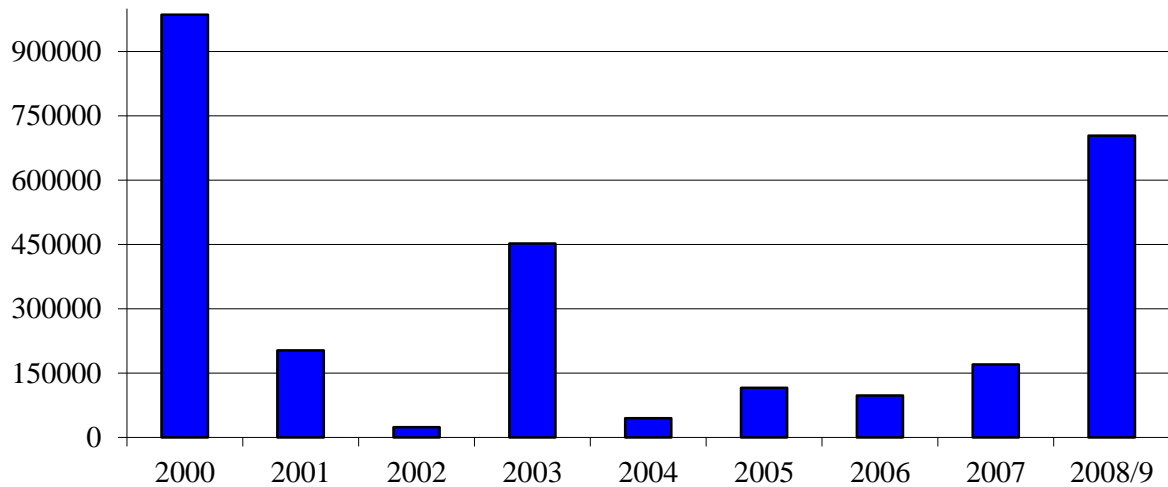
South Cotabato, and the outskirts of Zamboanga City. The incidents between the MILF and the AFP occurring outside of the ARMM occurred in most of the cases in areas that are claimed by the MILF as part of their ancestral domain.



Map 5: Map of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Hotspots of the Conflict between the AFP and the MILF and between the AFP and the ASG from August 2008-August 2009

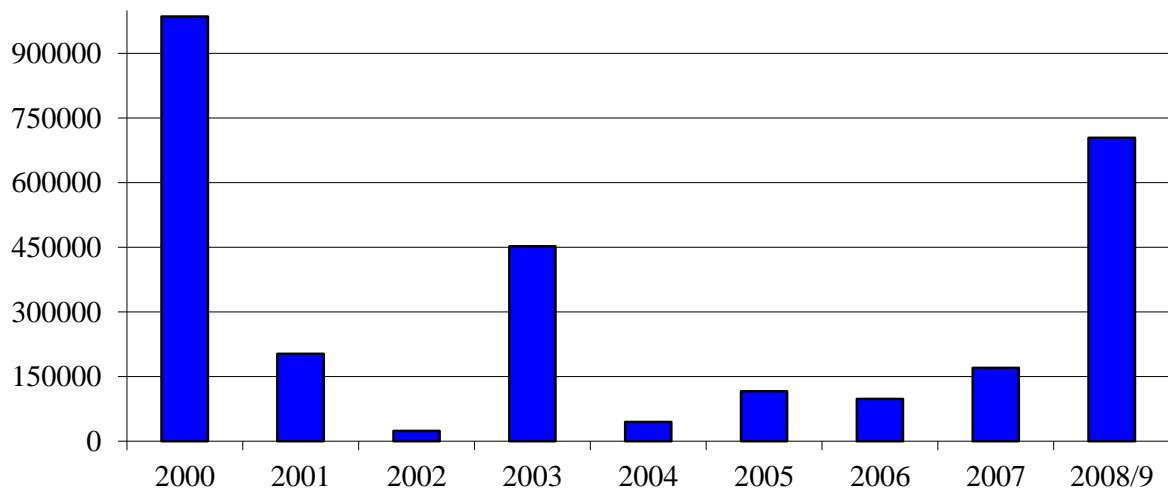
The map is based on newspaper articles and information provided by the NDCC. The number of encounters is not accounted for. Handmade map by the author; proportions do not entirely correspond with reality.

The explanation for the “no war, no peace” situation since 2000 has lain with the national context. This period saw more times of ceasefire between the MILF and the GRP than actual combat, but a positive peace was never achieved. As the chart below, representing conflict-induced displacement in the Philippines from 2000 to 2009, shows, there are times when the clashes have been more frequent and times when they are few or almost absent: the former are the times of failed peace talks and the “War on Terror”; the latter are the times of peace negotiations and monitored ceasefires.



Graphic 3: Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Mindanao from 2000 to 2009

IDPs include those from *ridos* or clashes between MILF/NPA/ASG and AFP as well as natural disasters. The numbers of IDPs represented in this chart are nevertheless mainly the consequence of clashes between the MILF and the AFP in 2000, 2003, and 2008-09. The high number of IDPs in 2007 can be traced back to an increased “War on Terror” against the ASG in Sulu. Source: International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC).



Graphic 4: Number of Violent Incidents between the AFP and the MILF from January 2002 to September 2008

Source: CCCH.

In 2000, the peace negotiations collapsed completely and turned into an all-out war under President Estrada, resulting in about one million IDPs in Mindanao and Sulu (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDMC). Peace talks were resumed under President Arroyo but

soon the global “War on Terror” was used as an excuse to launch new attacks on the MILF, which was believed to be connected to terrorist groups like the ASG and JI. In 2003, when a new peace agreement should have been signed, there was a major attack by the army on the new headquarters of the MILF. Guerrilla fights broke out again, resulting in about 400,000 refugees (Kreuzer 2003). After that, a new ceasefire was agreed upon by the GRP and the MILF and the peace talks were resumed, having been interrupted by the “War on Terror” and minor clashes. The ceasefire officially lasted until August 2008 and was re-established in July 2009. Santos, referring to the all-out war under Estrada in 2000 and the Buliok offensive under Arroyo in 2003, noted that violent conflicts interrupted the peace process “just when negotiations were nearing discussions of substantive issues . . . As a consequence of these, the complexion and even some substantive agenda items changed” (Santos 2005a: 5). The same can be said about the 2008 outbreak of war.

Under Estrada, the consent that had been given to recognize rebel camps was withdrawn and clashes started anew. Officially, however, it was claimed that the attacks were aimed against criminals and terrorists. They were encouraged by pressures resulting from reports connecting the MILF with terrorist groups. In 2003, under this pretense, government troops attacked MILF posts, one day after an agreement draft was presented to the House speaker and the Senate president. The incident in 2008 was the outcome of frustration on the part of the rebels about the non-signing of an important agreement (MOA-AD). The interventions of 2000 and 2008 seem to be similar: in both cases consent for recognizing the rebels was given by the governmental negotiation panel, which was concerned with substantive agreements. It was withdrawn through the intervention of other government officials and had to be re-negotiated after a violent conflict. While the 2003 incident followed the same structure, it can additionally be seen as an outcome of the “War on Terror.”

Violent conflicts on a larger scale are the result of failed or stalled peace talks, showing their importance. This importance partly led to a focus on the continuation of such talks and on maintaining the ceasefire. The establishment of development groups and projects, the Ad Hoc Action Group to catch criminals, the ceasefire committee, and the IMT were all designed to institutionalize the ceasefire rather than to find an agreement. These developments, as positive as they might be in comparison to a looming war, thus only succeeded in institutionalizing the “no war, no peace” situation as the lesser evil.

2. Looming Conflict

In this section, I demonstrate the importance of peace talks and the consequences of their failure by discussing the incidents resulting in the 2008 outbreak of war. After four years of ceasefire in December 2007, peace talks stalled when the MILF accused Manila of reneging on its earlier commitment to grant the demanded ancestral domain. The governmental negotiation team insisted that this could solely be done through constitutional processes. This suggestion was not accepted by the MILF because the Philippine Constitution prohibits the dismembering of the country. They likely rejected the “extended ARMM” offered by the GRP because the autonomous region is judged as inefficient in meeting the basic needs of the Bangsamoro people and as worsening the already depressed conditions. Instead, the rebels opted for a Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) of which the ARMM would be a part, with areas outside the region to vote on inclusion through a referendum (4 May 2008). The government, ignoring such wishes, organized a legal group in order to study the agreement-draft, setting its constitutionality as a non-debatable condition.

In response, the Malaysian mediator Othman Abdul Razak said that peace talks were not moving due to the lack of political will on the part of the GRP. In addition, he demanded that it stop insisting that an agreement conform to the Constitution. Filipino government officials asked for the replacement of the Malaysian mediator on the negotiation panel after this statement. Since the government did not move, on May 10, 2008 Malaysia withdrew the first contingent of the group heading the IMT to supervise the ceasefire in Mindanao. The MILF stated that this was the consequence of the violation of the IMT’s Terms of Reference (TOR),¹²² on which basis the team can withdraw in case there is lack of support for its reports. The government did not respond to these accusations but instead requested that Libya should assume the IMT leadership. The rebels then blamed the government for having no interest in the peace talks but only in the ceasefire. However, Malaysia was not replaced: since the TOR stipulated Malaysia as head of the 60-men IMT, it could not be replaced unless the TOR was amended, which could only happen when both peace panels resumed their talks. Civil society groups urged the two parties to go back to the

¹²² According to IMT-TOR Article 8, Sections 2 and 3, the IMT might cease or suspend the performance of its functions, with due notice to the GRP and MILF Peace Panels, in the event that: (Section 2) either the GRP or the MILF fails to fulfill its commitments and responsibilities to the peace process; or (Section 3) there is lack of support from either the GRP or the MILF for any of its reports. According to the MILF, the government delayed the resummptions “in spite of the fact that the GRP and MILF peace panels have practically agreed on the draft memorandum of agreement (MOA) on ancestral domain, as early as February 22, this year.” And it violated Section 3 “for deliberately ignoring the call of the Malaysian facilitator to resume the talks immediately as everything is already settled regarding the ancestral domain agenda” (Bompat 2008).

negotiating table. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino “Nene” Pimentel,¹²³ with the support of 15 other senators, authored in April 2008 Joint Congressional Resolution No. 10, proposing a federal system of government of which Bangsamoro would have been one state. The Constitution thus would be amended (a charter change, popularly known as cha-cha) in order to create a federal system; the resolution was still pending as of August 2011. However, the MILF had already agreed in January 2008 to the idea of a federal state, but insisted that the changing of the Constitution was an internal affair of the government for which the MILF did not want to be instrumentalized (in order to extend Arroyo's term) (Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao Wee 2008).

On 25 April 2008, Nur Misuari was freed on bail and MNLF leaders met in unification talks in Tripoli, brokered by the Libyan leader al-Gaddafi and his son Saif Al-Islam. Also participating at this meeting was Presidential Adviser Jesus Dureza. A follow-up joint press statement appreciated among other things the initiative of the government in its plan to establish a federal system. It was urged to involve the MNLF in this development. The next day the Arroyo government appointed retired General Hermogenes Esperon as presidential adviser on the peace process. That led to an outcry among civil society groups and Amina Rasul of the Philippine Council on Islam and Democracy (PCID), which accused Arroyo of having appointed a “military hawk,” a peace adviser who was more acquainted with war than with peace. Among MILF leaders, a governmental document signed by a brigadier general of the AFP on 3 April 2008 was discussed. In the document, about one billion pesos were demanded, “in view of the crisis situation that may develop in Mindanao and the uncertain conditions of Airmunition and Artillery Ammunition currently in the AFP inventory, may we request the [Department of National Defense] to conduct emergency procurement.” (Jalandoni 2008) The MILF accused the GRP of provoking an outbreak of the conflict. On the other hand, rumors circulated in January among Maranaos that the MILF had threatened the government with a revival of the conflict in case it would not end its refusal to discuss the constitutionality of the peace agreement. Both parties thus prepared for a possible war.

On 24 May 2008, according to the MNLF, about 50,000 supporters gathered in Davao for a Peace Summit with Nur Misuari as key speaker. Other speakers included the Sultan of Sulu, making the Sabah question an issue, with the support of Nur Misuari. The present (2010) Sultan of Sulu and Sabah, Muhammad Fuad Abdulla Kiram I, is in favor of a Sabah independence

¹²³ From the *Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (People's Power) (PDP-LABAN)*.

movement and claims the area as part of his sultanate. He accuses Malaysia of having illegally occupied Sabah since 1963 when the British left and not returning it to the sultan, and he has further declared¹²⁴ that the sultanate's historical domains comprise the Zamboanga Peninsula (Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, and Zamboanga City) as well as Basilan, Palawan, Sabah, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi. In his speech as Guest of Honor at the MNLF 40th Year Foundation and Bangsamoro Freedom Day Celebration on 18 May 2008 the Sultan of Sulu stated:

We welcome the possibility of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippines signing a peace agreement, but we must not agree and not allow that in any peace agreement between the two, that the Sultanate of Sulu & Sabah be promised as area of jurisdiction of the MILF, as the Sultanate of Sulu & Sabah is the land of the Tausugs, the Samals, the Badjaos and other indigenous traditional peoples but not the members of the MILF who are from Central Mindanao far away from Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga, Palawan and Sabah. (Homepage of the Royal Hashemite Sultanate of Sulu and Sabah 2008)

The mutual agreement of the sultanate and the MNLF against claims from the MILF may be the outcome of a divide-and-rule policy by the government against the MILF. Both the division of Moro groups and the Sabah claim have the potential to make the peace process more complicated especially since the Sabah issue remains a source of potential conflict between the Philippines and Malaysia, which has facilitated the GRP-MILF peace process since 2001. The Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) refers to the sultanates in the times before the Moros became a minority in its declaration of them being a "first nation" of the Philippines.¹²⁵ However, the MILF does not sympathize with a revival of the sultanates. On 18 September 2008, Marines confiscated the Sulu sultanates' flags that had been displayed in several barangays since March. The MILF Central Committee on Information's official website commented on this by quoting an anonymous person saying:

Better for them [the Sulu royal houses] to support the cause of the Bangsamoro people for freedom and right to self-determination now led by the MILF than by

¹²⁴ Agreement of Recognition and Declaration of Support between Sultan Muhammad Fuad Abdulla Kiram I and the MNLF, signed on 15 January 2008.

¹²⁵ According to the MOA-AD, under "Concepts and Principles," "Both Parties acknowledge that the right to self-governance of the Bangsamoro people is rooted on ancestral territoriality exercised originally under the suzerain authority of their sultanates and the *Pat a Pangampong ku Ranaw*. The Moro sultanates were states or *karajaan/kadatuan* resembling a body politic endowed with all the elements of nation-state in the modern sense. As a domestic community distinct from the rest of the national communities, they have a definite historic homeland. They are the "First Nation" with defined territory and a system of government having entered into treaties of amity and commerce with foreign nations. The Parties concede that the ultimate objective of entrenching the Bangsamoro homeland as a territorial space is to secure their identity and posterity, to protect their property rights and resources as well as to establish a system of governance suitable and acceptable to them as a distinct dominant people."

asserting and reviving the grandeur of the sultanate in this 21st century. This century is the age of democracy and Islam, which draw their right to rule not on one man or monarchy but from the people, in the case of the former, and man, as representative (khalifah) of Allah, in the case of the latter. (18 September 2008)

Military skirmishes erupted in Basilan between the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf and the AFP. On 31 May 2008, eleven cities in Mindanao were plunged into darkness following an attack on the National Power Cooperation (NPC) towers in Lanao. Rumors were heard that rebels wanted to make the government bleed financially, adding to the record energy and rice prices at this time and, as a result, to make it more responsive to political demands. Members of the MILF also calculated how much the transfer of military equipment and soldiers to places under alert cost the government. On 8 June, bandits, who were assumed to be from the Abu Sayyaf Group in Sulu, kidnapped an ABS-CBN¹²⁶ crew; it was freed several months later. The incident led to violent clashes with the MILF, which was accused of involvement in the kidnappings.

On 14 June, the Bangsamoro Solidarity Conference (BSC) was formally approved by leaders of the MNLF, headed by Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema, and members of the MILF, headed by Al-Hadji Murad Ebrahim. The BSC functions as a coordinating body between the two groups and others who wish to join. It agreed that unity was paramount in the search for a genuine solution to the Mindanao conflict. Apparently, the group was founded as a reaction to the “divide and rule” tactic assumed by the government in freeing Misuari. The major component groups were identified on the MILF Central Committee on Information’s official website as MILF, MNLF-Nur Misuari, and the MNLF-Committee of 15 headed by Muslimin Sema, as well as traditional politicians. Nur Misuari was not present at this meeting.

On 18 June, the National Security Council approved the final draft of the agreement on the ancestral domain issue. Six days later President Arroyo met President Bush, who congratulated her on her “carrot and stick” counterterrorism-approach: “‘sticks’, of course, say we’re not going to allow for people to terrorize our citizens; the ‘carrot’ approach is that there's peace available” (Bush 2008). About 500 to 600 members of the American military are stationed at present (2010) in Mindanao; they have been there since 2002 under the Visiting Forces Agreement as part of the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P). Their task is to “support the comprehensive approach of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in their fight against terrorism in the southern Philippines” (JSOTF-P Fact Sheet 1 April 2009). The

¹²⁶ Alto Broadcasting System-Chronicle Broadcasting Network is a local media group.

headquarters of the recruits are located at Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City.¹²⁷ They have a strictly non-combatant role because of the abrogation of the US-GRP military bases agreement in 1991. Additionally, the US government increased its involvement by supporting American civilian agencies in the Philippines. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Navy Admiral Mike Mullen stated that these agencies were important assets in the effort to combat terrorism and asked the Congress for more financial support in 2008. USAID had spent until then USD 50 to 60 million a year in the country, with 60% going to Mindanao, including 10% for military aid (Garamone 2008). The US Congress followed this strategy and even increased its Grant Assistance to the Philippines in 2010 under the Obama government.¹²⁸

The MILF Central Committee on Information website indicates that the question of development aid was debated. Khaled Musa, deputy chairman of the MILF committee on information, said that it would be a failure to use development to undermine the Bangsamoro movement since “the problem is not about poverty or economic but political [and] can be addressed only by political solution.” On the other hand, the rebels did not categorically reject the presence of American troops, nor did they join protests against common exercises of AFP and US soldiers (the Balikatan exercises).¹²⁹ They only pronounced their concerns about possible human rights violations based on incidents involving US soldiers in the Philippines (especially the accusations in 2006 that a US marine raped a Filipina at the former US Subic Bay Naval base) in

¹²⁷ Additionally, there are three subordinate regional task forces, for Camp Navarro in Zamboanga del Sur Province named Archipelago, Camp Siongco in Maguindanao Province named Mindanao, and Camp Bautista, Jolo Island in Sulu Province named Sulu.

¹²⁸ Specifically, the combined Development Assistance and Economic Support Fund was increased to USD 70 million in Fiscal Year 2010 from USD 60 million previously. Of the whole amount of USD 135 million of development and security assistance which was approved by the U.S. Congress as a grant to the Philippines for the fiscal year 2010, two-thirds were “devoted to Mindanao for livelihood, basic services, and reintegration of ex-combatants” (Republic of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, 17 December 2009).

¹²⁹ Under the motto “U.S. Troops Out Now! Junk Visiting Forces Agreement!” in February 2008, various civil society groups protested in February 2008 against R.P.-U.S. Balikatan exercises. The ARMM issued Resolution No. 353, adopted on 5 February 2008, “Expressing the Objection of the Regional Assembly to the Holding of Balikatan Whether Military, Medical or Civilian Exercises in the Province of Lanao del Sur and the Islamic City of Marawi.” The City Council of Marawi urged in Resolution No. 112 in January 2008 “that the President of the Republic refrain from participating in the Balikatan exercise in Marawi”. Their reason was that it would have negative effects on the peace-loving citizens, igniting their desire “for the enhancement of gambling, [prostitution], alcoholism which is totally prohibited in the entire Province of Lanao del Sur and the Islamic City of Marawi.” Members of the Ranao Crescent against Balikatan Exercises led protests against the arrival of US soldiers in Marawi City, accusing them of being a threat to the ongoing peace process in provoking unpleasant memories of the Bayang massacre under colonial rule. The MILF announced in February 2008 that it would coordinate its activities with NGOs on questions in connection to human rights violations, and wrote a letter to the government demanding that it guarantee the protection of rights of the Muslims and indigenous people during the training. It nevertheless did not oppose the arrival of US troops categorically, as long as their activities were not directed against the Bangsamoro people. Some *datus* accompanied US soldiers on medical missions in Lanao del Sur, meeting thankful Muslim farmers who named their children after Barack Obama.

connection to them. Mohagher Iqbal, chair of the MILF peace-negotiation panel, warned in August 2009 that the MILF would not take issue with the American military presence in Mindanao as long as the military's activities were not directed against the Bangsamoro people. The line of this argumentation is based on a 16 June 2003 response from US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelley to a 20 January 2003 letter from MILF chair Salamat Hashim, who called on the US to help solve the Mindanao conflict.¹³⁰ The US would support a *bona fide* peace process (Santos 2005: 25) and ask the US Institute of Peace (USIP) to encourage the negotiation process (ibid 2005a: 99).

On 25 June 2008, the Philippine Cabinet agreed to include about 600 Muslim-populated villages in the homeland proposed in the MOA-AD. This number was half the total being demanded by the MILF. Nevertheless, the 600 villages were contiguous and not scattered throughout Mindanao and parts of Luzon. The inclusion was linked to a plebiscite. While the peace talks were not officially resumed, the governmental draft was forwarded to the MILF. That same day MILF fighters launched attacks in Maitum, Sarangani, and North Cotabato province, leading to about 3,000 IDPs. The *barangay* chair of Maguling in Sarangani reported to *MindaNews* that the rebels “passed through to us their demand for the President to give them a separate state. They also complained about the rocketing prices of rice, fuel and basic commodities” (Elusfa 2008: 5). Several newspaper articles stated that the MILF commander legitimized the attacks “out of frustration over the slow progress of the talks” (Arguillas 2008c). Through its chairman Murad Ebrahim, the MILF, however, explained that the group's leaders did not sanction the attacks.

Peace rallies to urge the government and the MILF to resume negotiations and to sign the MOA-AD were organized for 28 June 2008 by the Moro umbrella organization Mindanao Alliance for Peace. Some Christian NGOs, popular organizations, and peace advocates expressed their willingness to join these events. Demonstrations took place in Basilan, Cotabato, Davao, General Santos, Iligan, Marawi, Pagadian, Pagalungan, Pikit, and Tacurong, and are estimated to have included between 100,000 and 300,000 people. Not all politicians supported the peace

¹³⁰ Hashim Salamat wrote two letters to President Bush. In his letter from 20 January 2003, he explained that the MILF demanded decolonization under the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 1514 (15) of 1960. As he detailed, already under American colonial rule, Muslims had appealed to the US government for the lands to remain as a territory under a US protectorate rather than to become part a Filipino state. And had it not been for the outbreak of the Pacific War, “the Moro nation would have been granted trust territory status like any of the Pacific Islands states who are now independent or in free association with the United States of America . . . For this purpose, we are amenable to inviting and giving you the opportunity to assist in resolving this predicament of the Bangsamoro People.”

movement. Zamboanga City Mayor Celso Lobregat rejected an application for a permit to hold a peace rally in this city. That same day anti-tank rockets severely damaged a power generating plant in Sultan Kudarat; the costs were estimated to be about PHP 3,4 million. Four days after they received the government's proposal, the MILF answered with a counter-proposal in multiple-choice form to hasten the process. Still, the peace talks did not resume and regional army chief Major General Reymundo Ferrer said that the armed forces had recorded more than ten violent incidents by the MILF in June. Eid Kabalu, MILF Civil-Military Affairs Chief, admitted that commanders and military leaders who were not necessarily connected to the MILF were involved in these clashes and acted out of frustration with the peace talks. At the same time, he stressed that the leadership did not approve of the offensives. On 8 July, government troops were placed on high alert in Mindanao due to intelligence reports that the MILF planned a military offensive against the AFP. The MILF, on the other hand, accused the AFP of having broken the ceasefire by having moved troops without proper coordination with the rebels. One day later an informal emergency meeting took place, called by Malaysian IMTs, to diffuse tensions between the two parties. Military chief General Alexander Yano said there had been a spike in the number of violent incidents; 40 skirmishes had been recorded from 1 May to 30 June.

The North Cotabato Provincial Board passed a resolution urging citizens to mobilize village guards as part of their defense against MILF incursions. Civil society groups feared the mushrooming of vigilant groups, and on 15 July the Regional Peace and Order Council of Region XII received three proposals advanced by Vice-Governor Emmanuel Piñol, Aleosan Mayor Loreto Cabaya, and Midsayap Mayor Manuel Rabara that would allow LGUs of North Cotabato towns to arm civilians. The proposals came as a reaction to recent skirmishes in the area. The MILF's lead negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, already in 2007¹³¹ described Piñol and Zamboanga City Mayor Celso Lobregat as “warlord politicians” who had immigrated to Mindanao and had anti-Moro aspirations (International Contact Group (ICG) 2008). Two days later, the GRP and the MILF met in Malaysia to discuss the word “freedom” in the MOA-AD, which, as the GRP feared, might be interpreted as meaning independence and thus as unconstitutional. The MILF suggested replacing the word with “self-determination” or with “full measure of rights and freedoms.”¹³² The two sides agreed, saying that the MOA-AD does “address the aspirations of

¹³¹ In his book *The Long Road to Peace: Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process* (2007 Cotabato City: Institute of Bangsamoro Studies). Published under the pseudonym Alah Jubair.

¹³² According to MILF Vice-Chair Ghadzali Jaafar, the MILF in agreeing had to sign a ceasefire agreement, and, negotiating for a political settlement with the Philippine government, in effect dropped its secessionist goal (Espejo

the Bangsamoro people.” Government peace negotiators additionally proposed to amend the Constitution to change the current system of government to federalism; this would allow the MILF to have a separate state. Another meeting was planned on 25 July to sign the draft of the MOA-AD. At the urging of the MILF to postpone ARMM elections since the officials are elected for three years (which might conflict with a signed peace deal), Arroyo said she would support the suspension of ARMM elections after an agreement of the peace panels. That declaration gave the opposition the possibility of accusing the government of trying to postpone the ARMM elections and change the Constitution in order for Arroyo to extend her term.

On 21 July, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Board) of North Cotabato passed a resolution opposing the inclusion into the Moro territory. Four days later the peace talks collapsed after the government re-opened discussions about the date of the plebiscite in connection with the inclusion of non-ARMM villages into the BJE. The government wanted to conduct a plebiscite in the predominantly Moro villages (categorized as A in the MOA-AD) to be held after the Comprehensive Compact had been signed, not six months after the signing of the MOA-AD. On 27 June, an agreement was reached (that the plebiscite would be held a year after the signing of the MOA-AD). A Joint Communiqué was signed; the MOA-AD was initialed and it was decided to meet again on 5 August to sign it. High officials were invited for this event, among them US Ambassador Kristie Kenney. Both parties also agreed to complete in the following 15 months the negotiations on the Comprehensive Compact, the final version of the peace agreement of which the MOA-AD was only one framework agreement. Thus, the issue of political settlement would be negotiated after the MOA signing, as well as the future of former MILF combatants.

On 2 August, officials from North Cotabato (represented by Governor Jesus Sacdalan and Vice-Governor Emmanuel Piñol), and Zamboanga City (represented by Mayor Celso Lobregat and Representatives Isabelle Climaco and Eric Fabian) asked the Supreme Court to block the signing of the agreement between the GRP and the MILF.¹³³ Sultan Kiram I of Sulu stated that the government should not give away land that belonged to his ancestral domain. Likewise, Datu Albi Julkarnain, chair of the Council of Royal Datus, argued that the MOA-AD would “encroach on areas under the sultanate,” while the Cotabato City Citizens’ Movement for a Federal Philippines warned that the signing of the MOA-AD would lead to war. In Manila, the United

2008).

¹³³ For North Cotabato, about 30% of its total number of *barangays* were listed in category A and about 48% in category B. Six percent of the *barangays* from Zamboanga City, more specifically those on Sacol Island, were listed in category A and 40% in category B.

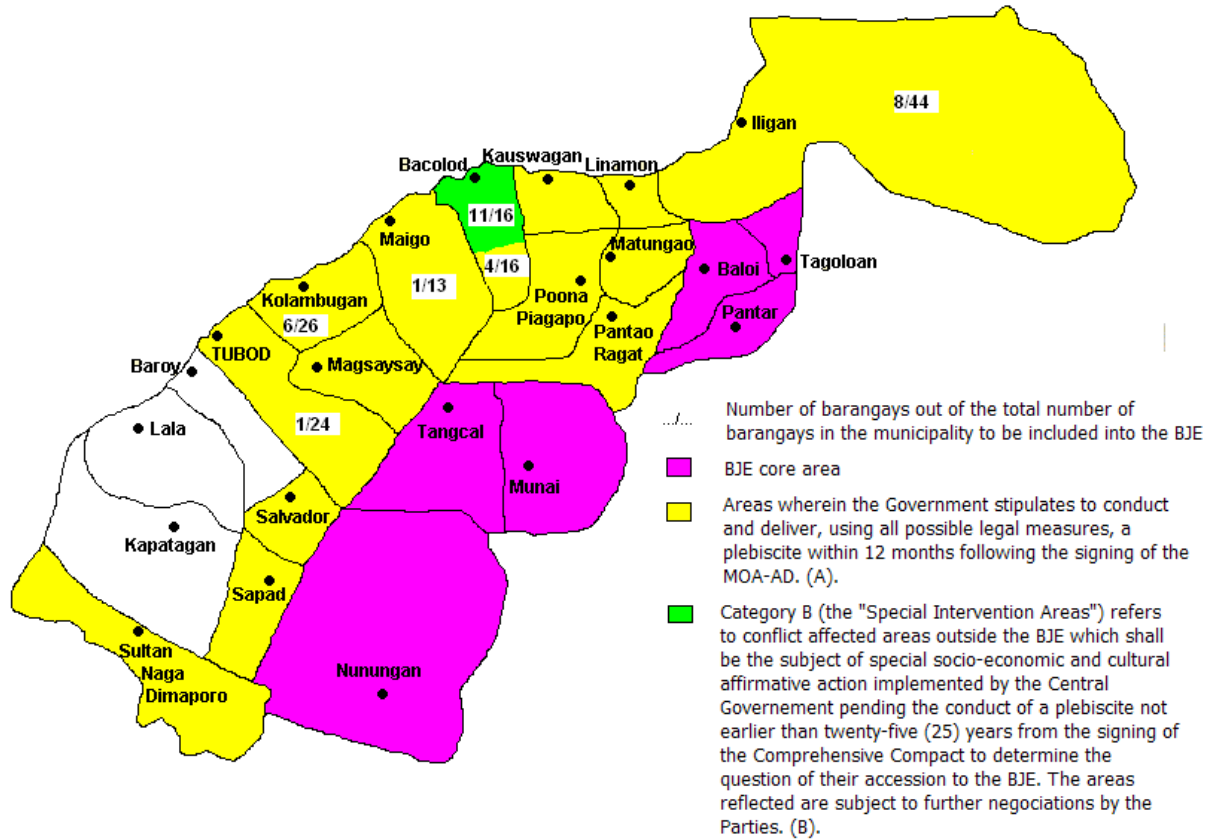
Opposition asked the government to await the Supreme Court's decision (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 4 August 2008). Finally, the Supreme Court issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against the signing. Protests against the accord demanding the exclusion of some areas of the province from the proposed BJE were held in Iligan City, Isulan (Sultan Kudarat), Kidapawan (North Cotabato), and Zamboanga City. On 14 August, the governors of Mindanao gathered to sign a Statement of Solidarity of the Caucus of Mindanao and Palawan governors. The Statement declared that the governors supported the peace process and were against any violence.

However, the Statement also demanded that the GRP Peace Panel and the MILF adopt actions and decisions concerning the MOA-AD within the legal framework and the rule of law, and make them the foundation for subsequent agreements. Further, the GRP Peace Panel was expected to conduct wider and more comprehensive consultations with LGUs to help resolve issues that would affect the peace process in Mindanao. Fifteen governors from the 27 Mindanao provinces signed the Statement after a closed-door caucus with Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro, the former military officers Hermogenes Esperon and Rodolfo Garcia, and former Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabby Claudio.¹³⁴

Iligan City officials and eight of its *barangay* captains presented a petition seeking exclusion from the BJE. According to the petitioners, Muslims in those eight Iligan *barangays* that were included in Category A in the MOA-AD¹³⁵ constitute a minority of the population. The *barangays*' combined land area is about 66,500 ha or 82% of the total land area of Iligan. These are also the city's main agricultural, mineral, and watershed areas. According to "historical evidence", Higaonons living in the eight *barangays* never came under Bangsamoro suzerainty because of pacts they forged with Muslim sultans that implied that they were treated as coequals. City Mayor Lawrence Lluch Cruz, Representative Vicente Belmonte of the 1st District of Lanao del Norte and Iligan, and the eight captains of the concerned *barangays* signed the petition.

¹³⁴ The signatories were: (1) Governor Mamintal "Bombit" Alonto Adiong – Lanao del Sur; (2) Governor Erlpe John Amante – Agusan del Norte; (3) Governor Jum Akbar – Basilan; (4) Governor Aurora Cerilles – Zamboanga del Sur; (5) Governor Douglas Cagas – Davao del Sur; (6) Governor Miguel Dominguez – Sarangani; (7) Governor George Hofer – Zamboanga Sibugay; (8) Governor Oscar Moreno – Misamis Oriental; (9) Governor Loreto Leo Ocampos – Misamis Occidental; (10) Governor Maria Valentina Plaza – Agusan del Sur; (11) Governor Jurdin Jesus Romualdo – Camiguin; (12) Governor Abdusakur Tan – Sulu; (13) Governor Rolando Yebes – Zamboanga del Norte; (14) Governor Joel Reyes – Palawan; (15) Vice-Governor Elvis dela Merced – Dinagat Island; (16) Vice-Governor Norris Babiera – Misamis Oriental; (17) Governor Mohammad Khalid Dimaporo – Lanao del Norte; (18) Congressman "Bobby" Dimaporo – Lanao del Norte; (19) Governor Jesus Sacdalan – North Cotabato. The Sultan Kudarat governor, Esmael "Toto" Magundadatu, was not present but pronounced his discontent with the inclusion of almost the entire area of Sultan Kudarat into the MOA-AD.

¹³⁵ Namely Dikilaan, Dulag, Hindang, Kalilangan, Lanipao, Mainit, Panorogana, and Rogongo.



Map 6: MOA-AD, Map of Annexes A and B: Lanao del Norte
Handmade map by the author; proportions do not entirely correspond with reality.

Shortly after the TRO the President’s spokesman, Jesus Dureza, still pronounced optimism about the signing of the MOA-AD. The opposition in Manila on the other hand engaged in polemics against the MOA-AD. Makati Representative Teodoro Locsin for example said that a Bangsamoro state would be “bereft of respect for civil and human rights” since it was not included into the framework of the Constitution. “Indeed,” Locsin said about the BJE, “it shall possess absolute powers without any prohibition against the discrimination, abuse and enslavement of women which happens in some Muslim states.” He ignored the fact that the MOA-AD specifically refers in its TOR to RA No. 8371 (otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997), the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Charter, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, international humanitarian law, and internationally recognized human rights instruments as bases of the agreement. Frustrated, so-called “lost” or “rough commands” of the MILF meanwhile lost faith in the peace process and attacked Christian villages; this was answered by AFP counterattacks. The situation of violent conflict lasted for about one year and led to about 700,000 IDPs and 400 deaths.

3. The Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD)

The MOA-AD is the result of eleven years of negotiation (from January 1997 to September 2008) between the government of the Philippines and the MILF. It is based on the Agreement on Peace signed by the two parties in Tripoli in 2001, which defined three clusters of issues to be negotiated: (1) security, (2) humanitarian aid and development, and (3) the “ancestral domain,” the territory to be included in the BJE. In order to reach the first goal the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) formed an IMT¹³⁶ in Mindanao “to facilitate and negotiate [the] peace process between the GRP and the MILF, more importantly in monitoring both parties’ adherence to ceasefire agreements” (House Resolution (HR) No. 578, 12 May 2008). The IMT, headed 70% by Malaysians, was quite successful. Under its supervision from 2004 onwards, military clashes decreased considerably from “one thousand two hundred fifty-seven (1,257) in the span of two years alone (2002-2003) to only forty-six (46) from 2004 to 2008” (ibid.)¹³⁷ However, with stalled peace talks in December 2007 and the final breakdown of the talks in September 2008, the IMT left the Philippines in November 2008. Until then it continued to monitor those areas where there were no operations against the (according to the military) “recalcitrant” MILF commanders Abdullah Macapaar (Commander Bravo), Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato, and Alim Solaiman Pangalian (Arguillas 2008).

In order to put into practice the second goal, the MILF created the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA). Implementing the third goal of the Tripoli Agreement was the biggest challenge and the MOA-AD was to be the result. It contains five sections. In the first part (Terms of Reference) it lists the main documents it is referring to. In the second part (Concepts and Principles) it explains whom the BJE is designed to include, stating that this is not only Moros, but that it is the birthright of “all Indigenous peoples of Mindanao to identify themselves and be accepted as *Bangsamoros*.” Furthermore it explains why the Bangsamoros have a right to self-governance and how the ancestral domain is to be defined. The third part (Territory) sets

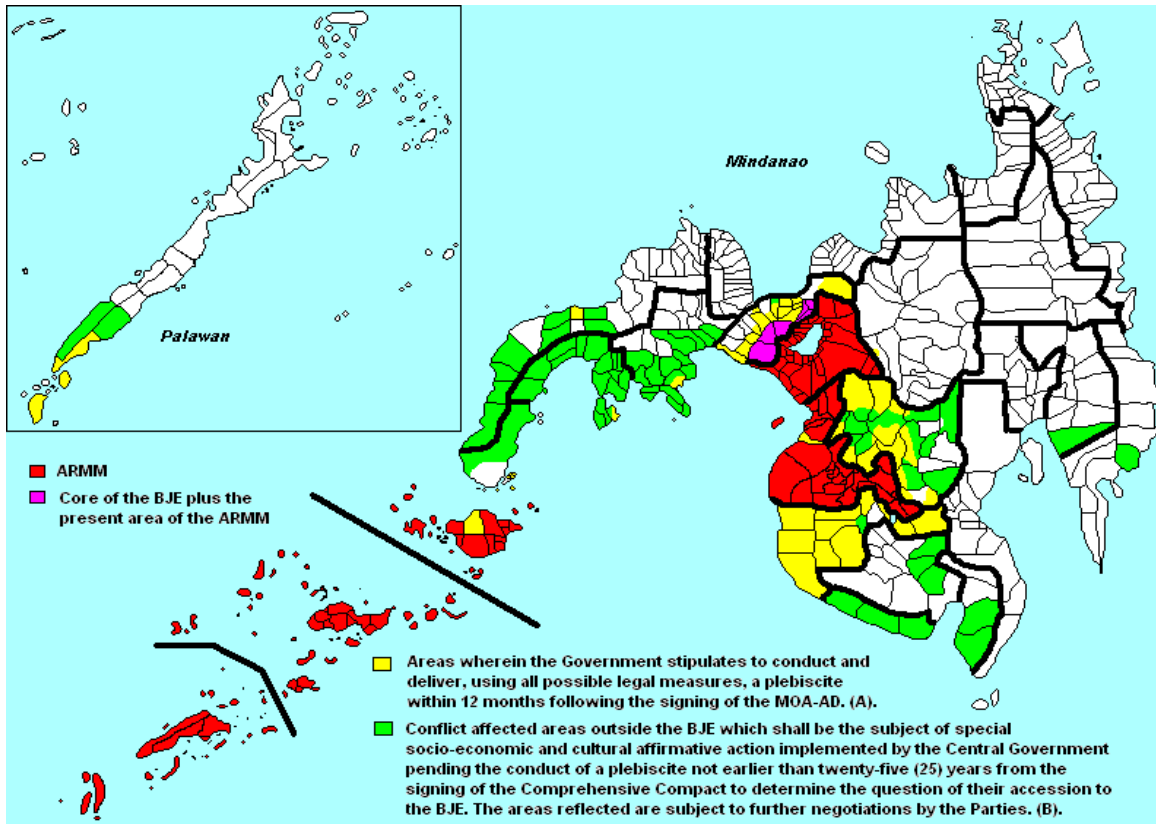
¹³⁶ With a membership of about 60 people, the IMT has its headquarters in Cotabato City while its five Team Sites are located in the cities of Cotabato, Davao, General Santos, Iligan, and Zamboanga. The IMT’s jurisdiction covers 14 of Mindanao’s 21 provinces. Members of the Malaysian Defense Forces have been in Mindanao since 2004 to lead the monitoring team, composed of 41 officers from the Malaysian Defense Forces, the Royal Malaysia Police, and the Prime Minister’s Department. It is also supported by ten military officers from Brunei Darussalam and five from Libya. Canada and Japan also have members on the IMT.

¹³⁷ The head of the governmental CCCH reported that from a height of 698 incidents in 2002, the number went down to 569 in 2003 even as a war was being fought in the Buliok area and neighbouring towns. In 2004, the year the Malaysian-led IMT came, the number went down to 16; was down to 10 in 2005; up to 13 in 2006; down to eight in 2007; and then back up to 128 in 2008 (Arguillas 2008a).

limits to the territory, which covers parts of the Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan geographic region. “[T]he core of the BJE shall constitute the present geographic area of the ARMM, including those municipalities¹³⁸ in the province of Lanao del Norte that voted for inclusion in the ARMM during the 2001 plebiscite.” Beside this core area, 737 Muslim-majority villages, identified as Category A, had the chance to opt in through a plebiscite held within twelve months after the signing of the agreement. Category B included 1,459 “Special Intervention Areas” that would be “the subject of special socio-economic and cultural affirmative action implemented by the Central government” for 25 years, after which another plebiscite would be conducted to “determine the question of their accession to the BJE.” The International Crisis Group adds that “[t]he category B areas included some of the most resource-rich land in Mindanao” (ICG 2008). The MILF reduced its main territorial claims to cover only the areas where the Bangsamoro are dominant, and all non-ARMM residents have the option to vote against their inclusion into the BJE.

The fourth part of the MOA-AD discusses how resources and all “royalties, bonuses, taxes, charges, custom duties or imposts on natural resources and mineral resources” in the homeland should be split between the BJE and the central government “on a percentage ratio of 75:25 in favor of the BJE”. The last point, governance, settles the details of how the BJE was to be governed and is left to a final Comprehensive Compact. It is stated that the relationship between the BJE and the central government should be “associative.” This notion later on led the Supreme Court to judge the MOA-AD unconstitutional, because it could establish an independent state. The International Contact Group (ICG) reports that a government negotiator explained that the MILF saw the BJE as “akin to a state in a federal system. For them, the use in the MOA of the term ‘central government’ was clear acknowledgment that the BJE was part of a larger whole, not a co-equal policy” (ibid. 2008).

¹³⁸ Baloi, Munai, Nunungan, Pantar, Tagoloan, and Tangkal.



Map 7: MOA-AD, Map of Annexes A and B

Handmade map by the author; proportions do not entirely correspond with reality.

On 14 October 2008, the Supreme Court, voting 8-7, declared that the MOA-AD was “contrary to law and the Constitution.” Two main reasons were given: first, the “failure to consult the LGUs or communities constituted”; second, that the respondents “exceeded their authority by the mere act of guaranteeing amendments to the Constitution” (*Supreme Court*, 14 October 2008). Regarding the first point, the Supreme Court concluded that “[t]he contents of the MOA-AD are matters of paramount public concern involving public interest in the highest order . . . at least three pertinent laws justify the exercise of the people’s right to be consulted on relevant matters relating to the peace agenda.” Concerning the second point, the Supreme Court explained that the MOA-AD was unconstitutional since it envisioned an associative relationship between the GRP and the BJE; “the concept presupposes that the associated entity is a state and implies that the same is on its way to independence.” Thus, the MOA-AD would require changing the Constitution. The MOA-AD “virtually guarantees that the necessary amendments to the Constitution and the laws will eventually be put in place. Neither the GRP Peace Panel nor the President herself is authorized to make such a guarantee. Upholding such an act would amount to authorizing a usurpation of the constituent powers vested only in Congress” (*ibid.*).

4. Subsiding War and Stabilization of the “No War, No Peace” Environment

After the failure of the MOA-AD, “MILF lost commands” under Commander Kato occupied Christian villages in North Cotabato. Combat then broke out between the AFP and the MILF, involving aerial bombings. Several people died and thousands fled the area. A big contingent of soldiers was sent to Mindanao among other place to secure the ARMM elections, which took place on 11 August 2008. On 27 May, the MILF released an official statement, reiterating its consistent policy of non-recognition of and non-participation in any election undertaken under the Philippine government and Constitution. On Election Day, rebels occupied the town hall of Tipo-Tipo, Basilan, to prevent the election from taking place. Apart from this incident, elections were generally peaceful. However, the following period was marked by further clashes. Commander Bravo led an attack on Christian villages in the north of Lanao del Norte on 18 August 2008.¹³⁹ He was accused of plunder and terrorizing the population, raiding towns, spraying gunfire, hacking civilians with machetes, and torching houses. A Maranao recounted:

In Kauswagan where atrocities happened again, there were many of the civilians who were threatened including my Christian uncle who was nearly killed by the so-called members of MILF. Fortunately, my uncle married a half Maranao and at the time, the MILF pointed [a] gun into his head, his wife's relative spoke in Mranao [sic] and told alleged MILF to withdraw the gun. Thanks are to Allah, my Christian uncle is still alive although his house was burned and they have not saved their properties. (Email correspondence, 2008)

In nearby Iligan 3,000 civilian volunteers organized themselves to undertake a foot patrol around the city and set up checkpoints. The city government provided them with communications equipment for easier coordination with the police. For the mayor, Commander Bravo's attacks and bombings of two hotels one day before had an evident signification:

We only took the position that we want to be excluded! Look what they have done to us! I could not imagine [what else they can do] when we campaign for “No” to our inclusion in the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity when the plebiscite comes. (Gillera 2008).

The gun owners club in Iligan as well as civilians demanded to be allowed to carry their licensed guns to be able to defend themselves. In addition, an anti-Moro group named “Shepherds” was founded as a reaction to the attacks. Iligan Professor Rudi Rodil, who specialized in the history of the Mindanao conflict, was granted an “Outstanding Citizen” award by the Iligan government in 1994. He also became vice-chairman of the government peace panel. Nevertheless, he was

¹³⁹ The affected municipalities were Kauswagan, Kolambugan, Linamon and Maigo, all included in the MOA-AD under category A. The affected *barangays* were Kulasihan, Lapayan, Larapan, Libertad, Napo, and Tacub.

declared persona *non grata* by Iligan's City Council on 9 September for having told the Council that a high percentage of Iligan's land area¹⁴⁰ was included in the BJE¹⁴¹ and thus

for his alleged participation in the “grand conspiracy to fool the people, cut Iligan City into pieces and of the biggest blunder the Philippine government has ever made which is the carving and giving of a big chunk of Mindanao to a rebel group, just to attain the simple word *peace*.” (Declaration by the Iligan City Council, in Arguillas 2010a)

Rodil answered that people tend to omit that the inclusion of the *barangays* into the BJE is connected to a plebiscite and that consequently the MOA-AD would not have automatically included land area from Iligan into the BJE.

The government offered PHP 5 million for information that would lead to the arrest of Commanders Kato and Bravo. The AFP launched counterattacks in Muslim areas in search of the lost commands.¹⁴² In western Lanao del Sur, clashes were reported between the AFP and the MILF. The majority of the clashes, however, took place in the Maguindanao area.¹⁴³ People in Lanao del Sur spoke of a state of war, whereas the government talked about a “law enforcement campaign to neutralize and bring to the folds of the law the MILF lawless groups who attacked the civilian communities” (Arguillas 2008b).

In October and November 2008 and then since January 2009, Basilan and Sulu were increasingly involved in violent combats. In particular, there were clashes between the AFP and the Abu Sayyaf Group, which kidnapped several persons, among them three members of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The MILF offered to aid in their safe release, stating that kidnapping is against the principles of Islam. The AFP frequently accuses the MILF of involvement in kidnapping cases, even though their leadership categorically denies this. The rebels proved their good intentions by helping to free an Irish priest kidnapped in November

¹⁴⁰ The mayor of Iligan City complained that the BJE would reduce the land area of his city by 82%, and Steven Rood (2008) from the Asia Foundation added that this “would reduce by over 20 percent the block grants the city receives from the national government.”

¹⁴¹ Eight *barangays* of Iligan are listed in the MOA-AD for inclusion in the BJE; however, they were to be included only after a plebiscite to be held within one year from the signing of the MOA-AD.

¹⁴² In Lanao the 104th AFP Infantry Brigade was assigned to hunt down Commander Bravo. About 60% of this unit are former MNLF rebels who, after the 1996 FPA, had been integrated into the AFP. Among them was Captain Alonto Maamo, a Maranao who helped 112 families return home in military vehicles in October 2008. The families were Maranao IDPs from the highlands of Paiton (Kauswagan), Pantaon, and Tangclao (Poona Piagapo) (Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. 2010).

¹⁴³ Maguindanao was according to the Philippine Human Development Report of 2005 the province in Mindanao with the highest number of encounters between rebels and AFP and the highest number of casualties from 1986 to 2004. Lanao del Norte numbered second in terms of casualties, followed by North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, and Sultan Kudarat. In terms of encounters Maguindanao was followed by North Cotabato, Basilan, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, and Zamboanga del Sur.

2009. Criminals from Lanao had abducted him for ransom. However, neither the government nor the MILF could prevent the beheading of another victim, a state school principal from Sulu, abducted at about the same time as the Red Cross members by the ASG.

Several bombings in major cities outside the ARMM areas that are claimed by Muslims took place, including, in Iligan, on 17 August 2008, one day before Commander Bravo's attacks on *barangays* in Lanao del Norte, and on 18 December, one day before President Arroyo was scheduled to visit the city. In other places, like Sulu, military installations were targeted. No group took responsibility for the bombings. Among the injured were Muslim as well as Christian citizens. The government in most cases blamed hardline MILF rebels, a MILF Special Operations Group, bandits, or members of the Abu Sayyaf Group for the attacks. The MILF officially condemned the bombings.

Table 3: Bombing Attacks in 2008-2009

Date	Place	Region	Target	Killed	Injured
8/17	Iligan	Lanao del Norte	Hostels	0	3
9/14	Kiamba	Sarangani	Public market	0	0
12/11	Isulan	Sultan Kudarat	Public market	0	7
12/18	Iligan	Lanao del Norte	Department stores	2	36
4/26	Besana Beach Resort	Sultan Kudarat		1	3
7/5	Cotabato City	Lanao del Norte	Near the cathedral	5	51
7/7	Jolo	Sulu	Near the cathedral	5	30+
	Iligan	Lanao del Norte	In front of a lending firm	1	21

After the first escalation of the conflict at the end of August 2008, both negotiating parties were very strict in their demands. The MILF declared that the MOA-AD was a “done deal” especially since the MOA-AD had already been initialed,¹⁴⁴ and because it saw it in the context of international, not national, law (referring to the UN framework;¹⁴⁵ see also Santos 2004).

¹⁴⁴ Presidential Peace Adviser Hermogenes Esperon disagreed with the MILF position; according to him the affixing initials to the draft accord was meant only to ensure that it would not be altered or changed, not to indicate that an agreement had been reached.

¹⁴⁵ The MILF, for example, in July 2010, hailed the ruling of the United Nations International Court of Justice on the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence as “a trend in the resolution of the conflicts in the world today” and

Additionally it had supposed to have negotiated not only with the executive but with all three branches of the Philippine government. The GRP thus had to consult the other branches before making major decisions. The MILF would only go back to the negotiating table if the government signed the MOA-AD. The scholar and human rights activist Attorney Soliman Santos supposed that the MILF would not reconsider negotiations with the Arroyo government at all but would wait for the next president, taking what had happened to the MOA-AD as evidence of “the GRP having negotiated in bad faith, and thus the basic trust built by years of peace talks has been seriously eroded. The bottom line is that the Arroyo administration cannot deliver after all” (Santos 2008). Additionally, the drafting of the MOA had already marked the success of the MILF in putting its demands on the national agenda and in unifying Moros under the agreement. “They cannot for their own self-respect go into ‘further negotiations’ which would not be on the basis of a signed MOA.” (ibid.). The MILF also considered the possibility that any further peace negotiations apart from the MOA might end up in the same way.

Because of violent incidents in North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte and mass protests against the MOA-AD from concerned LGUs, citizens, and the opposition, the government, which initially had been positive about resuming peace talks, stated that it would not sign the MOA-AD even if the Supreme Court decided on 14 October that it was constitutional. On 3 September 2008, it dismissed its peace panel, not wanting to negotiate again before the DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and rehabilitation) of the rebels had been completed. By doing so, the government set impossible conditions for the return to the negotiating table. Murad Ebrahim characterized this demand as illogical since DDR was designed to happen *after* the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Compact. The government announced that it would focus from then on “on working with Moro communities and civil society to bring peace to Mindanao” (Martin 2008). In September, an increased reward of PHP 10 million was promised to anyone who captured, dead or alive, Commanders Bravo or Kato, who were by this time held responsible for the death of 62 civilians and the displacement of about 200,000 people. The Ilagas¹⁴⁶ announced

an example that seeking independence under international law was possible. It further highlighted the strong support of the Kosovo struggle for independence by the US (MILF Central Committee on Information Official Website).

¹⁴⁶ The Ilaga (rats) are sometimes said to have been founded in 1968 by Commander Toothpick (Feliciano Luces), a Christian Ilonggo. But the movement of Luces is a different movement. McKenna (1990) writes that Luces led the first of the sectarian conflicts in Cotabato, in Upi Valley in 1970, which became rampant later on, mainly as a result of land conflicts and political rivalry. Commander Toothpick, who later on earned a reputation as a fanatical anti-Muslim, was initially perceived as a local Robin Hood who defended poor Christians, Muslims, and Tirurays against Muslim outlaws. “Influential Muslims and Christians had reportedly titled a good deal of occupied land in the area and were using Muslim outlaw bands to gain possession by scaring off the inhabitants” (p. 264). And Muslim *datus*

that they would take part in the manhunt. On 23 September, according to the Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, the government declared that it would ask the UN to add the “renegade commanders” Abdullah Macapaar (alias Commander Bravo), Umbra Kato, Alim Solaiman Pangalian, and nine other MILF commanders to the list of terrorists. The main argument was that many of them were “secretly trained in bomb making and urban warfare and propaganda by Al-Qaeda-linked JI” (Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, Inc. (PIPVTR), 24 September 08).

The rather drastic measures against the MILF are partly the result of pressures by the opposition. According to the Social Weather Station, Arroyo’s popularity rate (June 2008) was the lowest of any president since the start of the study in 1986. The opposition blamed the Arroyo government for acting against the Constitution by signing the MOA-AD. Some speculated that the agreement was a tool for charter change and thus for the extension of Arroyo’s term. In Mindanao, settlers, being at the same time landowners and politicians, reacted the strongest to the MOA-AD. The ICG writes that these groups feared that

if the document became official, it would be a recognition of Moro land claims whether or not the population voted to join. From the point of view of settlers who acquired title through dubious means during the Marcos years, it would be a threat to vested interests. In some areas such as North Cotabato, where land disputes have been particularly bitter and clashes often take place between farmers and MILF fighters at harvest time, there was a sense that the MOA could be an invitation to “renegade” commanders to take back land by force. (ICG 2008)

Complains about lack of information as well as about the vagueness of the memorandum were issued by governmental groups, civil society organizations, and indigenous groups. The lack of public information was finally one reason why the Supreme Court declared the MOA-AD unconstitutional. The MILF therefore created in November the Department of Mindanao Migrants to focus on non-Moro issues. It sought to establish contact with the Lumad groups of the Tedurays, Manobos, Arumanens, and B’laans. Additionally, it declared that it would increase its information campaign (Arguillas 2009).

demanded tribute from Christian and Tiruray villagers. Later on Luces was employed by Liberalista Christian politicians in the attempt to oust the local leading Muslim political family (the Sinsuats). Thus he gained his anti-Muslim reputation. The Ilaga were also founded around this time. They are described by Abreu as an anti-Muslim vigilante group. They were founded by “ultra rightist traditional politicians in Cotabato under then AFP Deputy Defense Minister for Civil Relations (and later North Cotabato governor) Lt. Col. Carlos Cajelo” (Abreu 2002: 3; see also McKenna 1990: 267). Yegar (2002) reports that they were financed by large businesses and companies and supported by the AFP (p. 254).

In addition to the protests of local politicians, initiating rallies and filing petitions against the signing of the MOA-AD, civil society organizations urged the GRP and the MILF to return to the negotiating table.¹⁴⁷ The Mindanao Peoples' Caucus (MPC) accompanied IDPs to Malacañang to pressure Arroyo for a return to negotiations. Symbolically, the personal meeting took place on 11 September 2008, on the seventh anniversary of the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, which had led to a radicalization of Filipino politics towards the MILF. Arroyo promised no more air strikes during Ramadan but did not agree to renewing negotiations. The visit was part of MPCs campaign "Bakwit sa Syudad II" (Evacuees in the City II). (Bakwit sa Syudad I had taken place during the heavy military clashes in 2003; see Woodward 2005: 26). Whereas the National Disaster Coordinating Council noticed that clashes slowed down in September, they increased again at the end of Ramadan.¹⁴⁸

On 14 October, eight of 15 justices of the Supreme Court voted to declare the MOA-AD unconstitutional. In response, the MILF announced that it would take the accord to the UN and the OIC to seek their guarantees that if talks resumed their outcome would be respected. Coincidence or not, four days later Arroyo awarded 73 soldiers who had been involved in military operations against the MILF with medals of honor in Cotabato. On 19 October, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) documented a new peak in IDPs, reaching a total of 391,266,¹⁴⁹ with 91 dead and 120 injured (mostly civilians) since the outbreak of the conflict in 2008. The Moro umbrella organization Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS)¹⁵⁰ organized a demonstration, in Marawi in front of the AFP military base, to call on the UN and the OIC to intervene to stop the war in Mindanao and to put pressure on the government

¹⁴⁷ As part of the celebration of the United Nations Decade of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence to Children of the World (2000-2010), and the Mindanao Week of Peace, the religiously mixed NGO MCW and Mothers for Peace initiated the campaign "Million Thoughts and Acts for Peace" (1 September-1 December 2008), urging the GRP and the MILF to go back to the negotiation table.

¹⁴⁸ The governmental CCCH recorded (on 8 October) for the year 2008 one incident between the AFP and the MILF in January; zero in February, March, and April; two in May; four in June; five in July; 77 in August; and 39 in September. Of these 128 skirmishes, 66 were initiated by the AFP in their manhunt for the lost MILF commands.

¹⁴⁹ As of 14 October 2008, according to the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), a majority of IDPs were from Maguindanao (123,324), followed by North Cotabato (87,555), Lanao del Sur (62,258), Lanao del Norte (58,532), Shariff Kabunsuan (24,485), Basilan (13,870), Sarangani (6,775), and Misamis Oriental (17). The IDPs in Lanao del Sur are from the following municipalities: Balindong – 8,425; Bubong – 150; Butig – 11,640; Calanogas – 3,000; Ditsaan Ramain – 1,525; Ganassi – 1,410; Kapai – 1,300; Lumbayanague – 2,680; Madalum – 3,170; Madamba – 4,490; Malabang – 3,585; Marantao – 2,990; Marawi City – 2,785; Marogong – 4,605; Masiu – 1,000; Malundo – 115; Pagayawan – 505; Picong – 1,188; Poona Bayabao – 70; Pualas – 1,160; Saguwaran – 5,000; Tamparan – 750; and Tugaya – 715.

¹⁵⁰ The CBCS describes itself as "a confederal body and network of 168 Moro civil society organizations based and operating in the whole of Mindanao who have converged for the purpose of advocating for peace, human rights and good governance." It was founded in 2002 and has its main seat in Cotabato City. It was one of the first umbrella Moro NGOs, helping to strengthen the by-then rather limited tradition of Moro NGOs.

to honor the botched MOA-AD. NGOs spoke of a humanitarian crisis in the region. On 2 November, six Maranaos were killed, including two children, aged five and nine. Ten were wounded in the municipality of Magsaysay, Lanao del Norte. According to relatives of the victims, they were killed by Ilagas in Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO) attire. The Police, the AFP, and media branded this incident, regarded by Moros as a massacre, as a *rido*, ignoring laments made by Moro civil society groups about mounting human rights violations against Bangsamoro people, including illegal arrests, torture, the burning of houses of civilians, looting, and harassment.

In November 2008, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the OIC, appealed to the Philippine government and Muslim rebels to end clashes and return to the negotiating table. Moreover, the OIC promised to mobilize resources from affiliated institutions to alleviate the suffering of civilians. Later on, the European Parliament, which had spent EUR 13 million in aid to Mindanao by April 2009, also urged the groups to renew their negotiations and even offered to facilitate the peace process (European Parliament Resolution, 12 March 2009). The American Ambassador Kristie Kenney announced that her country had released USD 2.5 million in additional aid for the evacuees, asking in return that both parties agree to a ceasefire. Clashes between the AFP and the MILF decreased again in December during Christmas holidays.

On 30 November, the last Malaysian IMTs left the Philippines but said that they might return if there was progress in the peace process. The MILF submitted a proposal with certain conditions after the GRP requested an extension of the IMT's stay and the resumption of peace talks. The conditions were: the peace panel had to be reconstituted; there must be an international guarantor; the status of the MOA-AD had to be agreed upon by the parties; the IMT would conduct investigations of ceasefire violations; the warrants of arrest issued against Commanders Bravo, Kato, and Pangalian be declared null and void; and Malaysia would remain as a third-party facilitator. On 2 December, Arroyo appointed Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael Seguis¹⁵¹ as the new chief of the government-negotiating panel. The MILF defined this as a positive step but refused to renegotiate the MOA-AD. Moro hawks urged that the best strategy of

¹⁵¹ The diplomat Seguis replaced retired General Rodolfo Garcia as chief negotiator. He is known as an expert on Islamic affairs, having been assigned as chief of mission to several Muslim countries like Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. He studied Arabic while assigned to Baghdad. Seguis successfully brokered the safe release of Filipino workers Angelo de la Cruz and Roberto Tarongoy, who were held captive by Iraqi dissidents in Baghdad in 2004 and 2005.

the MILF was to intensify the war and thus to pressure the government to change the Constitution in order to accept the MOA-AD.

In December 2008, large protests occurred, supported by the political opposition,¹⁵² representatives of the religious group El Shaddai, the Makati business sector, and also civil society groups¹⁵³ and the “Hyatt 10”¹⁵⁴ against another move by the government and its will to change the Constitution – a measure that would have included an extension of Arroyo’s term that, according to the opposition, could have led to dictatorship.

On 19 January 2009, the government issued E.O. No. 777, creating a national preparatory committee for the Amendment of RA No. 9054 (creating an expanded ARMM), dating back to 2001. On the MILF Central Committee on Information official website, it was said that the MILF does not want an expanded ARMM but the implementation of the MOA-AD. Khaled Musa, deputy chairman of the MILF committee on information, said: “The MILF will not settle for it because it is not negotiated; it is imposed”. He further complained that the E.O. 777 “is nothing but a “paikot” (a runaround) that was chiefly conceived by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.” He told a group of non-government organizations from Mindanao: “Papaikutin lang natin sila gaya ng ginawa natin sa MNLF” (We will just take them on a runaround just like what we did with the MNLF) (Recio 2009).

For the opposition, it seemed evident that the “Mindanao option” was the last card of President Arroyo to remain in power beyond 2010. According to Jejomar Binay, Makati mayor and United Opposition President, E.O. 777 as well as the MOA-AD designed to trigger conflict in the Muslim south in order to declare emergency rule and thus cancel the 2010 elections:

We have had strong suspicions that an escalation of the conflict in the south will be used to justify the declaration of emergency rule, that could lead to the cancellation of the 2010 elections. It began with the MOA-AD, and while conflict in the south has subsided, the EO could trigger fresh hostilities. (Callar 2009)

¹⁵² Among them were Senator Manuel “Mar” Roxas II, Senator “Noynoy” Aquino, former Senate President Franklin Drilon (all Liberal Party), Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero (Nationalist People's Coalition, NPC), and Panfilo Lacson (independent).

¹⁵³ Like the nationalist Bayan, committed to the people's struggle for national freedom and democracy, or the women's rights group Gabriela.

¹⁵⁴ The “Hyatt 10” were ten government employees who announced their resignation in a press conference at the Hyatt Hotel in Pasay City after the “Hello Garci” scandal in 2005. (This scandal refers to a recorded phone call of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which they allegedly talk about vote-buying in the 2004 elections in her favor.) Their resignation was an appeal to President Arroyo to follow their example in order to solve the controversy and to bring prosperity to the country.

The MILF, several peace activists, and the religious sector were instead asking for international pressure to end the conflict, specifically from the UN and the OIC but also the newly-elected President Barack Obama. Amina Rasul, a Tausug women's activist, delivered a letter to Pope Benedict XVI in November 2008 regarding the search for peace. On 18 February 2009, thousands of Marawi City residents demonstrated to call on the UN to support the signing of the MOA-AD (*Bangsamoro Updates*, February 2009). The MILF leaders wrote a congratulatory message to President-elect Obama. A rumor even speculated that an MILF lobby was working for Barack Obama, trying to force the issue of an unconditional peace agreement between the GRP and the MILF. This would serve to stabilize the entire East Asian region, particularly in the Malay and Mindanao economic zones. In November 2009, the MILF received an answering letter wherein the White House assured it of America's continued support for the peace process, expressing a desire to see formal negotiations resume as soon as possible.

The OIC advised the Arroyo government and the MILF to go back to the negotiating table. It initiated a conference on minorities on 18-19 April 2009, and convened MILF delegates for the first time to address the meeting. The invitation followed the 10 March 2009 talks in Manila with Maulana "Bobby" Alonto and Abdullah Camlian, leaders of the MILF delegation (*GMA News*, 18 April 2009). At all past conferences of the OIC, the MILF was only invited as part of the MNLF delegation, which is the only representative of the Bangsamoro that the OIC recognizes (MILF Central Committee on Information official website, 18 April 2009). The OIC took this occasion to call on the MILF and the MNLF to open up dialogues and start to work together. Such a demand was already frequently pronounced by Moro civil society organizations, among others by the Mindanao Commission on Women (MCW). In May, OIC members opposed the Philippines' bid to be granted an observer status in the organization.

However, the government continued to soften its approach towards the MILF. In order to induce a broader participation in the peace process as a consequence of the shift in the government's strategy from negotiating with armed rebels to engaging in "authentic community dialogues," it tapped the Bishops-Ulama Conference (BUC) to take a more active role. Under the BUC commission, "Konsult Mindanaw" was designed by an interfaith committee constituted by members of Mindanao's academic community, the Ulama League of the Philippines, and the Lumad. The project conducted 311 multi-sectoral and cross-regional focus group discussions in

various parts of Mindanao and southern Palawan.¹⁵⁵ The conclusions were underlined in a final report in January 2010. Among others, it stated that many Muslims but also some Christians in Central Mindanao and ARMM considered the approval of the MOA-AD as the key answer to the conflict. Others, however, saw peace in Mindanao more as a result of “satisfying basic needs, respecting collective identities, exercising good governance, caring for the environment, and deepening in one’s spirituality” (Arguillas 2010d). Many people shared the desire to be involved in the search for peace. From a certain point of view, a general confusion was rampant about what was the exact standing of the government but also about the different Bangsamoro groups (including MNLF and MILF) and about civil society and the political sector. Some demanded that the peace process include dealing with prejudices and discrimination. The MILF was asked to clarify the BJE and to include more religious leaders in the peace process and in teaching good governance. Finally, a professionalization and institutionalization of the peace efforts was demanded, starting with the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (OPAPP), which should be transformed into a “Department of Peace”.

On 5 March 2009, the government dropped its demand for the arrest of the three rogue sub-commanders of the MILF (Commander Bravo, Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato, and Solaiman Pangalian) as a precondition for the resumption of the stalled peace talks. Eleven days later, it shifted its official strategy from DDR to Renegotiate, Reaffirm, and Renew (RRR) with regard to the MOA-AD, rendering a return to the negotiation table more likely (ibid. 2009e). It also asked Malaysia to continue to facilitate the peace talks. Having met the MILF demands, the government created a six-point guideline for the peace panel: (1) any consensus or agreement reached shall always be subject to constitutional processes; (2) any future agreement must be within the purview of Philippine citizenship and there shall be no talk of independence; (3) the government panel shall utilize available mechanisms to reflect in the agenda and the agreements the values, sentiments and principles of the Filipino people; (4) DDR shall be the overall framework; (5) whether the negotiations succeed or not, hostilities on the ground must end; and (6) while peace negotiations are ongoing the government shall also intensify development efforts in the conflict-affected areas as part of its confidence-building measures.

Great Britain and the UN again offered to support the peace process. While the MILF and the GRP welcomed this initiative, the opposition, represented by Franklin Drilon, warned that too

¹⁵⁵ All these groups were asked to answer four questions: What is your vision of peace in Mindanao? What are your recommendations for the GRP-MILF peace talks? What other activities must we do to attain broader peace? What are you willing to offer and sacrifice for the sake of peace in Mindanao?

much internationalization of the peace process might be counter-productive and against the national interests of the Philippines (ABS-CBN, 1 April 2009). Military clashes had decreased since December but were still rampant (NDCC 2009). On 5 April, underlining “that the Philippines values its Islamic culture” (Gutierrez 2009), Arroyo issued Proclamation 1808 and declared Eid al-Adha a nationwide non-working public holiday in the Philippines. Arroyo thereby continued what Vivienne Angeles describes as government help “to make the environment conducive to Islamic resurgence,” applied initially by Marcos during the period of martial law (Angeles 2001: 197).¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Arroyo's decision did not last for long. In October 2009, Proclamation No. 1808-A declared Eid al-Adha again only a regional non-working holiday in the ARMM. Another movement in this direction was made several months later on 23 September 2010. The bicameral Conference Committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives approved Senate Bill (SB) 3307, the addition of a ninth ray to the sun in the Philippine flag. The rays in the flag represent the eight provinces that declared war during the Philippine Revolution in 1896. The new ray has thus a high symbolic value by recognizing Muslim Filipino efforts for the nation's independence.

On 13 July 2009, the government again declared a new strategy, which was named HELP-CM (Health, Education, Livelihood, and Progress Task Force-Central Mindanao). It was created under Administrative Order 267 and signed on 29 June. HELP-CM may have partly been a reaction to a report by the Norwegian Council of Refugees in which the Philippines had the most number of evacuees worldwide for the year 2008, with 600,000 people displaced. The program had the main intention¹⁵⁷ of overseeing and ensuring the safe return of thousands of families displaced by armed conflicts in parts of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, South Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat.¹⁵⁸ PHP 10 million were allocated for it. Violent military clashes still occurred and after a serial of bombings in Mindanao the Arroyo government declared a full and then a heightened alert in metropolitan Manila, activating an Anti-Terror Command Center and leading the

¹⁵⁶ Indeed, in order to underline its positive intentions towards Muslims, the Marcos government had officially recognized Islam as an historic inheritance of the Philippines, declared Eid al-Fitr a holiday and finally integrated aspects of *sharia* law into the Constitution. At the same time, the MNLF were considered as rebels and consequently military operations were launched against them (Angeles 2001: 197).

¹⁵⁷ It had four main goals: “1) to forge a peaceful, negotiated, final political settlement with the MILF, including the effective implementation of ceasefire, development, and monitoring agreements; 2) addressing the concerns arising from continued armed hostilities, and the protection of civilians and non-combatants, especially from lawless MILF renegades; 3) reducing the impact of the conflict on the communities in the conflict-affected areas, especially the IDPs; 4) pursuing “humanitarian offensives” to address the root causes of conflict (poverty and exclusion from access to education, employment, and livelihood)” (Arguillas 2009d).

¹⁵⁸ HELP-CM was criticized because it did not cover Lanao del Norte.

opposition to accuse the government of “lay[ing] the groundwork for the President’s declaration of a state of emergency” (Felipe, Laude, Calica, Adraneda and Carcamo 2009). Through the declaration of martial law, the Constitution can be set aside and regular terms of office abrogated, as under President Marcos in 1972.

On 23 July 2009, Malacañang announced the Suspension of Offensive Military Operations (SOMO). Two days later Mohagher Iqbal declared a Suspension of Military Action (SOMA). On 28-29 July, a special meeting between representatives of the MILF and the government took place in Kuala Lumpur. Both parties agreed to a Joint Statement in which four major initiatives were introduced. First, SOMO and SOMA should be sustained by mutual efforts. Secondly, the MOA-AD would be acknowledged as an unsigned and yet initialed document and the consensus points would be reframed with the end in view of moving towards the comprehensive compact to bring about a negotiated political settlement. Thirdly, the parties would work for a framework agreement on the establishment of a mechanism for the protection of non-combatants in armed conflict. Finally, they would work for a framework agreement on the establishment of an ICG consisting of states and non-state organizations to accompany and mobilize international support for the peace process.

When President Arroyo met her American counterpart on 30 July 2009, she honored “President Obama’s reaching out to the Muslim world” and “let President Obama know that the Muslim secessionists have agreed, together with a Philippine government panel, to work towards a resumption of formal peace talks” (President Barack Obama and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines, press conference, Washington, DC, July 30, 2009). At the beginning of August, the AFP launched an attack against ASG training camps in Basilan, killing 23 soldiers and injuring 22. The military urged the government to change its policy towards the MILF and be stricter on them, since the MILF, according to the military, had cooperated with the ASG during the attack. The MILF admitted that ten MILF members had been killed when the AFP attacked the ASG camp but that those MILF members had not supported the ASG but had acted on self-defense, allegedly having been caught unaware by the arrival of government troops. The military then accused the rebels of not having sufficient control over their members. Arroyo called for the “annihilation” of Abu Sayyaf extremists and those MILF troops having aided them. At the same time, the government took care to not offend the entire Moro population by emphasizing that operations against the MILF in Basilan should not affect efforts to revive the peace talks.

Military clashes after the end of July 2009 were mainly limited to those between the ASG and the AFP in Sulu and Basilan. The incidents between the AFP and the MILF were mainly followed by protests to the Ceasefire Committee, in order to prevent similar incidents in the future. The procedure of protesting to the committee is not new: it was used frequently before, when one side believed that the other had broken the 2003 ceasefire. In defiance of the reinstatement of the ceasefire agreement, about 250,000 IDPs remained in the ARMM. The majority of them came from Maguindanao, where a flood exacerbated the disastrous situation.

On 15 September 2009, the peace panels signed a framework agreement in Malaysia on the formation of an ICG. The accord was reached in recognition of the role that interested countries and international non-government organizations can play in the peace process. The tasks of the ICG would be to attend and observe the face-to-face negotiations upon invitation by the parties and with the concurrence of the facilitator. It would also have to conduct visits, exchange views, and give advice on a discreet basis in coordination with the parties and the facilitator. It had to seek out the assistance of recognized experts, resource persons, or groups on specific issues in order to support the parties. Finally, it had to meet upon request by any of the parties to help resolve substantive issues based on the agreed agenda. The ICG would engage the OIC, the EU, and eminent persons to participate in its activities. Concerning the INGOs, their task was mainly to function as a bridge between the parties and to provide research input and feedback (Arguillas 2009b). Shortly after this, during a diplomatic journey in Europe, Arroyo met the Secretary-General of the OIC in Turkey to talk about a possible involvement of this organization in the peace process.

Mindanao women leaders from the NGO Mindanao People's Caucus (MPC) initiated the Mindanao Women's Framework for Civilian Protection. It suggested that a Joint Civilian Protection Authority (JCPA), composed of members from the government and the MILF as well as associate members from various civil society organizations, LGUs, the media, and the MNLF, should be established to protect civilians and IDPs against violence, deprivation, and threats to their lives. The composition of the JCPA was to be 70% female. In response, the MILF's Central Committee, while commenting that the exchange with women leaders constitutes an important forum, rejected their views in the decision process (Elusfa 2009). Instead, the government and the MILF signed in Kuala Lumpur an agreement to include civilian protection into the TOR of the

IMT. The IMT was to monitor non-compliance¹⁵⁹ by the parties to their basic undertaking to protect civilian communities. They would be supported by humanitarian organizations, NGOs, and INGOs (Arguillas 2009a). The MPC expressed dismay about this decision since the protection of civilians being attached to the IMT gave the impression of being only an “afterthought”. The peace panels answered that the MPC could be among the NGOs to carry out the civilian protection functions and later on invited officially, which was accepted by the women's group.

With the signing of the Joint Statement on 29 July, a ceasefire was also agreed to, officially ending roughly one year of combat in which about 500 clashes had taken place, counting only those in the marshy heartland of Maguindanao province. According to the AFP, about 123 guerrillas (the rebels say about 20) were killed along with 41 soldiers (Hranjski 2009). Between August 2008 and July 2009, the NDCC estimated that over 700,000 people were displaced and nearly 400 people were killed.¹⁶⁰ On 8-9 December 2009, peace negotiations were resumed in Kuala Lumpur after a 16-month impasse. The negotiations from then on included the ICG, involving governmental representatives from Japan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom (Saudi Arabia joined it in December 2010), four INGOs, the Muhammadiyah, a socio-religious organization from Indonesia (represented by Dr. Sudibyo Markus and Prof. Din Syamsuddin), the Asia Foundation (represented by Herizal Hazri and Steven Rood), the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (David Gorman), and the London-based Conciliation Resources (Kristian Herbolzheimer and Cynthia Petrigh). The mandate of the IMT was a main issue at this meeting.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ The parties agreed to: “(1) refrain from intentionally targeting or attacking non-combatants, prevent suffering of the civilian population, and avoid acts that would cause collateral damage to civilians; (2) refrain from targeting or intentionally attacking civilian properties or facilities such as schools, hospitals, religious premises, health and food distribution centers, or relief operations or objects or facilities indispensable to the survival of the civilian population and of a civilian nature; (3) take all necessary actions to facilitate the provision of relief supplies to affected communities; (4) take all precautions possible to avoid incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, and danger to civilian objects; (5) ensure that all protective and relief actions shall be undertaken in a purely non-discriminatory basis covering all affected communities.” (Agreement on the Civilian Protection Component of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) 27 October 2009).

¹⁶⁰ Since its eruption in the 1970s, the conflict has caused about 150,000 fatal casualties.

¹⁶¹ It was decided to invite the following groups to join the IMT: (1) the initial members (Malaysia as leading member, as well as Brunei, Japan, and Libya), (2) additional new members such as Indonesia, Norway (which accepted), Qatar, and the EU (which accepted); (3) non-governmental organizations, namely, the International Committee of the Red Cross (which declined), the local MPC (which accepted), and Nonviolent Peace, based in Brussels (which accepted). On 5 March 2010, other NGOs accepted an invitation, including the Cotabato City-based Mindanao Human Rights Action Center and the Marawi City-based Moslem Organization of Government Officials and Professionals, Inc. (MOGOP).

On 20 January 2010, the two parties submitted their respective draft proposals on the Comprehensive Compact. The MILF draft covered every aspect of the proposed interim Bangsamoro governance. It was premised on a state/sub-state relationship, similar to the regulation of the state of Sarawak in Malaysia. This demands an amendment of the Constitution. The government's draft offered enhanced autonomy by amending the R.A. 6734 (An Act Providing for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao). The author of *Understanding the Mindanao Conflict*, Patricio Diaz, criticized the GRP for being still involved in implementing the expanded autonomy promised to the MNLF in 1996.¹⁶² This might conflict with the suggested enhanced autonomy promised to the MILF. After the panels met on 27 January, the MILF panel did not show up for the following day, claiming that the GRP had not offered anything new and that the MILF had already in 2000 and 2003 declined the offer of enhanced autonomy.

Despite stalled peace talks, the first group of the IMT returned to Mindanao in February. Under its guidance both ceasefire committees signed an agreement on 23 April that violence and any disturbance — including attacks on power towers — should be avoided during election times. As a reaction to the efforts of the GRP, the MILF, and international groups to push peace negotiations, the North Cotabato vice-governor, gubernatorial candidate Emmanuel Piñol, and his younger brother, Representative Bernardo Piñol, filed a petition in the Supreme Court to stop a possible signing of an interim agreement, unless it was made public beforehand. They thus showed their vigilance and the will to repeat their court attack against an agreement, which was judged by them as unconstitutional. On 23 May, the MNLF (headed by Nur Misuari) and the MILF formed a coordinating committee to consolidate their movements. Commander Umbra Kato was transferred from his military post to become a senior staff member of one of the political organs of the MILF. Peace talks were on hold until after elections.

5. The Inclusion of Women in the Peace Process

Unlike on the MILF negotiation panel, several women were members of the governmental peace panel. Only one Muslim (Maranao) woman, Professor and former MSU President Emily Marohombsar, was part of it (1998-2004). From 2001-2004 Irene Santiago, a Christian women's activist and feminist from Davao, joined it. Known for her contributions to a culture of peace in Mindanao, she was granted a title (Bai Romapenet, Princess of Hope and Solidarity) by the royal

¹⁶² In 2006 a tripartite (GRP, MNLF, OIC) review was recommended after the OIC sent a fact-finding team to look into the implementation of the 1996 peace pact. In 2009 the OPAPP reported that the first phase of the FPA had been implemented but that there were still some open issues from the second phase.

houses in Lanao, becoming an adopted daughter of the Islamic City of Marawi. Under her leadership, the inter-religious MCW, which was founded in 2001, initiated the “Mothers for Peace” campaign in 2003 (Rood 2005: 11). “With almost no resources but a lot of contacts and commitment, Mothers for Peace launched a relentless campaign using TV and radio time and print space offered free by media networks that believed in its message.” (Sanz-Zarate 2006: 148). Other civil society groups had similar agendas and it was supposed that the public pressure contributed to the bilateral declaration of a ceasefire a couple of months later.

The MCW also advocated for more women participating in peacemaking efforts. In February 2006, a conference was held with the title “Mindanao Women’s Peace Summit: If Women Negotiated the Peace Agreement . . .”, with the goal of training women to participate in the ongoing peace negotiations. Women sympathizers of the MILF and the MNLF were invited as well as indigenous women. At least 325 women participated, as well as MILF resource speakers Attorney Lanang Ali (the MILF’s legal counsel and member of the Peace Panel), Datu Jun Mantawil (head of the MILF Peace Panel Secretariat), Dr. Alpha Amirulhaj (member of the MILF Technical Committee), Jimmy Labawan (MNLF Vice-chairman), and sponsors from the Australian Agency for International Development and the GTZ.

The Summit resulted in a position paper that was given to the peace negotiating panels. In this document, several suggestions were made for enhancing the peace process in Mindanao. Among them were the inclusion of the MNLF in the peace process; building on the 1996 peace agreement; and establishing the executive, legislative and judicial powers and functions of the future BJE government from the existing ARMM structures. In addition, the peace process introduced a requirement for the amendment of the Constitution and the inclusion of women in post-peace agreement political decision-making, reconstruction, and recovery. Finally, the Mindanao Trust Fund was to be 30% female in its decision-making structure.

While we anticipate that the Mindanao Trust Fund will adhere to guidelines on mainstreaming gender into all its programs, projects and activities, we strongly recommend the establishment of a Special Fund for Women. This recommendation comes from the lessons learned from the nine years of implementing the UN Multi-Donor Trust Fund after the signing of the 1996 GRP-MNLF Peace Accord where women were able to access a miniscule percentage of the funds but showed that their projects were the most sustainable. The decision-making body of the Special Fund for Women must include representatives from Mindanao women’s groups with constituencies in the conflict-affected areas. (Homepage of the MCW, 2010)

Concerning projects that should be implemented in a post-peace BJE, the paper mentioned as a first point free formal and informal education. This was followed by livelihood, health, gender, and development projects. Issues like the integration of the *madaris* into the mainstream educational system (including the study of the *sharia* and the teaching of comparative religion in all elementary and secondary schools), the promotion of a peace culture and indigenous ways of conflict resolution and transformation were also of interest. The position paper was handed over to Lanang Ali as a member of the peace panel and Silvestre Afable, Chair of the GRP Peace Panel. While Afable especially appreciated the role of women in the microfinance sector, Lanang commented on the paper from a conservative religious point of view, emphasizing that women are the assistants of men:

I cannot yet give [my comments]. I have to submit this to the central committee for them to scrutinize but I am sure that everything here will be considered by the MILF. As I scan it and heard from point to point, I do not see any reason why the MILF will not respect this document.

We cannot disregard the role of women in Mindanao. The role of women has been revealed in the Koran. To respect the role of women. Empowerment is already there also. We need to consult our Ustadz what specific verses in the Koran that emphasize the empowerment of women. Ex: A woman is the assistant of the man. The man is always the head of the family. It is *haram* if the woman heads the family. The man also heads the prayer. That is *haram* for a woman to lead the prayer. It cannot be that the woman will always be the head of the state. As long as there is a male capable to head the state then he should lead. There is always an exception to the rule. A female may be allowed to rule the nation but only as such time that the male cannot perform. By nature, women are emotional. That is why females are discouraged to rule the nation. (Homepage of the MCW, 2010)

The MILF did not reconsider the MCW demands concerning the gender-composition of the peace panel, but in 2010, it formed a board of consultants, which also included two women: an indigenous woman and an *alima* (female religious scholar). Nevertheless, the participation of GRP and MILF functionaries at the conference could already be seen as representing the success of the MCW in putting its demands on the peace panel agenda.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Jun Mantawil in 2009 emphasized that in the proposed BJE the MILF would be more liberal in its approach to women than the Taliban. There would be no prohibition on women seeking public office but men would have “priority” in that field under an Islamic government “because women are encouraged to become good mothers and regents of families, first and foremost, as the real foundation of an ideal society.” Mantawil elaborated on this by saying that “the success of women in laying the foundation for a good society within their respective families will serve as a community model as they move on further to a secondary task of public service. Should they be able to become successful in both endeavors, then they prove to be more successful than us, men.” Finally he stated that like men, “women are part and parcel of any struggle for reform in Islam” (Maulana 2009).

Some months after the conference, in May 2006, Irene Santiago was appointed senior adviser to the OPAPP.¹⁶⁴ MCW continued pursuing its agenda of more female participation in 2010 by handing over a letter to President Arroyo urging her to promote the involvement of more women on the new governmental peace panel. In March 2010, Dr. Grace Jimeno-Rebollos became a member. She, however, stayed in office only a short time, being replaced by candidates chosen by the newly-elected President Aquino.

Sylvia Okinlay-Paraguay, a Lumad from Bukidnon and member of the organization Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks, thus again from civil society and a women's rights organization, joined the government's peace panel in 2004. At the same time, the attorney Leah Tanodra-Armamento was appointed an alternate member. Both stayed in office until 3 September 2008 when the governmental panel was dissolved.

In August 2010 under the Aquino government Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer became a member of the governmental peace panel. Santiago and Coronel-Ferrer participated in the drafting and finalization of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (September 2009-March 2010). The NAP is based on UN Security Resolution No. 1325, adopted by United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2000. It was sponsored and was to be implemented and monitored by government agencies with advisory functions, OPAPP and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women. The NAP, like the UN resolution that was its model, seeks to advance the participation of women in the peace process.

Among those civil society activists who promote the participation of indigenous people, and particularly of women in the peace process, the lawyer and peace advocate Mary Ann Arnado has to be mentioned. In 2001, civil society groups were for the first time allowed to join the peace negotiations, even though they were excluded from the closed-door negotiations. Among the observers were representatives of the NGO Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC), like the journalist

¹⁶⁴ The OPAPP, including its support Secretariat, had been founded by the Ramos government in 1993. The government at this time also created the Peace Panels for the peace talks. The OPAPP supports and coordinates the negotiating panels appointed by the president and supervises the implementation of existing peace agreements. The OPAPP was part of a governmental peace policy which provided a broader official perspective on peace, an official policy that defined a comprehensive, multi-track peace process, an infrastructure to carry out the government peace effort, and significant achievements in the reform and negotiations process. Besides the OPAPP, the Ramos government in 1992 also created the National Unification Commission (NUC). The NUC was given the task to "formulate and recommend, after consulting with the concerned sectors of society, to the President . . . a viable general amnesty program and peace process that will lead to a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace" (E.O. 19, 1992). The NUC received support from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), and Regional and Provincial Convenors Groups were set up which also included NGOs and POs. The aim of the peace efforts under Ramos was a "shared ownership" of the peace process (OPAPP homepage).

Carolyn Arguillas and Mary Ann Arnado. In Kuala Lumpur, Arnado was the one to point out to MILF functionaries that there was no woman on their peace panel. In response, she was told that they could not find anyone competent (Woodward 2005: 31). Under her initiative, the MPC developed, initially as a component of an institution with its main seat in Davao (Initiatives for International Dialogue) promoting solidarity among the peoples of Southeast Asia. In 2002, MPC established the Bantay Ceasefire monitoring team. The idea was based on the formation of LMTs provided by the Tripoli Agreement of 2001. Military generals and the MILF did not want civilians to monitor the ceasefire, and in particular, women were seen as being not competent enough in dealing with military tasks (ibid.: 23). Therefore, the Bantay Ceasefire Monitoring Team was established as an independent monitoring team, which worked in zones of conflict to educate involved groups on international humanitarian law and human rights. During the 2003 outbreak of conflict, the MPC helped to convince the MILF to announce a ten-day ceasefire on 28 May, but the AFP declined a similar move; one military commander explained to the MPC they could not do so without appearing like “homosexuals” (soft) (ibid.: 34). In June 2008, the MPC succeeded in mobilizing 10,000 evacuees for a demonstration for a ceasefire and initiating a broad media campaign demanding the same. The protests accompanied those of other civil society organizations like the Mothers for Peace (see above). In 2010, the MPC became part of the newly-established Civilian Protection Component of the International Monitoring Team.

Since UN Resolution No. 1325, non-Muslim women have increasingly been included in the peace negotiations as part of the governmental panel. Most of these women are active in inter-religious civil society movements. They are pushing for greater participation of women not only in the peace process but also in the future BJE. Also Muslim women’s activists were recently more involved as consultants of the MILF. In 2011, the Tausug Muslim lawyer Raissa Jajurie and the Maguindanao Muslim educator Bai Cabaybay Abubakar, along with Timuay Melanio Ulama, a member of the T’duray tribe in Mindanao, were appointed members of the MILF peace panel’s board of consultants. Raissa Jajurie is heading the women’s organization Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro confederation (Women for Justice in Bangsamoro). This demonstrates that the MILF is open to the issues of Muslim women’s rights being presented by a progressive Muslim women’s activist. So far, however, women are not included into the MILF peace panel but remain as consultants.

6. Outlook: The Benigno Aquino Government

The national media commented that the 2010 national elections showed that even though they are prohibited by the 1987 Constitution,¹⁶⁵ political dynasties are “stronger than ever” (*VERA Files*, 14 May 2010). Benigno Simeon “Noynoy” Cojuangco Aquino III, who was strongly supported by leading political clans in Lanao del Sur, was proclaimed the new President of the Philippines. The same families that had been in politics for decades were (re-)elected in 15 out of 39 provinces in Luzon (38%), eight out of 16 in the Visayas (50%), and 11 out of 25 in Mindanao (44%). Some political families suffered a setback. Of the 11 Piñol brothers who ran for local posts in North Cotabato, seven succeeded, but still Emmanuel Piñol could not regain the governorship he had held in Cotabato from 1998-2007 (Tiongson-Mayrina 2010a).¹⁶⁶ The MILF commented that with the loss of Piñol, the peace process might now progress more easily. The Ampatuans of Maguindanao on the other hand were among the biggest winners among the 64 political families in the 2010 elections who won two or more posts. They counted about 15 winning relatives, among them eight mayors and six vice-mayors. Zamboanga City Mayor Celso Lobregat and Iligan City Mayor Lawrence Lluch Cruz were also re-elected.

Soon after Aquino assumed office, he chose a new chair for the governmental peace panel, Attorney Marvic Leonen. This choice was widely welcomed by peace advocates.¹⁶⁷ In July 2010, the newly-appointed Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Deles, known as one of the “Hyatt 10,” explained that the Aquino government was following a four-point strategy (not the six-point strategy applied by the Ramos and Arroyo governments) to put an end to the Mindanao conflict. Priority would now be given to more delivery of basic services, particularly education and health. Also mentioned were economic reconstruction and the sustainable development of Mindanao, “to spur growth areas in the region wherein the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is an integral part.” The last two points are the reforms of the security sector, in particular the disbanding of private armies and good governance (Cal 2010). Thus, RRR as well as a peaceful, negotiated settlement with the rebel groups are not mentioned any more as major issues. In an interview, Leonen made clear that an amendment to the

¹⁶⁵ Article 2, Section 26 states: “The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law.”

¹⁶⁶ Piñol lost to Emmylou Taliño-Mendoza in his run for governor. Former North Cotabato Governor Jesus Sacdalan traded places with 1st district Representative Emmylou Taliño-Mendoza: Sacdalan is now 1st district representative while Mendoza is the new governor.

¹⁶⁷ The other panel members are Maranao Dr. Hamid Barra, a former ARMM education secretary and incumbent chairman of the Ulama Council of the Philippines, UP Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, a peace activist; former Agriculture Secretary Senen Bacani; and Maguindanao Vice-Mayor Ramon Piang Sr.

Constitution was not being categorically refused. This left an open door for further elaborations on the implementation of the MOA-AD under the condition that all sides would accept it. The government's optimism about solving the Mindanao conflict within the following six years of Aquino's governance seems familiar, similar promises having been made before by other Presidents.

The Aquino government announced at the beginning of its term further support for the MNLF-GRP-OIC tripartite meetings as well as the closure of the FPA of 1996. Moreover, it continued the new development, which began under Arroyo, of including a larger variety of groups in the peace talks. Along with international governmental representatives (including Malaysia, Norway, and the EU), international and local NGO representatives are also involved. For its part, the ARMM government demanded to "be heard" by both parties in the peace process. Its first action was to sponsor the first region-wide peace summit, inviting members of the MNLF, the MILF, religious and traditional groups, and the government to discuss the issue. On 20 September 2010, Muslimin Sema from the MNLF, a guest speaker, as well as government representatives and international guests took part in the summit, while the MILF declined the invitation, arguing that the gathering was a government initiative. It announced it would participate in negotiations only under the third party facilitator, Malaysia. Muslimin Sema stated that he did not believe that the GRP and the MILF would be able to find an agreement and that the only solution the MNLF saw was "the enhancing of autonomy already in place" (Arguillas 2010).

On 5 September 2010, Aquino formed an advisory body, which was assigned the task of assisting government negotiators. The body is composed of members of Congress, retired justices of the Supreme Court, members of the 1987 Constitutional Commission, members of local governments in strife-affected areas, representatives of NGOs, and chairmen of previous peace panels. While negotiations with the MILF continue, the court was asked by the government to outlaw the Abu Sayyaf Group as terrorists and to blacklist the roughly 200 members. In order to get around the law stating that the Abu Sayyaf members cannot be arrested if they do not commit a crime, the government asked for the criminalization of the group under the 2007 anti-terrorism law.

Regardless of the MILF's will to end the conflict, the implementation of the MOA-AD remains its central condition, as it is not satisfied with mere development projects but demands a political solution. In particular, a "state/sub-state relationship" is favored. This would require an

amendment to the 1987 Constitution's Article 10, Sections 15-21. The Malaysian state Sarawak and the "one country, two systems" of Hong Kong as part of China are named as models. According to Soliman Santos, an amendment would only change the setup of the ARMM, including a higher degree of self-determination, without necessarily requiring a federal system in the whole of the Philippines (ibid. 2010c). In September 2010, the MILF announced its new peace panel. It retained Mohagher Iqbal as chairman, the lawyer Michael Mastura, Maulana "Bobby" Alonto, and Sama-Bangingi-Tausug Abdullah Camlian, formerly Chair of the MILF Technical Panel. New to the panel was Professor Abhoud Syed Mansor-Lingga, Chairperson of the Institute for Bangsamoro Studies. Datu Antonio Kinoc, a B'laan tribesman from Colombio (Sultan Kudarat), became an alternate member of the peace panel. Replaced because of health reasons were lawyers Lanang Ali and Musib Buat. An additional Board of Consultants was also formed with five members, two of them women: one to represent the indigenous people and one to represent the religious sector.

However, negotiations were put off until February 2011 because of a dispute about the Malaysian facilitator¹⁶⁸. Demonstrations in Marawi City demanded that the MILF return to its original quest and ask for independence.¹⁶⁹ At the end of 2010, President Aquino started a new anti-rebel campaign under the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP). This meant that the military relied on field commanders' experiences of their areas of command to win the people's hearts and minds in order to defeat threats to national security. Compared to the old campaign — a pure military plan known as Oplan Bantay Laya (Operation Freedom Watch) — the new IPSP involves all sectors of society, with the primary objective of winning peace without the implication of violence.¹⁷⁰ The military will support the local governmental units in the delivery of basic services like health care. Further, the government plans to include community leaders in

¹⁶⁸ The Malaysian Othman Abdul Razak is not accepted as a facilitator by the Aquino government. Officially, no reasons are given for this, allowing the media to speculate that the government suspects him of having a biased standing towards the rebels.

¹⁶⁹ About 30 to 40 thousand people gathered in Marawi City during a rally organized on 22 November 2010 by Bangsamoro Solidarity Action for Peace and Justice. They issued a manifesto that cited the "bleak developments" in the negotiations as their reason for asking the MILF to quit the talks. stating, "Toward this end, we now strongly urge the MILF and its leadership to withdraw from the peace negotiations with the GRP and revert to the original aspiration and stand on which the Bangsamoro liberation movement was founded more than four decades ago: The political independence of the Bangsamoro nation from the Philippine state" (Lacson 2010).

¹⁷⁰ Apart from its humanitarian approach, the campaign also identified the following groups as enemies of the state and threats to national security: the Communist Party of the Philippines and its negotiating arm, the National Democratic Front; the Moro Islamic Liberation Front; the Abu Sayyaf Group and its foreign ally, the Jemaah Islamiyah; Moro rebel groups; and the private armed groups, including armed civilian auxiliary groups being maintained by politicians and influential personalities.

the planning and coordination when carrying out Civil-Military Operations, meaning operations to gain the maximal civil support for military operations. Around this time, it became publicly known that Umbra Kato had left the MILF, taking about 1,000 fighters with him to form his own rebel group, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). Militiamen held responsible for the Maguindanao massacre (Gomez 2011) also joined the group, accusing the MILF of having abandoned its original demand for independence.¹⁷¹ This, however, became only a marginal issue at the February meeting in Kuala Lumpur, where the MILF withdrew its proposal submitted to Arroyo, and introduced a new one in which its area claims were reduced to only 7-9% of earlier demands made in the MOA-AD. Further, the idea of an asymmetric state/sub-state relationship, taking Northern Ireland as an example, was enhanced (Wee 2011).

The peace talks or renegotiations that have taken place since the last outbreak of violence have included large numbers of international and local players, as well as an increasing number of women and indigenous people on both sides. Amina Rasul from the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy, who was named Mindanao Peace Champion by the UN-sponsored Action for Conflict Transformation for Peace Programs in 2011, commented on the increase in the number of women, wondering “what role do Muslim women play in the fashioning of peace in Muslim Mindanao even if many women have been appointed peace adviser and sat in GRP peace panels?” (Glang 2011). To discuss this issue *alimat* and civil society leaders held the Second National Conference of Muslim Women Peace Advocates in Zamboanga City from 7 to 10 February 2011, in which 150 individuals participated, mostly women.

All agreements between the GRP and the MILF since the return to the negotiation table under the Arroyo government have served only to institutionalize the “no war, no peace” situation, especially the increased focus on the monitoring team, development projects, and good governance rather than on the solution to the conflict. The newly installed Aquino government announced its basic willingness to change the Constitution and altered its security plan to increase human security with the help of LGUs and local leaders. At the same time, the MILF was declared a threat to national security. The MILF, on the other hand, proposed reducing its area claims in a newly drafted Comprehensive Compact to push the peace talks.

¹⁷¹ In August 2011 Kato renamed his organization Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) because the number of supporters had grown since the foundation of the organization and included civilian members. The goal of the movement is to create a puritan Islamic state. The MILF declared Kato and his supporters rebels against the authority of the MILF (Unson 2011).

The inclusion of a larger interest group in the peace process has a biased character. On the one hand, people are not able to complain any more about not being involved; on the other hand, this arrangement might harbor a potential for further conflicts in case each group chooses to defend its own interests against the others. The development might prove a disadvantage for the MILF in its becoming again a minority in relation to the various Muslim groups that are supported by the government, like the MNLF and the ARMM LGUs. However, it could also be an advantage in taking into consideration the future and compatibility of already existing arrangements. In an environment in which family politics (see chapter two) are of crucial importance, it might be a gain in opening the door for multifocal power structures.

C. Conflict as a Tool of Stabilization

1. Family Feuds (Ridos)

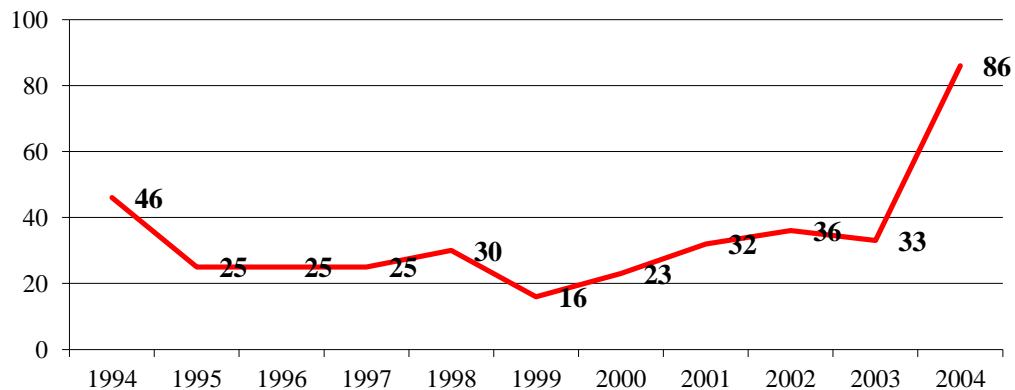
Whereas the violent conflict on the national level has been defined as a process of “de-embedding” (“Entbettung”), violence on the local level is “socially embedded” (“sozial eingebettet”) (Elwert 2004; Zürcher 2004: 102). It follows certain cultural patterns and institutionalized forms (Bierschenk 2004: 186). *Ridos* aim not at changing of society but at stabilizing it. They strengthen local norms and cultural patterns, whereas the national conflict tends to destabilize national norms and patterns.

Ridos were already a part of the Maranao social structure when the American colonial forces arrived. Magdalena quotes a comment of General Leonard Wood: “If this intense family fighting can be stopped, great progress can be made by this people, but they are constantly fighting with each other” (Wood, 12 August 1903, in Magdalena 2002: 33). General Pershing, after seeing that all Moro villages had *kotas* (forts), which varied in strength according to the power of the local chief, observed that they were actually built to protect “themselves and their property from covetous neighbors” (Magdalena 2002: 34). Mednick (1965) noted that Maranaos would usually not leave the area of their relatives without being accompanied or armed since they feared becoming victims of a family feud (see Mednick 1965: 359; Saber and Tamano 1985-1986: 118). Mednick said of Maranao society at this time that “lack of effective authority beyond the kin group, endemic conflict, and an absence of permanent or cohesive social groupings thus continually threatened the continuity of community life” (p. 363). Gonzales (2000) emphasizes that *ridos* actually refer to “the traditional Moro mode of ‘dispute settlement’ that has boosted the Maranao reputation for belligerence” (p. 88). However, conflict settlement includes not only the

mobilization of the extended family in order to execute revenge on the culprit or his extended family, but also peaceful means, like payment of blood money or forgiving (see chapter two).

The institutionalization of *ridos* as a measure for solving conflicts stems from the belief that every clan must have a “robust member” — someone who has already killed (Matuan 2007: 93) — in order to earn the respect of the society. This signifies that being able to defend oneself by violent means does earn the respect of others. It is said that Maranaos prefer death to soiled honor (Disoma 1999: 183). In addition, those Maranaos “who have no *maratabat*” (status-honor) and would not revenge the killing of a relative, even by hiring a killer, or defend their relatives, are looked down upon as *marata a tau*, meaning “bad/low people” who do not have kinship ties and thus any social standing (Seagoing 2000: 223). It consequently may be difficult to avoid becoming involved in a *rido*. When a close relative has participated in a killing, the revenge can also comprise the extended family, and one might have to be from a very powerful clan or group not to be bothered or to move away from the area to avoid being included, maybe thereby losing status.

2. *Ridos* and Elections



Graphic 5: Frequency of *ridos* in Lanao del Sur from 1994 to 2005

Source: Matuan (2007: 79).

An Asian Foundation study from 2007 on *ridos* from the 1990s up to 2005 in Muslim Mindanao shows that the number of *ridos* grows in times of elections. The chart above indicates the frequency of *ridos* between 1994 and 2005 in Lanao del Sur. It is striking that there are two maximum points and both correlate with either local *barangay* (1994) or national (2005) elections. The outbreaks of war in 2000 and 2003 had neither an augmenting nor a decreasing effect.

Mednick (1965) mentions as causes of *ridos* disputes over “land, killings, thefts, bodily injuries, soiled honor, and fancied grievances,” but not disputes over political positions. According to Matuan (2007), conflicts over political positions are nevertheless the reasons for most *ridos* in present times (p. 79). Even for small posts like *barangay* captain, there are bloody fights. In some cases, those persons who have succeeded in being elected to a lower position like board member (without an Internal Revenue Allotment, IRA)¹⁷² spend more money being elected (there is a case in which a person spent about PHP 10 million by shelling out large sums of bribe money to the Commission on Election (Comelec) to tamper with the election results) than they would actually gain by occupying the position. But still people come to them and ask them for money, and if they cannot help out, they are not re-elected, which means they have a lot of debt.¹⁷³ Thus, they are dependent on those higher-ranking posts that have their own IRA, like governor, mayor or congressman. The holders of these positions tend to give additional money to the lower officials who agree with their decisions.

The national elections in Lanao del Sur in 2010 were accompanied by several violent acts that the national gun ban law and the placement of the ARMM under AFP control for the election period could not prevent. *VERA Files*, an online publication initiated by veteran Filipino journalists “to look deeper into Philippine issues” (according to its homepage), even reports a worsening of violence compared to previous elections. On 20 October 2009, a bomb exploded in Marawi City during voter registration, killing at least one person (some say three) and injuring 20. In Tamparan, gunmen fired indiscriminately on those who registered, injuring five people. Political clans were accused of initiating these violent acts. Colonel Ray Ardo, chief of the Marawi-based 104th Infantry Brigade, explains that since as a result of the automation of the election process cheating became more difficult, some candidates sowed fear so that people would not register. The kidnapping of a foreign priest for ransom was also traced to election-related violence, and was justified by the desire to have enough funding for the electoral campaign. The MILF put pressure on the kidnappers to free the victim.

On Election Day, another bomb exploded in Marawi, this time not hurting anyone, and a shootout happened in Tugaya, in which one woman was killed and two were injured. Father Chito

¹⁷² IRA is a share local governments receive from the revenues of the national government.

¹⁷³ Disoma (1999) writes that a normal salary does not suffice to meet the “liberality expected of an official or ranking employee” (p. 73), meaning that the official has to borrow money or augment it in any other way to meet the expectations of the relatives. “If this income is somehow augmented and his great solvency is shown, he is given high valuation, but if he fails in this expectation, regardless of how morally proper he may have conducted himself as a Muslim, he becomes a nobody — he is looked down upon in the society.”

Suganob, head of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting in Marawi, reported that armed confrontations took place in Tugaya because of disagreements among candidates and municipal Commission on Elections (ComElec) officials. Others reported that members of the Balindong and Guroalim clans initiated the shootout. A member of the Balindong family ran for representative of the 2nd District in Lanao del Sur,¹⁷⁴ also covering Tugaya. Alber Balindong and Alimatar Guroalim ran for the post of municipal mayor in Tugaya (Gloria 2010a). Guroalim was shot dead in September 2010 while on his way to celebrate the end of Ramadan. The results of the 10 May 2010 elections in Tugaya, in which Alber Balindong was the sure winner, had been nullified after Guroalim filed a protest. ARMM Governor Assaruddin “Hooky” Adiong appointed Mangawan Rinabor, a relative of both warring parties as Officer in Charge (OIC) for Tugaya on 22 July. The wife of Guroalim, Rohamina “Nini” Guroalim, announced she was running for mayor in place of her husband.

Three other persons were reported killed in an encounter between armed men and soldiers in Kapai. In seven towns¹⁷⁵ — the majority of them in the *Pangampong* (a traditional principality to the south of the lake) Unayan — elections could not take place. Among other reasons, this was because the new precinct count optical scan machines remained with the Commission on Elections in Marawi City and because the Board of Election Inspectors did not show up due to the climate of fear (Gloria 2010). In *barangay* Linamon of the town of Ramin, elections were reportedly peaceful but some officials went inside the polling places to see whom the voters chose. In those towns where elections failed, new elections had to be organized on 3 June 2010 (they had to be repeated in ten *barangays* in Basilan, in the ARMM; and in one *barangay* in Western Samar, and in one in Sarangani, both outside of the ARMM). The new elections were again accompanied by vote buying, allowing some people speculate that the repetition of elections may please those getting paid for their votes. In eight other areas in Lanao del Sur,¹⁷⁶ because of the irregularities, voting was scheduled for November 2010.

Lanao del Sur is not the only place where election-related violence could be found, but it is frequently mentioned. Of the 82 election-related violent incidents recorded by the Philippine

¹⁷⁴ The 1st and 2nd Districts in Lanao del Sur were created along divisions of the traditional sultanate system. The 2nd District covers the whole of Unayan and Western Masiu. The Balindongs are descendants of the Sultanate of Masiu.

¹⁷⁵ Bayang (Western Unayan), Lumba Bayabao, Lumbaca-Unayan (Eastern Unayan), Marogong (Western Unayan) Masiu, Sultan Domalondong (Eastern Unayan), and Tubaran (Western Unayan). These seven towns involve almost 72,000 voters in 190 clustered polling precincts.

¹⁷⁶ The voting would take place in one *barangay* in Buadiposo-Buntong, six in Calanogas, four in Ganassi, ten in Kapai, two in Lumbatan, one in Marantao, one in Pagayawan, and three in Tugaya, involving about 12,000 voters.

National Police nationwide from 10 January to 9 May, only eleven of them occurred in the ARMM, among them the reported murder of six people in Lanao del Sur. In the 2007 mid-term balloting, 181 persons were either killed or injured in 242 polling-related attacks in the whole of the Philippines. During the 2004 presidential elections, the PNP recorded 140 casualties in 129 incidents during the first 92 days of the election period (Kwok and Ramos 2010). The 2010 elections were declared by various organizations to be the most peaceful elections so far, whereas others claimed that the elections had the most severe violent cases. Both attributed this mainly to the computerized voting, which was held for the first time in the Philippines. The Consortium on Electoral Reform, a non-government poll watchdog, commented: “While the number of incidents is relatively lower as compared to the same period in the 2007 elections, what is [disturbing] is the significant number of fatalities [and that] there are victims killed in almost every incident.” (*VERA Files*, 10 May 2010).

Since the number of *ridos* can grow in connection with elections, it can be speculated that it is mainly the rival political elites who are triggering a disproportionate number of *ridos*. However, it needs to be mentioned that an increase in the number of *ridos* does not occur during every election and that not every politician will be involved in a *rido*. Kreuzer (2007) suggests that violence in Mindanao in connection with elections occurs only when there is a political rivalry and an unstable authority that is challenged. Thus in the case of opposing political clans running for the same political position, violent incidents may occur. Because of the national conflict situation, the purchase of weapons and the founding of private armies pose few difficulties, which makes violent conflicts more likely to appear. Further, since elections today are more frequent and office-holders are subject to term limits authority can be challenged more often. In times when only one group claims authority, elections can be quite peaceful. This does not necessarily mean that there is no vote buying, but it does mean that the number of conflicts in connection to politics will be limited. In the 1998 elections, for example, no dramatic increase in the number of *ridos* in Lanao del Sur was observed.

Additionally, not every case of election-related violence can be categorized as a *rido*. The murder of the mayor of Tugaya was judged not to involve a *rido*, but as portending a possible *rido* in case the relatives of the mayor sought to retaliate. As can be seen, election-related violence throughout the Philippines is not exceptional. The “no war, no peace” situation in the area can nevertheless lead to a culmination of violence, as in the case of the Ampatuan massacre (see below), which again is not necessarily defined as stemming from a *rido* (see also Kamlian

2010). As one NGO member stated, the settlement of *ridos* should not diminish the reasons for the rebellion. Whereas *ridos* are perceived as a problem in the area by locals as well as by non-locals, they are not the main problem to be solved.



Picture 7: Haram-Streamer

The positioning of a streamer with the message “Avoid haram [things that are forbidden according to Islamic law], the only way to progress and paradise,” by the Islamic Movement on Electoral Reform for Good Government (IMERGG), beside a picture of President Arroyo surrounded by leading politicians of the ARMM, might not have been accidental. The founder of IMERGG was Hadji Abdullah Dalidig, former head of the National Movement for Free Elections chapter in Lanao del Sur who testified before the Senate Committee on National Defense and Security that he had observed massive cheating in the 2004 elections. Photo taken by the author, 2008.

3. Interconnections and Differences between the National and Local Levels of the Conflict

Recent studies indicate that *ridos* have intensified since the time of martial law (see Seagoing 2000: 221). In most of the cases the proliferation of arms, which is an effect of the national conflict, is seen as a major reason. The number of loose (unlicensed) firearms in Marawi is estimated by governmental sources to be only about 300 (City Planning and Development Office, 2002). However, local NGOs estimate that every third household has firearms. Others say that 85% of households in Lanao del Sur possess a gun. Women have purchased majority of the weapons, since they are not stopped at checkpoints (Bamgbose 2003: 91).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ In the Philippines, according to police estimates, there are about 1.3 million licensed firearms. About 600,000 are

The proliferation of arms, along with the questioning of the elders' authority by young Moros starting in the 1970s in the framework of the rebellion, have challenged the traditional authority of leading *datus* and families. Former weak and uninfluential clans thus developed "new attitudes, new awareness and consciousness by their empowerment through the possession of modern arms and the skill to shoot guns." They no longer believed in the invincibility and "invulnerability of the Maranao influential kinship families." New elites which based their influence on the power of the gun defined clan conflicts as a method of oppression since they demand the closing of ranks and "do not likely bend for subservience to the Maranao dominant and strong families when it comes to conflict or social violence" (Seagoing 2000: 221). "Moreover, the proliferation of arms in the Maranao society has also unlocked violent tendencies from the undisciplined and delinquent Maranaos, especially the young Maranaos who are drug addicts, to express unpredictably their violent behavior [in] acts of social and factional violence." (ibid.). These new developments did not lead to a complete falling apart of "we-groups", even though there was and still is a high fractionalization. According to Elwert, material (like land) or immaterial resources (like honor-status) which depend on group cooperation sometimes include conflicts about these resources within the group. As long as there is a part of the group that is not systematically destroyed, the coherence of the (ethnic) group can still be maintained (2004: 35). Gluckman already writes in 1956 about the integrative functions of feuds.

The fractionalization includes an interconnection between the national conflict and family feuds. People involved in *ridos* might ask rebel groups for their support. On the other hand, rebel groups may be involved in *ridos* among each other, as had happened in June 2009 when a two-year old clan conflict between MILF and MNLF members escalated, leading to about 5,000 people fleeing the area of the conflict in Maguindanao. Additionally, the main reasons for *ridos* are politics and land disputes, which are also the two main issues of the Muslim rebellion (Matuan 2007: 78).

Another effect of the national conflict situation is that the markets of violence prosper, and because there is no real alternative since economy is poor, illegal business prospers. If one is rich, he can challenge local authorities. In addition, the police in Lanao del Sur enforce national justice only minimally most of the time, since clan members are well-armed, do they not dare to

in the hands of private citizens and the military and police hold the rest. It is further estimated that there are about one million unlicensed firearms. "The combined tally means there is roughly one firearm in circulation for every 40 Filipinos" (Macaraig 2010). For the year 2007, about 93 private armies were officially identified in the country (Kraft 2010: 186).

interfere when there is a conflict (Abreu 2002); or else they are in the service of leading political clans. In 2002, 54 police officers were employed in Marawi, who were according to a city brochure, “ill equipped and less motivated.” According to the Marawi City Planning and Development Office, the local police are too inadequately armed and understaffed to be able to solve a conflict. At the same time, local politicians sometimes do not want to interfere, partly because they fear that one party might not be satisfied with the solution, that they will be forced to take sides and become involved in the *rido*, or because the conflicting parties are not their relatives. When a politician is able to solve a *rido*, both parties will usually vote for him or her (Gonzales 2000: 92). In the case of a *rido*, a “powerful force both militarily and politically can mediate,” a role which among others the MILF with its *sharia* court system and military force can perfectly manage (Abreu 2002: 31). The traditional sector, namely the sultanates, often does not have the money or weapons to enforce traditional laws, and *ridos* are settled by involving government employees, the military, politicians, or the MILF. Some families involved in such conflicts are members of the MILF and consequently ask the rebel group to solve their *rido*. In some cases, the MILF has to arrange things with major political families; in other cases, it will work hand in hand with the family that has called upon it, depending on the case and the kinship connections.

Connection to a *rido* is the subject of warrior narratives which are part of the institutionalization of violence that has “taken root in Moro society as a result of centuries of warfare — first against the colonizers, and now against a government which is perceived as an extension of the colonizers” (*gobyerno a sarwa nga tawo*) (Abreu/Rose 2003: 25-6). The narrative is nurtured by local conceptions of being male, associated with bravery and the ability to defend *maratabat*, Islam and women. Repeatedly, local publications mention the role Muslims played in colonial times where they were brave fighters against the Spanish who never succeeded in subduing them. They also went to battle against the Americans and later against or alongside the Japanese. If an ancestor was a colonel or any other official in the army, he is mentioned proudly. Warrior narratives are not only used in connection to family feuds or the rebellion. In recent publications, one ancestor (*apo*) of each of the 16 royal houses was mentioned as having fought against and defeated the Spanish colonial forces.¹⁷⁸ These narratives are symbolic,

¹⁷⁸ A booklet on the 16 royal houses published under the guidance of Topaan “Toni” Disomimba, Sultan sa (of) Masiu, stated for example that Dianaton Naim of Butig and Balindong Bezar of Masiu (Major Ancestors of the Royal Houses of Butig and Masiu) fought side by side with Sultan Qudarat against Spanish intruders. It is also written that the four ancestors of the *Pat a Pangampong* led the resistance in Lanao against the Spanish in 1640: Datu Alanak sa

designed to associate the royal houses with collective resistance and victory. In this case, the narrative invokes the resistance of all Filipinos against the Spanish and thus has a nationalistic character. A warrior narrative is also sometimes employed among women. A Bai a Labi sa (of Marawi recounts:

Even before, during the time of our ancestors, the women were already taking part in the activities of the communities. During the war, when this place had been conquered by the Spaniards the sisters of [Taringanoi], who happens to be a *datu*, fighting for the — you know this people are saving their own place, so it will not be taken by the Spaniards. You know you have read in our history, that the places they have conquered, they have to work for the Spaniards, from 16-year-old boys up to — But here we never served the Spaniards or the Americans. Because our people fight, usually they fight against it. And the women take part. Because before I become *bai a labi*, I have asked those questions to the old *datu*s. And then we can remember the war during the First World War and even during the American time — the women cooked for the warriors. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

According to a study by Capal-Guro, the MNLF rebellion was morally supported by a majority of Maranao women in Marawi, while a minority provided military, financial, or educational assistance (1996: 77).

MILF rebels sometimes strengthen the religious elements in combination with the warrior narrative, defining the rebellion in certain situations as holy war or *jihad*. In addition, Muslims dying in this war may be seen as martyrs. Men in Lanao can be heard pledging their life and *maratabat* in public for the defense of their homeland: “*Kamorkaan ako o Allah sobhanaho wa ta’ala o bakn indaraynon so tindeg ago maratabat akn ko Islam ago so kapag inged.*” (“God curse me if I fail in my duty to defend Islam and my homeland!”)

Not every Maranao employs warrior narratives. Disoma (1999) reports that some parents forbid their children to join the rebellion and instead prefer that they will be educated and become professionals (p. 91). Some refuse an offer to be trained in combat while others have been trained but do not join the rebellion and prefer to become professionals. In view of the devastating living conditions, young Maranao elites ask themselves whether it is the duty of a Muslim in Mindanao to support the rebellion in case it is a holy war. Many people instead support the peace movement based on the assumption that Islam means peace.

Baloi, Datu Pascan sa Unayan, Datu Popawan sa Bayabao, and Amiyaona Siman sa Masiu (Madale 2003: 5). Other authors of the booklet mention all the other major ancestors of the royal houses as having joined the resistance against the Spanish intruders at this time.

4. National Politics as Family Politics and the Remaining Datu System

The situation of social and economic insecurity, discrimination and lack of prospects deepened by the national conflict situation increases the importance of family, clan, and any other group support. Neither the introduction of a new political system by the colonial forces, nor the rebellion, nor religion has completely replaced the *datu* system, even though “new elites” and new groups have been established. There are three possible reasons for this. *Ridos* and thus the closing of ranks among relatives in case of conflict is one. The second is that in case of a violent conflict because of damaged honor, the non-traditional political and juridical system cannot protect family or clan members. For example, people who are imprisoned might still be killed by avenging clans. Therefore, clan members try to strengthen the system which gives them social standing and protection, which means their own family, clan, or faction. Seagoing (2000) explains:

The situation of revenge may alienate the Maranao individual from the Maranao political system. The Maranao individual knows that he cannot be protected by the political system in a situation of revenge. He can be protected only by his own family, kinship or faction group. The more powerful his own family, kinship or faction group – the more secure he would feel. Therefore, he gives and directs his own support and loyalty to help create and strengthen the power of his own family, kinship or faction groups. The weaker his own family, kinship or faction groups, the better he behaves himself to avoid being humiliated by the more dominant families, kinships or faction groups in the community. (p. 223)

A third reason is that political families are supported by the national political system. The best-known example here would be the Ampatuan case in Maguindanao. The Ampatuans had been American protégés and several of them became ARMM governors. The family grew to become strong warlords in their area, feeling so invincible that they massacred the family of a political opponent, the Magundadatus, who are themselves an established dynasty that has occupied political posts in Sultan Kudarat for 25 years (2010). When the Buluan vice-mayor, Esmael “Toto” Magundadatu, wanted to run for Maguindanao governor, he was warned that this might be dangerous. Thus instead of going himself, he sent female relatives in the company of several journalists to file his candidacy in the May 2010 elections, since women are said not to be targeted in clan conflicts. The cars of the relatives ran into a hold-up: 32 media workers; Esmael’s wife, who was the vice-mayor of the Magundadatu municipality;¹⁷⁹ his sister and aunt, along with several other people who were “accidentally” involved — a total of 57 people all in all — were

¹⁷⁹ The municipality of Magundadatu was created in 2006 out of eight *barangays* from Buluan.

killed. The main suspect, Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr., had the support of over 100 members of his clan's private army. The patriarch of the Ampatuan clan, being Maguindanao governor at this time; his son, Andal Junior, his supposed successor in politics; and Zaldy Ampatuan, ARMM governor, were suspended from Arroyo's Lakas-Kampi-Christian Muslim Democrats (CMD)¹⁸⁰ party. From 4 to 11 December¹⁸¹ Maguindanao was placed under martial law, including the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus for those people who were charged with rebellion. The justification for this measure was that a high number of heavily armed gunmen loyal to the Ampatuans had threatened to attack security forces and civilians if the clan chiefs were taken into custody. Several persons were charged with rebellion, among them Andal Ampatuan Sr., as well as members of his private army. Murder cases were additionally prepared against them.

The ICG warned that branding the massacre as a *rido*, as was widely done in the media, would diminish the role of the government "in allowing a local despot to indulge his greed and ambition, including through building up a private army in the name of fighting insurgents" (Abbott and Dávalos 2009). Norodin Alonto Lucman writes about the culture of impunity according to which political motivated killings, specifically those of journalists, throughout the Philippines¹⁸² remain unsolved since "corrupt officials and landlords" continue protecting their power through violence (Lucman 2008: 456). Several national and international civil society organizations blamed the Philippines for its high number of extra-judicial killings since 2001 (Kraft 2010: 287). The World Bank noted a decline in the rule of law in the country, especially since the end of the 1990s. In the World Bank's World Governance Indicators, the rule of law indicator dropped from 52.9 to 39.7 between 1998 and 2008 (Mogato 2010).¹⁸³ This may be a result of the further privatization of the executive under the Arroyo government but was also an effect of anti-terror laws. The formation of private armies throughout the Philippines was widely criticized by human rights groups, describing the high number of extra-judicial killings in the Philippines as an outcome of a culture of impunity serving the political elites.

The Maguindanao massacre was seen as one outcome of this general culture of impunity. The Ampatuan clan had established a private army in order to protect its members against the

¹⁸⁰ *Lakas* means power in Tagalog; KAMPI is the acronym of Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Partner of the Free Filipino).

¹⁸¹ Martial law was lifted on 11 December, just before a joint session of Congress was to vote on the constitutionality of the proclamation.

¹⁸² In the year 2010, the Philippines attained third place on the New York Committee to Protect Journalist's Impunity Index. This list spotlights countries where journalists are murdered regularly and governments fail to solve the crimes.

¹⁸³ Indicators are on a scale of 1 to 100; the lower the number, the less the rule of law is upheld.

MILF. In 2006, Arroyo issued E.O. 546, under which public funds could be used to support and maintain a private security force. E.O. 546 directs the Philippine National Police (PNP) to undertake active support of the AFP in internal security operations for the suppression of insurgency and other serious threats to national security. The document states that the PNP is authorized to deputize *barangay tanods* (volunteers, or “village watches”), also known as Civilian Volunteers (CVOs) — unarmed volunteers for community self-defense, like neighborhood watches — as force multipliers in the implementation of the peace and order plan in the area, which included arming them. Some activists saw this measure as a tool for the legalization of private armies. As a reaction to bad experiences under the Marcos government, private armies are explicitly forbidden in the 1987 Constitution (Art. 18, Sec. 24).¹⁸⁴ However, after the attacks on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001, the Arroyo government authorized the arming of selected members of the CVOs in high security risk areas (Kraft 2010: 194). E.O. No. 546 enforced this law. It was issued days after a media debate broke out about heavily armed CVOs being employed by Governor Zaldy Ampatuan in order to protect himself from supposed MILF attacks. President Aquino promised at the beginning of his term to revoke this E.O. (Arguillas 2006).

The trial of the Ampatuans was, beginning in August 2010, frequently delayed. According to a report of Human Rights Watch issued two months earlier, witnesses who had not been included in the witness protection program since they were part of Ampatuan’s private army were killed. Shortly after this, the Aquino government improved the witnesses’ protection. Esmael “Toto” Magundadatu won the election for Maguindanao governor in 2010 and the ARMM governorship went to Vice-Governor Adiong-Alonto from Lanao del Sur. The Ampatuans were nevertheless among the biggest winners in the 2010 elections, winning 15 local posts in Maguindanao, among them one representative, eight mayors, and six vice-mayors.

It is an open secret that national elections are partly won in Muslim Mindanao since *datus* can provide the needed votes.¹⁸⁵ In the 1980s, Mohamad Ali Dimaporo boasted that he could

¹⁸⁴ The 1987 Constitution provides, however, the possibility of a Citizen Armed Force mandate in E.O. No. 264. On this basis, in 1991, the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGU) were founded as an integral part of the AFP reserve forces. The reserve then, chosen by local politicians and businessmen, was enrolled in company-sized units, the CAFGU Active Auxiliary. Neglecting the high number of human rights violations which accompanied their formation, the CAFGU were seen as “important parts of the Philippine Defence System” and its use more economical than increasing the number of recruits of the AFP; their number thus increases and decreases with the state of negotiations with the NPA and the MNLF/MILF (Kraft 2010: 191-3).

¹⁸⁵ The “Hello Garci” scandal in the 2004 elections is one incident in regard to which there are speculations about the importance of Mindanao in national elections. “Hello Garci” refers to a taped conversation supposedly between

deliver votes for Malacañang (Bentley 2007: 259). In the 2007 senatorial elections, all 12 candidates whom Arroyo had backed for senator won in Maguindanao. In the 2008 ARMM elections, the Lakas-Kampi-CMD¹⁸⁶ candidates were re-elected as governor and vice-governor. In addition, the 2010 election results transmitted to the ComElec central server included results from nine ghost precincts in Lanao del Sur. Of these votes, the mayoral candidate Usman Sarangani from Lakas-Kampi got 90% (808) and Governor Mamintal “Bombit” Alonto Adiong, also from Lakas-Kampi, 79% (705). The representative of the 2nd District, Pangalian Balindong, of Lakas-Kampi got 599 votes whereas only 199 were credited to former Representative Benasing Macarambon of the Nacionalista Party. In the presidential race, Senator Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino led with 328 votes, former Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro followed with 285, and Senator Manuel Villar with 161 (Rosau 2010).

Strong political families, serving as buffers against rebel groups and being able to provide needed votes, are thus of advantage for Manila politicians. However, as McCoy (2007) demonstrates, political families cannot only be found in the Muslim areas. The 2010 election results showed that political dynasties are rampant in the Philippines since “[i]n at least 34 of the country’s 80 provinces, political families won tandem posts — one family member winning as governor and another as representative — in a new configuration that will give them a lock on power for years to come” (VERA Files, 14 May 2010).

Lanao is thus no exception, but it has its special form of *datu*-ship, influenced by the “no war, no peace” situation. The Adiongs, Alontos, Balindongs, and Dimaporos are especially important in the area, because they have dynasties that have been established for several decades. All of them belong to the traditional political elite and have royal ancestry. Their dynasties, especially since the introduction of limited terms (three terms at the mayoral level), also include women, taking turns in exercising power with their husbands, fathers, or sons. These forms of dynasty can be found particularly on the mayoral level. The Disomimbans in Tamparan are one example where husband and wife take turns as mayor. Topaan “Toni” Disomimba is the Sultan sa Masiu and the chairman of the 16 Royal Houses of the *Pat a Pangampong* (Four Principalities). Since 2007, the Royal Houses are recognized by the government as peace advisers and receive an annual subvention. Dynasties are further strengthened by intermarriages between different

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano wherein the women's voice is asking to ensure a lead of at least one million votes over her rival. To realize this wish, the regional election director (RED) of the ARMM was said to have been tapped. The ARMM later on was called the “cheating capital” of the Philippines.

¹⁸⁶ Lakas-CMD and Kampi were the biggest parties in the Philippines in 2008; they merged in June of that year.

political clans having in many cases a royal background. The marriage patterns partly follow the sultanate structures where the royal houses have stabilized their leadership via intermarriages with other royal houses. The connection between the sultanate system and the present form of governance in the “no war, no peace” situation will be the focus of the debate in the second chapter.

Conclusion

Out of a sense of historical wrongs and an increasing national awareness after World War II, Moro rebels de-embedded themselves from the national state. The insurgency strengthened directly or indirectly alternative state structures in the form of rebel camps and the sultanate system, but also the markets of violence. A de-embedded non-war situation can be defined as a “no war, no peace” environment when war characteristics dominate the area and, among other things, are institutionalized through stalled peace talks. The Mindanao conflict has lasted for several decades and it can be defined as a situation in-between peace and war in which neither constitutes the “norm.” This is of special importance to ethnographic research since it provides the possibility of understanding violence as part of cultural dynamics, not only regarding how peace and war are defined but also to what extent the current situation is used and misused to constitute them. In considering the local, national, and international links, it becomes obvious that the cultural dynamics are not isolated. Family feuds, even though locally fought, are connected to national circumstances, like elections or the challenge of traditional leadership as a consequence of the rebellion and the proliferation of arms. The settlement of *ridos* became a matter of “peace and order” on the national and international levels. However, *ridos* acquire their main signification on the local level. Indeed, they are part of conflict settlements between clans and serve to stabilize the clan and *datu* system. The idea that by solving family feuds through the revival of the traditional system, “peace and order” would come to the area is contradictory. On the one hand, the efforts of re-traditionalization can be misused in a divide and rule policy and can be a potential source of violence by creating conflicts of interest. On the other hand, this conception ignores rebellion and *ridos* as causes of violence: rebellion reflects a political confrontation, while *ridos* belong to cultural dynamics that render them part of a relative autonomous process. They are not, however, immunized against alien influences, notably those arising from political issues. Thus, the frequency and severity of *ridos* has increased in the national conflict and through the national political system, which includes political violence in

the form of private armies. These forms of violence will not stop by applying the traditional means of conflict-solving. Political clans involved in *ridos* are too powerful, among other ways through their support by the national government as a measure to counter the rebellion.



Photo 8: Entrance to Lanao del Sur

Amai Pakpak Avenue, which extends from Iligan City to Marawi City, at the entrance to Lanao del Sur. Checkpoints cluster this road, which are occupied in case of red alert. Along the highway are military facilities of the AFP and in Marawi City the AFP Camp Ranao can be found in *barangay* Datu Saber. Under the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF)-Balikatan, U.S. military facilities are also part of this camp. Photo taken by the author, 2008.

Chapter Two: The Lineage System, the Importance of Status, and the Revival of the Sultanates

Introduction

Tradition, according to Shils (1981), preserves and conveys the great bodies “of knowledge and skill” that have been developed over time (p. 8). It further constitutes a mechanism of transmission (Armstrong 1982: 71; see also Jacobs 2007). This transmission is not static because traditions change by adapting to social developments. This perception of tradition can be found within the concept of multiple modernities:

The realization that modernity is not *a* project but one encompassing many possibilities of development places tradition in a unique situation of facilitating social change by readjusting cultural practices. In a sense, such change does not destroy traditions but redefines them through innovative actions to produce a modern context not shorn of traditions. Thus, multiple modernities guarantee the continuity of tradition but not necessarily in its original form. The concept of diversity emphasizes the localization of modernity in which diverse traditions do not disappear completely, but are transformed or absorbed into new forms of thought and action. In effect, it is this diversity that determines the multiple trajectories of the modernity project. (Lee 2006: 363; emphasis original)

Following George Klute’s idea of heterarchy (2007), I define the traditional sultanate system in Lanao (*Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*, the four principalities of Lanao) as one element of many, among them the national state, in a complex power structure, each searching for more influence — or at least a stabilization of it. In describing its mythical origins and developments and in particular the consequences of the “no war, no peace” situation on this system, the *Pat a Pangampong* will be defined as part of historical and current processes. The revival of the sultanate system and the state’s and civil society’s increasing recognition of it and financial support for it can be described as the result of three main developments: first, the emic search for more influence in the form of an alternative governance to the national system, which is seen as corrupt and headed by foreigners; secondly, the symbolic and, since 2007, financial support by governmental officials of the sultanates as an alternative to the rebellion; and thirdly, the recognition and financial support of the traditional system as an effective measure in the resolution of local conflicts by international development organizations.

The traditional sultanate system never vanished even though it declined in (state) authority. The reasons why it remained are manifold, but one of them is that it is functional in

solving local conflicts (*ridos*). Additionally, the clan and family system is deeply connected to the sultanate system and its system of *maratabat* (status honor). Political clans are, as described in the previous chapter, indirectly supported by the state system, which is often defined as cacique democracy (see Anderson 1988). Whereas initially the independent Filipino government discouraged the sultanate system, its representatives were symbolically recognized as a countermovement to the rebellion in the 1970s and 1980s. Recently, members of the sultanates have become official advisers of the government, which has recognized their role as peacekeepers in the area. This development can be seen as a strategic-political reaction by the national government to the rebellion as well as participation in a global movement of the revival of traditions since the 1990s and the end of the Cold War.

Discussing the sultanate system in Lanao del Sur requires considering its mythical origins as a lineage society, its descent from Prophet Mohammad, but also its connections to the social organization of *datu*-ships and clans on which it was superimposed. This reveals traces of a social form of “competitive equality” (Toren 1990). Being a sultan or a *bai a labi* (the highest female royal title, literally “highest woman,” this title is the counterpart to sultan) is predominantly the result not of a birthright but of many other factors leading to election by clan elders. The authority of titleholders among clan members only remains with the continuous maintenance of supporters, be it via “patron-client” relationships or financial contributions and conflict settling. Influence should consequently not be confused with carrying a title, which in many cases serves as a mere status symbol in a status- and honour-oriented society.

Whereas the sultanate system declined in lieu of the national political system, fusions can be observed between the two. Geographically, ancient area divisions became part of the new administrative divisions and sultanates adapted to the *barangay* structure. Many of the political elites elected in the post-independence period were from the royalty. Their election to public office legitimized their traditional power positions and hence the traditional social structure remains important today. In most cases, the traditional elites have the power, the followers, and the money to win elections. Politicians who have a royal background and come from what is locally defined as “good people” do not necessarily have a royal title anymore, but others whose royal background is not that strong may acquire a title in order to legitimize their political position traditionally. Still others with political ambitions and the lineage but a lack of money and power first become titleholders to establish their traditional and also their national support, because it is presumed that politicians in Manila think titleholders are influential. The political

influence of traditional elites was temporarily interrupted through an increasing influence of the MNLF and religious parties, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, but soon returned at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The mythical origins of and changes in the traditional system are described in this chapter in order to contribute to the broader debate on movements of revival of traditions (Bräuchler 2007; Henley and Davidson 2007; Hirtz 2003; Klinken 2007; Kohl 2006). The revival of the sultanates in Lanao cannot be placed within the framework of “global indigenous movements,”¹⁸⁷ which I have found to be of marginal importance in this case. Royalties do not refer to a general indigeneness nor to the Indigenous People’s Rights Act included in the Philippine constitution in 1997.¹⁸⁸ Of more importance are local norms of conflict resolution designed to bring peace and order to the area. Similar attempts to revive traditional structures connected to royalty (*datus*, *rajas*, or sultanates) in order to solve conflicts can be observed in Indonesia, for example in the Kei islands of southeastern Maluku or in South Sulawesi (Henley and Davidson 2007: 18). In Lanao, this task is seen as insufficiently being fulfilled by politicians who even contribute to an increase in local violence through conflicts over political positions. The question of this study is hence why there has been a revival of Lanao sultanates, what is their relationship to the “no war, no peace” environment, and what are the possible effects of external financial support on internal social order, including gender relations.

I. The Lineage System

A. Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao

1. The Salsila

The ways of the ancestors (*andang sa muna*) are manifested in pre-Islamic epic poems like the *Darangen*, which comprises several volumes in its published English version and evokes the mystical realm of Bumbaran. Parts of it are quoted on special occasions and qualities of leadership — particularly bravery (Macarampat 2008) — are traced back by traditionalists to the time of the leaders in Bumbaran. Tawagon (1987) connected this to the concept of *anonen a rawaten* (the height of emulation), meaning that the ways of the ancestors are worthy of emulation and that “any event or ceremony has a justification in the past” (1987: 23):

¹⁸⁷ Following Morgan, the global indigenous movement can be defined as “the discourse and movement aimed at advancing the rights and status of indigenous peoples worldwide” (2007: 278).

¹⁸⁸ For the debate on the relationships between indigenous rights movement and Moros, see Eder and McKenna (2004). Worth mentioning in this connection is the existence of two separate offices for the affairs of indigenous people and Muslims since 1987. The two groups are thus treated differently by the government.

The claim that their ancestors really exist and the events actually happened is supported by their genealogy or chain of descent lines which links the present generation of Maranaos to the characters in the narrative and the epic [the *Darangen* and other local folk tales] on the one hand and Sariips Kabungsoan and Alawi [supposed descendants of Prophet Mohammad] on the other hand. (ibid: 36)

Maranao history and society are thus very much connected to *salsila* (genealogy). Every royal family has its own *salsila*. Traditionally the specialists on family genealogy, the *pananalsila*, kept the *salsila* secret. In the past, if someone wanted to know more about his *salsila* he or she would have to sacrifice a *carabao* (water buffalo) and would be informed only when meeting with the expert in a place designed to prevent eavesdropping by means of a blanket covering the two of them. Interviewees related that they were not told about the *salsila* since they “like to talk much”.

There were several reasons given for keeping the *salsila* of a family hidden from the public. One is that through the publication of the *salsila*, the secrets of a family would be revealed, for example intermarriages with people from witch-clans or descendants of slaves. A *datu* explains:

Dagamot, sorceress, clans practicing sorcery are also mentioned in the *salsila*, if someone wants to marry a girl whose background is unknown, then the keeper of the *salsila* will be asked to check the *salsila* to determine where she belongs among the families. The keeper will check the document under absolute discretion and confidence. In the old days, a keeper is isolated in an area covered on four sides by a tent or cloth so as to give him privacy upon examining the document. Because not the whole community should know who are the sorcerers. Only the sultan knows and the keeper of the *salsila*. The sorcerers are protected since they can also be used for healing, etc. If the keeper finds out that the girl's clan is *kialilidan sa bangsa* (one whose bloodline is suspect) or belongs to the family who practice witchcraft, then the family of the groom is advised not to push through with the marriage. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

Monalinda Doro (2007) writes that an investigation into family lineage might be considered a serious offense and an affront to the family's *maratabat* (p. 240). The questioning thus has to be done in a private atmosphere and diplomatically. Another reason to keep a *salsila* secret is that it is an expression of a society in which one has access to influence and authority in large part via descent lines. In keeping genealogies secret, or rather restricted among the elders, no person can claim a title if not really related to title-holders or at least accepted as such by the elders. If not kept secret, this would reduce the influence of the elders. Genealogical connections are nevertheless shown or talked about in public on special occasions like weddings or in recent times through publications. Some Maranao royalty publish their personal genealogies as proof of

their rightful claim when enthroned. These can, in one way or the other, be modified *salsilas* (see Majul 1999).

Leadership of the royal houses in Lanao takes its legitimation from two main lines of ancestry. One is that of the Shariefs (descendants of the Prophet Mohammad who stayed in Mindanao), and in particular Sharief Kabungsoan, who brought the sultanate system to Maguindanao and who is said to have been a descendant of Prophet Mohammad. In some Maranao genealogies, the line of Sharief Kabungsoan is traced back to the 12 imams, the Prophet Mohammad, and Adam and Eve. The second line of importance is the one of local *datus* and Rajah Indarapatra, the first ruler in Lanao, who originally came from Mantapoli, an ancient state in Malaysia. Rajah Indarapatra is sometimes traced back to the Sultan of Istanbul and the Sultan of Istanbul to an ancestor of Prophet Mohammad. Some sultans also refer to Alexander the Great as their ancestor, similarly to the royal houses in Aceh, Indonesia.

According to Mednick (1965), it was mainly women who guarded the *salsila*. He writes: “The actual recording of genealogical details in the form of a *salsila* is the task of those who are felt to be *maongangan* (wise). These are older persons and most usually are female” (p. 145). One interviewee, a sultan, related that his father wrote the *salsila* of his family. The father handed it to his wife who gave it to her sister. The sister later transferred it to the interviewee, and he will leave it to one of his daughters, who are both titleholders. In most cases, the *salsila* was guarded by women; this might, however, be different from sultanate to sultanate.

Whereas the *salsila* was traditionally written in Arabic letters, there are now *salsilas* based on the Latin alphabet. *Salsilas* are never the same: each one adds some siblings or erases them, names ancestors only by their titles or their names, or exchanges the order of descendants. Family *salsilas* include only certain lineages; thus, no *salsila* comprises every descent line. Recently, however, there are publications that connect the most important lineages, bringing them into one order, like in Macarampat’s book (2008), which is taken by many royalties as a reference when they have to give public speeches. The author published the genealogy in the Maranao language, comprising the whole sultanate system. It starts with Adam and Eve, includes the Prophet Mohammad, and ends with the naming of the first *apos* (lineage/founding ancestors) of the royal houses in Lanao. It is interesting to notice that in this public genealogy, the descent lines of the royalties and the Shariefs are separated; direct connections are not drawn between the two lines. In addition, this *salsila* stops several generations in the past. Thus, there is still room for secret knowledge, and family genealogies remain of importance. Simultaneously, there is room for

“modifications,” leading to rumors that some royal titles are “bought,” for example via a strategic marriage with a woman from an influential clan.

Women as well as men are part of the *salsilas*, women primarily as marriage partners and daughters, who can transfer claims to important male and female titles but also as ancestors through whom the descent to the founding ancestor is claimed. An exclusively male lineage, without the spouses, can only be found among the claimed Arabic ancestors from outside Mindanao, going back to the daughter of the Prophet Mohammad and then to Mohammad himself. In genealogies of a clan every member, male or female, within the last five generations is mentioned. It is important to notice that women, even though they marry exogamously, are still seen as part of the clan, as through their marriage outside the clan support of their marriage partner’s relatives can be expected and vice versa. Women and men marrying outside of their lineage in bilateral lineage systems are recognized as important links, particularly if there are children who belong to both lineages.

Knowledge of the *salsila* by titleholders varies. Most minor titleholders, male or female, did not know more than the connection to their elders, clan, and maybe the first titleholder of their own title, especially when the former titleholder was in the parents’ or grandparents’ generation. They leave to the specialists the duty to trace back their genealogy any further. Others say that descent lines have lost their importance, for example in connection to marriages, which today are only limited in so far as a Maranao should be married to a Maranao, no matter what the exact descent lines. In a lot of cases, titleholders complained about a lack of interest by the younger generation in the traditional system. They accuse the youth of being more focused on Western education and political positions and regret that they are not able to read the *salsila* when it is written in “old Malay” or Arabic.

2. The Four Principalities

The sultanate system in Lanao is named *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*¹⁸⁹, the four principalities or encampments of the lake. The division of the area around Lake Lanao into four entities is explained through descent lines that go back to four brothers. The ancestors of these brothers came from the mythical realm of Bumbaran.¹⁹⁰ The heroes of the *Darangen* are

¹⁸⁹ According to Madale (1997), *pangampong* is derived from the Portuguese word “Kampong,” which means settlement and was adopted by trading Maranaos around 1511 (p. 22).

¹⁹⁰ Mednick in 1965 similarly traced back the mystical origin of the *Pat a Pangampong* to the *Darangen*. However, he did not mention any kinship relations among the founders of the *Pat a Pangampong*, letting the local descent lines

descendants of Rajah Indarapatra, who is said to have been the first to reside in Lanao, ruling over the Aetas¹⁹¹, who are defined as “pagans.” There are slightly different accounts of how Rajah Indarapatra came to Lanao. The following, based on a speech of Sultan sa Marinaot, will serve as one example.

Rajah Indarapatra came to Lanao to look for a lost brother. From a tree spirit, he learned that his brother had been killed by the monster Omakaan, and how he could defeat it. After Rajah Indarapatra killed the monster, the people came out of their hiding places and he named the place Bumbaran, which means “starting life.” He married a water nymph named Raina Laut, and built a house in Masiu. They had two children, one of them could not be seen and became the ancestor (*apo*) of the *tonong* (spirits who are believed to be benevolent). The other child came to be the *apo* of Bumbaran, of which Diwatan Tanda o Gibon sa Ilian a Bumbaran was the first ruler or “Ayonan” (Cali and Manalising 1983: 27). The two sons of Indarapatra declared that the *tonong* would help and protect the Maranaos and that the Maranaos would have to hold ceremonies for them in return (Disoma 1999: 108-09).

The *Darangen* describes the rise and fall of Bumbaran over four generations. The last ruler under which Bumbaran prospered was Pasandalan a Morog, who married Aya Paganay Bai sa Kodaraan a Lna. They begot the four brothers who first inhabited the four principalities of Lanao. They were out on a hunting trip when Bumbaran was destroyed as a punishment by the Muslim missionary Sharief Aulis, who came to the kingdom but was rejected because “who could be higher than the Ayonan?” (Cali and Unte 1983: 140). Of the initial five brothers who survived, also named the Five *Datus*, one “went north,” while Butuanun Kalinan stayed in Dagodob (today’s Bayabao),¹⁹² Dimaampao Kalinan in Marogong (today’s Unayan), Batara di Kilatn in Maganding (today’s Masiu),¹⁹³ and Amerogong Topaan in Mimbisa (today’s Baloi). The four brothers married four sisters who were also descendants of Rajah Indarapatra. Some generations later the heirs of the *datus* met to define the boundaries by naming the *Pat a Inged a Kiyasosoludaan o Bangsa o Pat a Pangamong sa Ranao* (places of intersection or

just “appear” in the genealogy, which was mainly focused on the Kabungsoan line, the line of descent that is said to go back to Prophet Mohammad.

¹⁹¹ An indigenous group in the Philippines.

¹⁹² Bayabao is referred to as “the one who chooses first,” since it was Butuanan Kalinan who first chose his abode (Madale 1997: 75).

¹⁹³ Masiu is described as “a place where Lanao's royal bloods meet” (Madale 1997: 75).

demarcation)¹⁹⁴ and to arrange the *taritib* (order) of the *Pat a Pangampong*. They also gave the principalities their names. They met in Sawir, Masiu, where there are still three stones (*telo a dibarosan*) to mark the meeting place. Baloi is the only principality that does not have a Demarcation Sultanate and it is said that the representative of Baloi did not join the meeting because he was in Maguindanao for a visit. Others state that Dilion of Baloi or Batolakongan, a grandchild of Amerogong Topaan of Baloi, had been there, that there is no boundary since Bayabao and Baloi are from the same lineage, and that they were connected in the name of *kingginawa-i* (friendship) and thus did not need boundaries.

The three heirs who are frequently mentioned to have met in Sawir are Pascan of Unayan, Popawan of Bayabao, and Amiyalongan Simban of Masiu. The regulation of the boundaries was sealed with a pledge on the Qur'an, of which every region has its own name (Dibolodan in Bayabao, Kiraat in Baloi, Maradika in Masiu, and Mokadam in Unayan). Certain rituals and a curse were spoken over every person who broke the vow by stealing a title or property. Sultan sa Butig explains:

When they were about to swear and make their pledge, that they will not take any property and the like that are not lawful to them, they did the following: (1) (*tinimbakan*) they had gunfire; (2) (*piyarngan sa solo*) they put off light; (3) (*linilayan sa gi*) they hung hay leaves; (4) (*biyotosan sa alad*) they ripped out a fence; (5) (*biyomboran sa ombi*) they sprinkled ash; (6) (*pisaan sa oraka manok*) they broke chicken eggs; (7) (*tipdan sa balagn*) they cut rattan; and (8) (*sindagan sa odang a pmasipsik*) they roasted live shrimps [symbolizing that any of the descendants who broke the vow would be cursed like an egg that breaks]. They did these rituals and likewise four (*pamalian*) curses were identified so that if a person broke the pledge, and went against the *taritib* [order] of the four principalities of Lanao, they would invoke Allah that this person might suffer the four dreaded wraths. These wraths were identified as follows: *bgaw* (leprosy/ungainly appearance) in Unayan, *songkor* (severe vomiting, stomach pains, and diarrhea) in Masiu, *na-as* (destruction) or *gapn* (black magic) in Bayabao, and *taryan* (insanity) in Baloi. This made these *datus* united during their time and live peacefully in their community. They compared the existence of our ancestors to water that is cool, undisturbed, and peaceful in Lanao. (Speech given in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, Bai a Labi a Panorogan ko Bayabao Masiu, translation modified)

The *taritib*, meaning the order or arrangement of the *Pat a Pangampong*, was established by the local *datus* and protected through the curse, which is still used in case the *taritib* is not

¹⁹⁴ The task of the Demarcation Sultanates is to help to settle conflicts between the *pangampongs*. The places are Sawir between Sebangon sa Masiu and Sebangon sa Unayan, Madamba between Sedapan sa Unayan and Sedapan sa Masiu, Bakayawan between Sedapan sa Masiu and Mala a Bayabao, and Dalama between Mala a Bayabao and Sebangon sa Masiu.

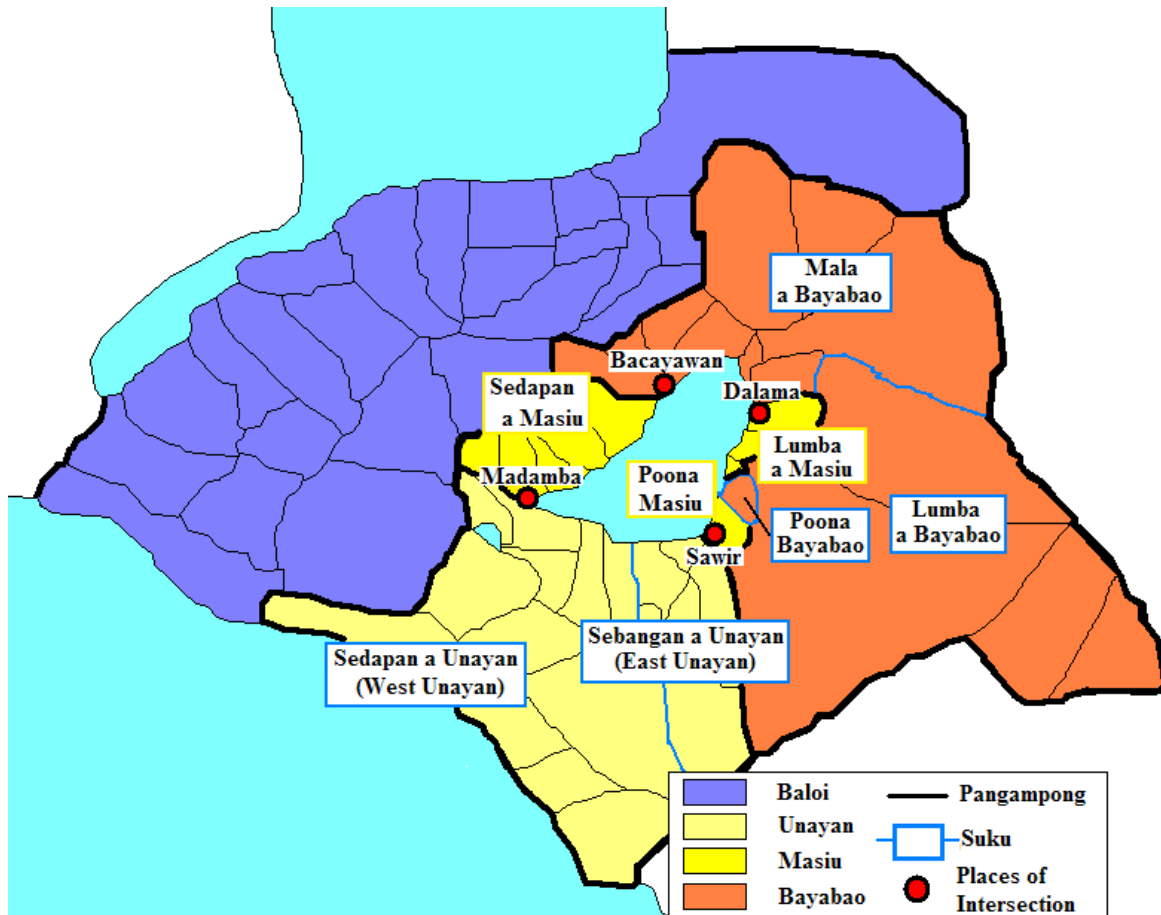
followed. The names of the wives of the brothers are mentioned in the *salsila* but no story about them was related to me. However, the curse counts for women as well as for men. The system at this point was not yet a sultanate, since in order to claim leadership of a sultanate one has to be a descendant of the Shariefs and in particular of Sharief Kabungsoan.

3. The Seven Districts

The *taritib* was initially divided along the four major local descent lines of the *datus*. Later, they were subdivided into seven major descent lines and respective districts (*sukus*). The Royal House of Masiu is divided into two Royal Houses: the Sultan sa Masiu and the Cabugatan sa Masiu (Crown Prince of Masiu). However, they share the same *taritib* and descent line with the same male founding ancestor, and each alternates (*idal*) in supporting the other. They thus form only one district. The genealogy of the Royal House of Baloi has linear connections with the Five *Datus* down to the first titleholder of the Royal House; thus, the *taritib* of Baloi was not subdivided. The *taritib* of Bayabao split along the descent lines of three brothers, the sons of Popawan, developing three *sukus* in Bayabao. Paskan sa Unayan had five sons, also called *apos*, which makes them all titled. However, the *taritib* of Unayan was only subdivided into two *sukus*. It is said that it was subdivided into five parts at the beginning but that some of the lineages, among them the Iranons,¹⁹⁵ declared independence.

In summary, the four principalities Bayabao, Baloi, Masiu, and Unayan, derived from four major bloodlines out of the *Darangen*, thus from ancestors who gave rights to the places but not rights to royal titles since at this time intermarriages with Sharief Kabungsoan had not yet taken place. The major lineages further branched, forming seven lineages that were accompanied by the development of respective *sukus*, as can be seen in the following map and table.

¹⁹⁵ Maranaos frequently claim that they are Iranons and that “Maranao” is a misnomer used to divide and rule the Moros. A similarity in language between the Iranons, Maranaos, and Maguindanaos supports this claim, which supposes that the Iranons were there first. Some of them went to Maguindanao, others went to Lake Lanao and became labeled Maranao, which means lake dwellers.



Map 8: Map of Places of Intersection and Demarcation of Sultanates (*Pat a Inged a Kiyasolundaan o Bangsa o Pat a Pangampong a Ranao*) and Districts (*sukus*)

Lumba a Masiu, Poona Masiu, and Sedapan a Masiu are sometimes identified as *sukus*. However, when defining *sukus* as a subdivision of a *pangampong* according to descent lines with equal authority, each *suku* containing four Lawmakers, Masiu has no *suku*. Handmade map by the author; proportions may not correspond entirely with reality.

Table 4: Districts (*sukus*) within the *Pat a Pangampong*, Divided According to Descent Lines

Bayabao	Subdivided into three <i>sukus</i>	
	Mala (big)	Lineage of Borawasan of Mala Bayabao, son of Popawan
	Poona (origin/source) ¹⁹⁶	Lineage of Gimbolanan of Poona Bayabao, son of Popawan
	Lumba (paragon)	Lineage of Maniri of Lumba Bayabao, son of Popawan
Masiu	Undivided	
	The territory of Masiu is divided into three traditional <i>ingeds</i> (townships), ¹⁹⁷ which are sometimes also called <i>sukus</i> . However, all three areas share the same ancestor Balindong, and have altogether only one Sultan and one Cabugatan (Crown Prince) sa Masiu; each forms one of the 16 Royal Houses. The traditional residential area of the Sultan and Cabugatan sa Masiu is Taraka. Masiu is also sometimes divided along the lake into Western and Eastern Masiu. However, when following the principle that <i>sukus</i> divide the <i>pangampongs</i> according to descent lines into areas of equal authority, each area having four Lawmakers, Masiu has no <i>suku</i> .	
Unayan	Subdivided into two <i>sukus</i>	
	Sedapan/Sudupan (Western Unayan)	Lineage of Borowa of Sudupan a Unayan, offspring of Matanog of Subangana Unayan, offspring of Pascan
	Sebangan/Subangan (Eastern Unayan)	Lineage of Dozonan of Butig, offspring of Pascan
Baloi	Undivided	

¹⁹⁶ It is said that the first ruler of Bayabao lived at the mouth of the Rugnan river; the area around it was called *po'on* (origin/source) a Bayabao.

¹⁹⁷ The three *ingeds* are: Poona Masiu, comprising the municipality of Masiu; Lumba a Masiu, comprising the lowland of Molondo, Tamparan, and Taraka; and Sedapan a Masiu, comprising the highland of Bacolod Kalawi, Madalum, Tugaya, and Wato Balindong.

4. Introduction of the Sultanate System

The sultanate system was introduced through the descent line of the Shariefs, who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet Mohammad. Two of them are predominantly mentioned as having brought the sultanate to Lanao: the brothers Sharief Alawi and Sharief Kabungsoan. Alawi is said to have come to Tagoloan (Misamis Oriental) and to have introduced Islam to the north of the lake, while Kabungsoan is said to have come to Malabang and to have introduced Islam to the south of the lake. Some also mention Sharief Alauya, an ancestor of the brothers who came to Lanao two generations before them. Some exchange the names Alawi and Alauya/Aulia.

In the case of Butig, another connection to the bloodline of Mohammad is drawn through a descendant of Sharief Abdul Rahman, the uncle of Sharief Kabungsoan, whose granddaughter Umpas married a local *datu*, a descendant of Indarapatra (see appendix 9). This descent line, however, does not provide the right to claim a royal title. The Sultan sa Butig explains:

One line of genealogy is Umpas. She was married to Datu Punduma sa Butig. Umpas was first married to Dimasangkay a Adil of Maguindanao. During that time, the rulers were on equal footing, when there was no sultanate. Dimasangkay a Adil sa Maguindanao ruled the entire region of Maguindanao, which was later divided into five provinces. Umpas came to Lanao from Johor [Malaysia] with her brother Sandab. When Umpas divorced her first husband, she was married to Punduma of Butig. Punduma sa Butig was the first *panoroganan* [literally “decision maker”, also described as “executive” and later as head of a Royal House] in Lanao, whose power was respected, during the time when there was no sultanate yet in the four principalities of Lanao, because the Shariefs had not yet introduced the sultanate leadership.

When Punduma married Umpas, leadership started, but during this time, their leadership was not sultanate but *datu*. The legislature, supporting the leadership of Punduma [was implemented by] his uncles. (Speech given by the Sultan sa Butig in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

Why then is the marriage to Umpas important? According to local oral transmissions from Unayan (see appendix 8 for the whole story of how Umpas and Sandab came to Mindanao), leadership in Lanao started in Unayan with *Datu* Punduma, who was chosen to be the first *panoroganan*. His relatives considered him the leader because his father, Amerogong Topaan, was a descendant of Sharief Alawi,¹⁹⁸ and also because of his marriage to Umpas. She was a descendent of Prophet Mohammad and, more importantly, the former wife of Dimasangkay a

¹⁹⁸ Sharief Alawi married Asinalang, the daughter Suinal sa Kapai. They begot Radia Kunug and Inon. Radia Kunug married Merimbai, the daughter of Sultan sa Dimagalin. They begot Amerogong Topaan, who married Lilangun sa Butig. Their son was Punduma.

Adil sa Maguindanao, an ancestor of the Maguindanao sultanate and Sharief Kabungsoan. As a result of his marrying her, the lineages from both the mother's and father's sides of the children of Punduma were higher than the lineages of Punduma's other relatives. Additionally, Punduma could declare himself a leader in front of the Dimasangkay of Maguindanao, the rulers in Maguindanao that were established before those in Lanao, and the latter could trace back their genealogy to the former in order to claim royal titles through Sharief Kabungsoan. The following is an extract from the oral transmission of how Umpas and Sandab came to Mindanao and how Punduma claimed leadership:

And Punduma asked [Umpas and her brother Sandab]: "Why are you here?" because they are not Maranaos. And they explained why [because they had had a row with their brother, the Sultan of Johor, and went to Mindanao. There Umpas married the Dimasangkay a Adil sa Maguindanao, but the other wives of the Dimasangkay got jealous and planned to kill Umpas, so they had to flee]. And he said: You come with me to my place. Because there are no people in Lanao, it is a hunting place. [Sandab asks Punduma]: "Can you take the anger of Dimasangkay because they are still married?" [And the Punduma said]: "Make it ten times, I can still protect you." (Extracts from an interview given in two parts by the Masiricampo sa Butig, later modified by the translator Amer Rashid Mindalano, Marawi City, 2008. See appendix 8 for the whole interview)

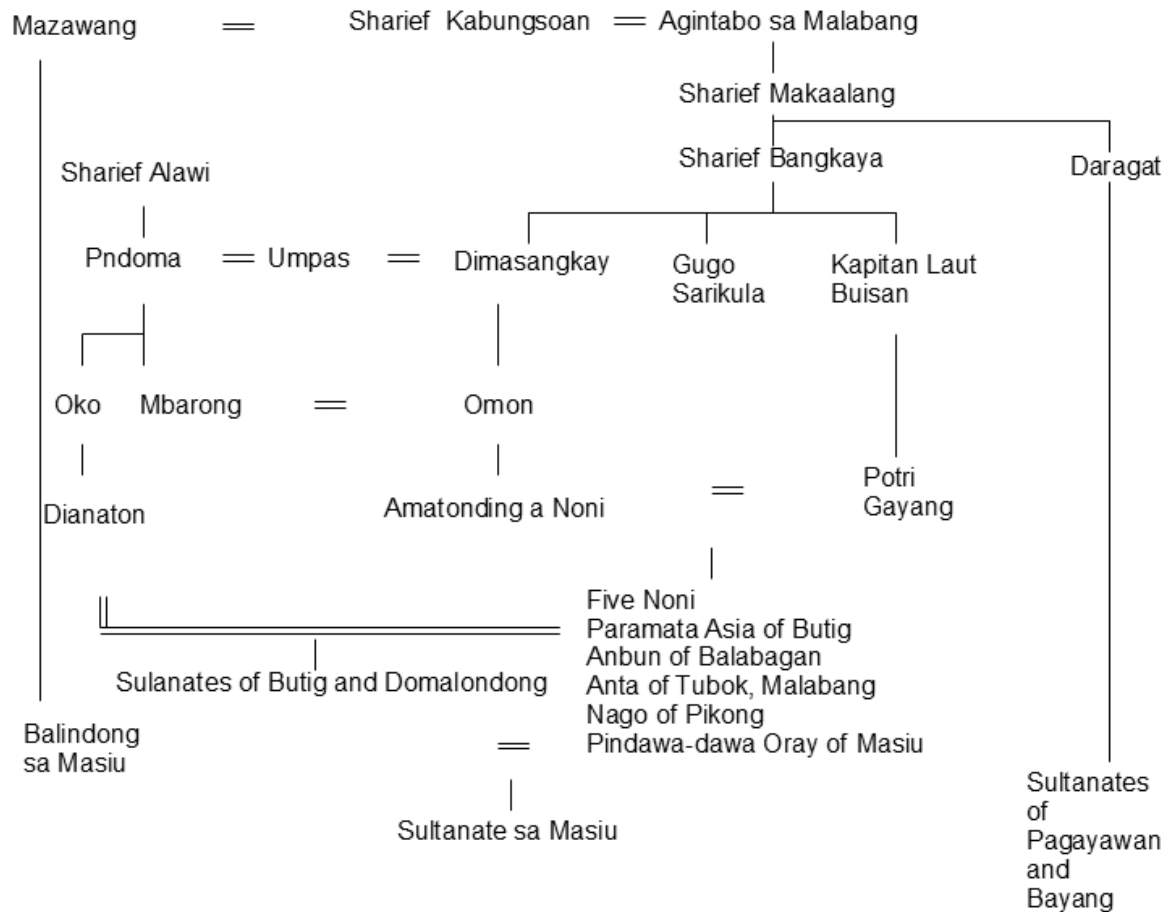
Punduma, however, is not a sultan; only his descendants can receive royal titles, as a result of intermarriages with the descendants of Sharief Kabungsoan and thus the Maguindanao sultanate. Mednick writes that the connection between the genealogies in Maguindanao and Lanao is in most cases through Dimasangkay a Adil, who married, among others, two women from Lanao. One was Umpas, the other Bai Simuol. The first gave birth to a boy named Omon, the second a girl named Mboring. After a disagreement with his brother-in-law, Dimasangkay left his wife (Umpas) and took his daughter (Mboring) with him. Mboring and Omon met again without knowing that they were brother and sister, married and begot a child named Amatonding a Noni, which means "pure blood" or "solid royal blood." Amatonding married Gayang, offspring of Kabungsoan. In other versions — in which the marriage between siblings was declared by interviewees to be wrong and something one should not talk about — it is Umpas who is the mother of Mboring and Omon, Dimasangkay a Adil the father of Omon, and Punduma sa Unayan the father of Mboring. The descendants of Amatonding and Gayang, the five (female) *Nonis* (full-blooded), can be found as important links in genealogies in the Pat a Pangampong, but not in the Maguindanao genealogy anymore. For the foundation of the Butig sultanate, the five *Nonis* are of crucial importance because they have bilateral descent from the lineage of Sharief Kabungsoan.

The founding ancestor (*apo*) Dianaton of the Royal House of Butig is only listed as such because one of the *Nonis* (Paramata Asia of Butig) married him. It is interesting to note that it is the women who are pure blooded descendants of Sharief Kabungsoan on whose basis the Butig and also the Masiu sultanates are founded. However, the *apo* of the Sultanate in Butig is not Paramata Asia but Dianaton, her husband, the grandson of Punduma, who, as direct ancestor, thus provides the rights of the local *datus*.

The local lineage is thus as important as the one coming from the Shariefs. The importance of the pure bloodedness of the *Nonis*, besides their high-ranking descent line, may be the result of their neutrality to local demands and rights, which are then traced through the husband. It may also be that, as in ancient Malaysia, men could only attain a powerful position when marrying a royal woman (Karim 1992: 52). Women are still important links when one wants to claim a title and they can transfer rights to titles but they are usually not *apos* of a sultanate, though there are some exceptions among women with minor titles. In case of a female title, the claimant has to trace back her lineage to the male founding ancestor of the sultanate. Male as well as female titles, however, can be claimed through the father's as well as through the mother's side (preferably both), which means there is neither a patri- nor a matrilineage concerning the inheritance of titles.

The Maranao sultanates trace back their genealogy to Maguindanao royal genealogies in order to justify their rightful claim, but distance themselves from claims of authority or superiority of Maguindanao over the *Pat a Pangampong*. The chairman of the Marawi Sultanate League, Sultan Mansing Macabando, emphasized in an interview that the first sultan in Maguindanao, a descendant of Kabungsoan, was a Maranao. He was a Maranao since Sharief Kabungsoan begot three daughters from Maguindanao wives and a daughter and a son (Sharief Makaalang or Saripada Macaalang) from Maranao wives (Mazawang and Angintabo). Sharief Makaalang begot one son, Sharief Bangkaya, who begot three children, Dimasangkay, Gugo Sarikula, and Kapitan Laut Buisan (the father of Sultan Qudarat). Kapitan Laut Buisan begot Putri Gayang. Dimasangkay begot Omon, and then Omon begot Amato Biganono (Amatonding a Noni). Amato Biganoni married Putri Gayang. The Five *Nonis* are their descendants.

Five Noni sa Unayan



Graphic 6: Five Nonis sa Unayan

The Nonis are important links in bringing the lineage of Sharief Kabungsoan to the Lanao sultanates. Source: Masiricampo sa Butig, 2008.

When Sharief Kabungsoan reached old age, he enthroned his first native son, Sharief Makaalang, the son of his Maranao wife Angintabo, as the Sultan sa Maguindanao. A Maranao sultan comments:

Here in Lanao those three brothers, Dimasangkay, Gugo Sarikula, and Buisan, their descendants all went down to Lanao and Cotabato, Maguindanao. That is where the rival[ry] arose. Because the people of Lanao would not admit that they are under the influence and leadership of the people of Maguindanao and the people of Maguindanao will also not admit that they are under the influence or leadership of the people of Lanao. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

Declaring that the Sultan of Maguindanao was actually a Maranao served thus as a challenge to claims of superiority by Maguindanao Muslims and was contested by members of the

Maguindanao sultanate. The claim to be of equal or even higher birth and authority is additionally of importance since initially the Maranaos were Islamized through Maguindanaos.¹⁹⁹

Similar arrangements of different sultanates that are connected through bloodlines but that at the same time would not allow leadership of another lineage over their own lineage can be found concerning the major royal lineages comprising the *Pat a Pangampong*. The Royal Houses of Bayabao and Baloi draw their genealogical connections to the Shariefs via Sharief Alawi and Sharief Kabungsoan. Baloi can be traced back to Sharief Alawi but it can also be seen as a branch of the *pangampongs* of Bayabao and Masiu. One of the progenies of the *apo* Balindong sa Masiu (from the line of Sharief Kabungsoan) got married to a descendant of a leader in Baloi. They begot a daughter, Aminsalam, who was married to Alao of Ditsaan, a descendant of Sharief Alawi (Bayabao). The descendants are the seven Marohom of Baloi and the sole bearer of the title Sultan sa Baloi.

In Bayabao, a daughter of Sharief Alawi married Popawan sa Bayabao. One of their children married the great-granddaughter (from the line of Sharief Kabungsoan) of Dianaton sa Butig (*apo* of Butig). One of the descendants of Popawan married Bai Batola of Baloi. Their children again intermarried with descendants of Balindong (from the lines of Sharief Kabungsoan and Masiu) and formed the Sultanates of Bayabao.

The genealogical connections to Sharief Kabungsoan of the Royal Houses in Bayabao are drawn via Unayan and Masiu, whereas the connections to Sharief Alawi in Masiu and Unayan are drawn through Bayabao and Baloi. The connections to Sharief Kabungsoan nevertheless are said to be of more importance in claiming leadership. However, Masiu and Unayan are not superior to Bayabao and Baloi. All 16 Royal Houses are equal in authority since there were intermarriages between them. The intermarriages between Masiu and Unayan are the following: the sister of the *apo* Dianaton sa Butig married Onggor and begot Balindong. The latter is the *apo* of the Royal Houses in Masiu. He married Pindawa-dawa Oray, the sister of Dianaton's wife, Paramata Asia; the sisters are two of the five *Nonis sa Unayan*. In most cases, the women marry into another sultanate through which the connections are established. But when a woman or a man marries into another lineage, she or he provides the needed connections with other sultanates but not their authority. Their children, however, may claim rights to a higher lineage transferred through the father or the mother.

¹⁹⁹ Loyré-de-Hauteclocque (1989) mentions that the Islamization of the Maranao groups was initiated by Maguindanaos in order to strengthen the bonds among the groups against outsiders (p. 127).

5. The Development of the 16 Royal Houses and the 28 Lawmakers

After intermarriages between major descent lines of the *Pat a Pangampong* and Sharief Kabungsoan, *apos* developed, providing the right to land and titles in the sultanates. The initial seven major descent lines sub-branched again into 15, forming 16 royal houses (Masiu has two royal houses, which have the same *apo*). It is not certain when these 16 developed, since descent lines undergo fissions when one sub-line is strong enough to claim the highest status. The last royal house that developed was Domalondong in the 1970s. At this time, Mohamad Ali Dimaporo was the chairman of the 15 royal houses. He recognized the lineage of Domalondong, a brother of the *apo* of the Royal House of Butig, as the lineage of a 16th Royal House. There have been further attempts to add a royal house. For example, the Sultanate of Tagoloan in Baloi wanted to become a *panoroganan* in the 1980s (Cayongcat 1984: 16), but the upgrade was not granted. The addition of a 16th Royal House shows that the *taritib* can be altered and that it is possible to change the arrangement of the *Pat a Pangampong*. Nevertheless, to add or to subtract a royal house requires the agreement of all 16 royal houses and the 28 *Mbabaya ko Taritib* (they are translated as the Houses of Peers, Policymakers, Lawmakers, *Pat a Datu* [Four Datus], or Legislative Assembly). Each of the initial seven major descent lines in the *pangampongs* has four *Mbabaya ko Taritib*; there are thus 28. It is the descent line division before the intermarriages with Sharief Kabungsoan that comprise the area according to which the guardians of the *taritib* (the *Mbabaya ko Taritib*) are subdivided. Sultan sa Butig explains:

It is not allowed for *panoroganan* to have no *datus*. Meaning that these four *datus* are responsible for making *taritib* for their place. These 28 serve as the Legislative Assembly of the sultanate of the *pangampong* of Lanao. (Speech given in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

The descendants of the Founding Ancestors of the 28 *Mbabaya ko Taritib* are also called the supporters (*pagawid*) of the *panoroganan*. This does not necessarily mean that the 28 are from a lesser descent line. For Masiu, it is said that of the children of the *apo* Balindong, the two youngest, Maruhom Jalalodin and Maruhom Rahmatola, stayed with their father. Their siblings left the house, became connected to other places, and decided to support for leadership over the whole sultanate of Masiu the two brothers who stayed. Jalalodin and Rahmatolan thus became the *lokes* (carriers of the rights of the *apo*) of the titles Sultan sa Masiu and Datu a Cabugatan sa Masiu, the highest titles in the sultanate of Masiu and thus the *pagawidan* (supported) (Mednick 1965: 114). Their brothers became their *pagawid*. In the case of Eastern Unayan, however, marriage into the descent line of the Shariefs made the crucial difference. Amizaman and

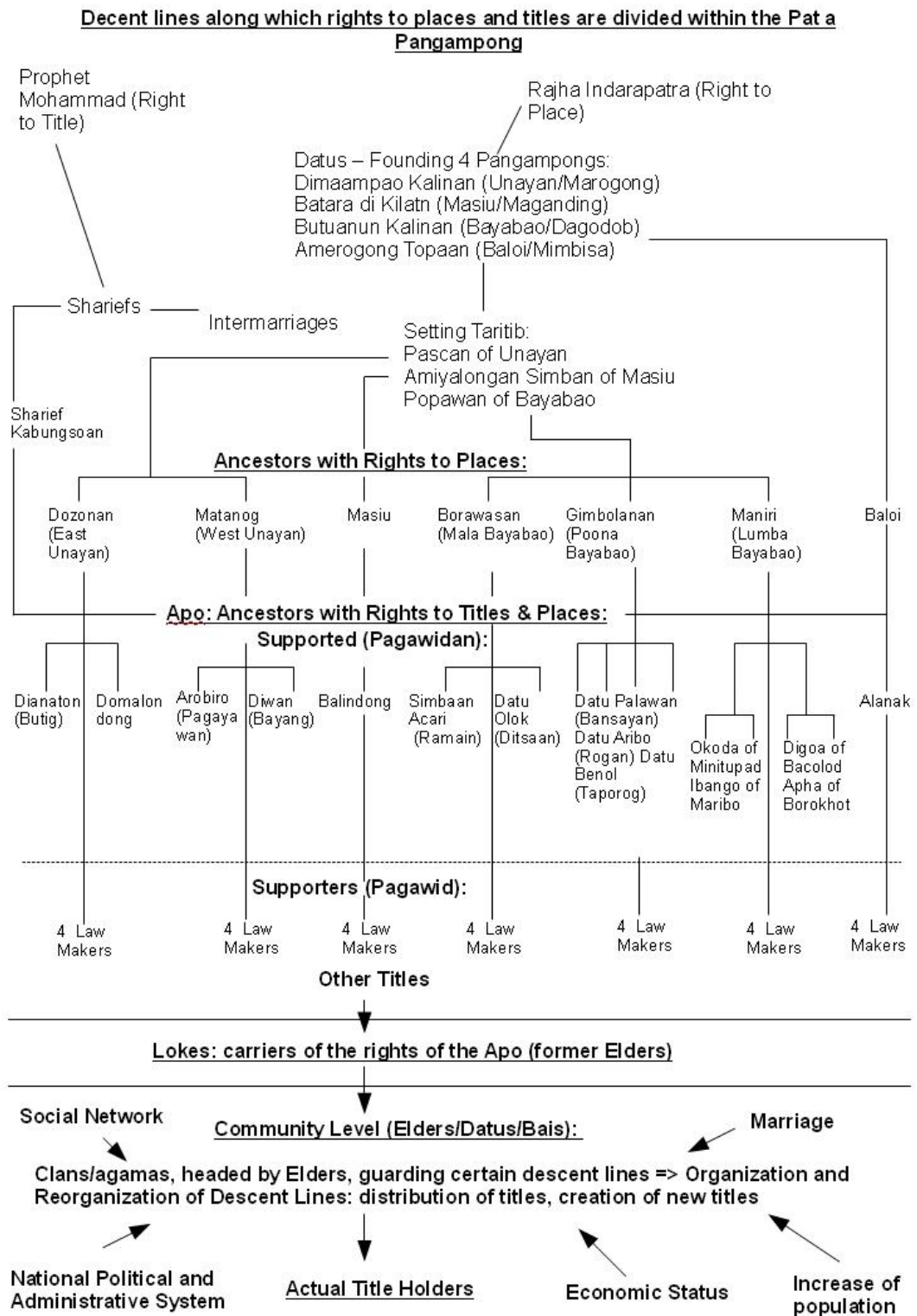
Rombaan had seven boys and one daughter. The daughter, Lilangun, married Amerogong sa Kapai, a descendant of Sharief Alawi, and it was decided that her son, Punduma, would be the *panoroganan* and that his uncles would support him. The support was based on the one hand on Punduma's descent through his father from Sharief Alawi (he could thus claim a higher descent than his uncles and cousins), and on the other hand on the marriage with Umpas, the former wife of the Dimasangkay sa Maguindanao and a descendant of Prophet Mohammad. This enabled him to claim equal authority to the Dimasangkay and it elevated the descent line of his children from the mother's side. Further, it has to be remembered that women can claim titles for their sons and that it is said that the wishes of a woman have to be granted because of *taritib*, which demands paramount respect to women. The situation that Lilangun was the only daughter who additionally had married into a higher descent line might thus also have been a result of the decision to accept Punduma as leader. Some of the uncles of Punduma became the four Lawmakers and thus supported him. Others, however, did not agree and left the area. Mamintal married into the area of Bayabao and his descendant, Apha sa Borokhot, became the *apo* of the Royal House of Borokhot in Lumba Bayabao.

The determination of which genealogical lineage is supporter (*pagawid*) and which gets supported (*pagawidan*)²⁰⁰ is in most cases an individual process within the sultanates and no general rule can be applied here. Regarding Mala a Bayabao, the *apo* of the Sultan sa Marawi was the brother of Batara of Ragain-Ditsaan, whose descendants hold rights to the titles Sultan sa Ditsaan and Sultan sa Ragain, belonging to those supported in Mala a Bayabao. The Sultan sa Marawi instead belongs to the supporters. Marriages of the *apos* may decide who will be supported and who is a supporter, but other factors may also play a role in this determination. Supporters and supported claim descent from the ancestor of the area in the major descent line, which, in the case of Mala a Bayabao, was Borawasan of Mala a Bayabao. Then they regulate who is the supporter and who is the supported. This regulation, however, is not as fixed as it looks like in the chart below; it goes along with descent lines and claims to certain titles but it can change through intermarriage. The uncle of the present Sultan sa Butig, Sultan Dalinambas sa Ragayan, carries a title of supporter. However, since his ancestor married the Bai a Labi sa Butig,

²⁰⁰ Authority in Lanao *datu*-ships is based on the people who support a chosen leader in exercising his or her authority. If the leader is not able to sustain his or her supporters through good leadership or other qualities, his or her authority will decline. This concept of leadership can similarly be found in patron-client relationships (see Teves 2000). In the Lanao sultanates the organization of supporter and supported (or patron and client) is connected to genealogy. One, however, has only a birthright to a title but not to authority, which still has to be earned by sustaining supporters.

the lineage has claims to both the supporters and the supported. Who is supported and who will support is then the result of descent line, marriage politics, (re-)arrangements of the kinship groups/clans, and the qualities of titleholders. These structures can additionally be subdivided into several sets of supporters and supported, if there are various people having claim to the same title. Further, the same group that is supported in one place can act as supporter in another framework.

The titles of the lineages presented in the chart of the 16 Royal Houses and the 28 Lawmakers are listed below, including the *apos*. These are founding ancestors of a lineage that is descended from the Shariefs (who give the right to a title) as well as from local *datus/bais* (who give the right to the land). An *apo* can be male or female but in most cases is male, as the paternal lineage is given priority, even though one preferably needs both lineages to claim a title. In addition, some *lokes* are included in the chart. *Lokes* are certain descendants and carriers of the rights of the *apo*; they were the former elders of the communities. The elders are the carriers of the rights of the *apo* and they are in the position to pick a titleholder among their clan members. In case there is a split or reorganization of descent lines, elders might become *lokes*.



Graphic 7: Descent Line Divisions and Hierarchies in the Pat a Pangampong

The elders choose new titleholders, not only on the ground of their genealogical connections.

The names of *apos* are, in most cases, only known by specialists of the *salsila* or researchers. In addition, many titleholders do not know the titles of all 16 and 28, which is an indicator of the autonomy but also of the influential position of elders.

Table 5: The 16 Royal Houses, the 28 Lawmakers and the Demarcation Sultanates

<u>Royal Houses</u> (<i>panoroganan</i>)		<u>Lawmakers</u> (<i>Dwapolo ago Walo a Mbabaya ko Taritib</i>)	
Title	Lineage Ancestor	Title	Lineage Ancestor
UNAYAN			
1.EAST UNAYAN			
Sultan sa Butig ²⁰¹	Dianaton	Sultan sa Dolangan	Labiolan/Rabiolan ²⁰²
		Sultan sa Malalis	Ditoklan
Sultan sa Domalondong ²⁰³	Domalondong	Sultan sa Ragayan	Didaitun
		Sultan sa Timbab	Sabbo
2.WEST UNAYAN			
Sultan sa Bayang	Diwan	Sultan sa Binidayan	Boadi
		Sultan sa Boribid	Matanog
Sultan sa Pagayawan	Arobiro (others say Borowa)	Sultan sa Padas	Sandab
		Sultan sa Pualas ²⁰⁴	Lawango

²⁰¹ The first titleholder of the title Sultan sa Butig was Gomogaw, the son of Utto (Uto); his father was Datu sa Palao sa Butig. Utto was one of the 11 *Moriatao* (offspring) of Baracat (11 *Kalokes a Moriatao Baracat*) who had the right to hold the title of Sultan sa Butig. Sultan sa Baracat sa Butig was the grandson of Dianaton Naim sa Butig and Paramata Asia sa Butig. He was married to the Bai a Labi sa Ragain, Bondayo. Their children were Datu sa Palao sa Butig and Bai sa Palao sa Butig. Both married and had several children. Eight of the children (two of them female) of Datu sa Palao and three of the children of Bai sa Palao (one of them female) were chosen as the *lokes* of the Sultan sa Butig.

²⁰² This *apo* was a woman.

²⁰³ This title was founded in the 1970s. However, the genealogy can be traced back to a brother of Baracat.

²⁰⁴ He was, as of 2008, the Secretary-General of the 28 *mbabaya ko taritib* of Lanao.

MASIU			
Sultan of Masiu ²⁰⁵	Balindong	Sultan sa Pitakes	Abagat
		Sultan sa Malungun	Madayao
Datu a Cabugatan of Masiu ²⁰⁶	Balindong	Sultan sa Lima Inged ²⁰⁷	Pondag
		Sultan sa Lumasa	Kadayon
BAYABAO			
1.POONA BAYABAO			
Sultan sa Bansayan	Dato Palawan (others say M' Baor)	Sultan of Bualan	Onawal
Sultan of Rogan ²⁰⁸	Dato Aribo (others say M' Baor)	Sultan sa Bubongn	Omilang
Sultan of Taporog	Dato Benol	Sultan of Lumbaca Ingd	Akari
		Sultan of Talagia	Sheik
2.LUMBA BAYABAO			
Sultan of Bacolod	Digoa of Bacolod	Sultan of Botod	Lomalag
Sultan of Borocot ²⁰⁹	Apha of Borokhot	Sultan of Galawan	Domaraag
Sultan of Maribo	Ibango of Maribo	Sultan of Maguing	Mamintal
Sultan of Minitupad	Okoda of Minitupad	Sultan of Talowan	Danno

²⁰⁵ The first sultan was Marohom Sarip Mahaduddin. His title Sultan Samporna was changed into sa Masiu.

²⁰⁶ The titles Cabugatan and Sultan sa Masiu are exchanged (during one term, each title is held by the one descent line, and in the next term by the other) between two descent lines: those of Maruhom Jalalodin and Maruhom Rahmatola, both sons of Balindong Bezar of Masiu and Pindawadawa-Orai.

²⁰⁷ Sultan sa Lima Inged means sultan of the five places.

²⁰⁸ He was, as of 2008, the Secretary-General of the 16 *panoroganan*.

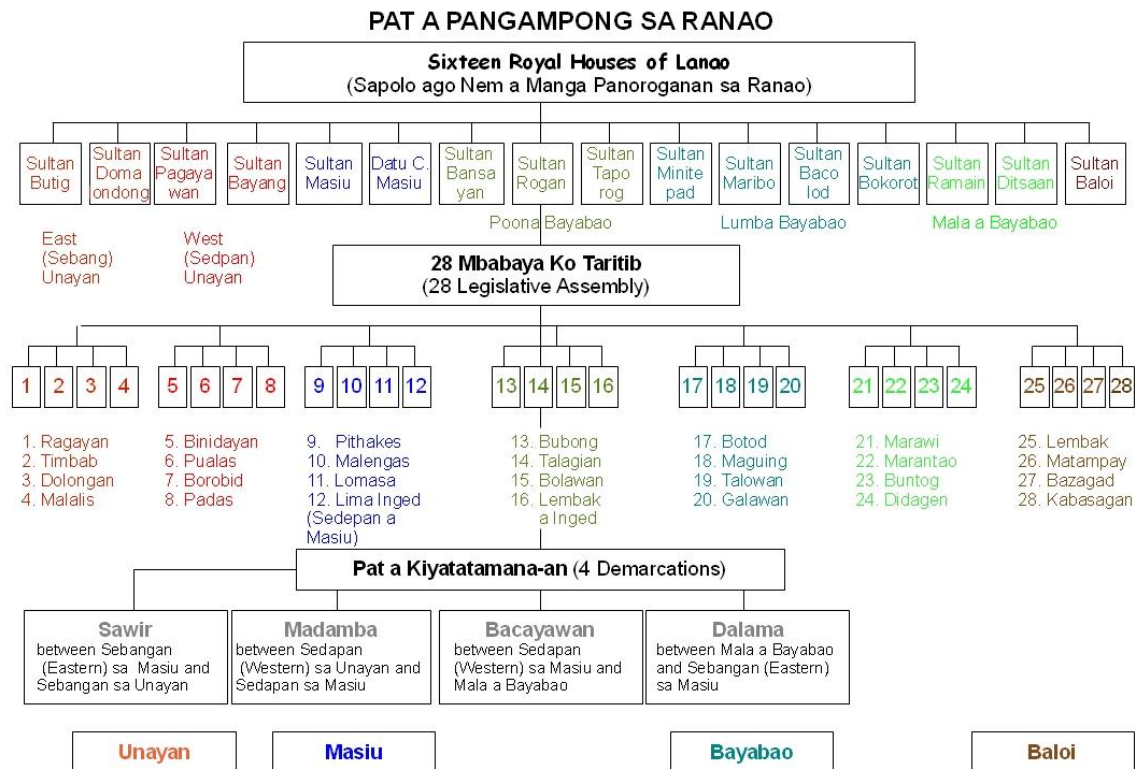
²⁰⁹ The first Sultan sa Borokot was Sultan sa Pinud, married to Paramata Balintao.

3.MALA A BAYABAO			
Sultan of Ditsaan	Dato Olok (others say Otowa)	Sultan of Buntong	Makadiar
		Sultan of Didagun	Mayaman
Sultan of Ragain	Acari Simbaan (others say Otowa) ²¹⁰	Sultan of Marantao	Gomising
		Sultan of Marawi	Gomisa
BALOI			
Sultan of Baloi	Ora-in is mentioned, and also Alanak. The latter begot the seven Maruhoms (Princes) who are the source (<i>lokes</i>) of the nominees for the title Sultan of Baloi	Sultan of Bazagad	Papas
		Sultan of Kabasagan	Atongao
		Sultan of Lumbak	Bai
		Sultan of Matampay	Rajah Ali
The Sultanates that are Places of Intersection/Demarcation (<i>Pat a Inged a Kiyasosoludaan o Bangsa o Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao</i>)			
Sultan of Bacayawan			
Sultan of Dalama			
Sultan of Madamba			
Sultan of Sawir			
Source: Macarampat [2008]; Tawagon 1987; Interviews by the author in 2007 and 2008.			

The chart below presents the distribution of the in table 5 mentioned sultanates in the *Pat a Pangampong*. There are three hierarchical levels, those of the royal houses, the lawmakers and the Demarcation Sultanates. Only the highest male representatives of the sultanates are mentioned; they each have a female counterpart but she is usually not listed. In particular, the number of Royal Houses is uneven in relation to the area, depending on the regulations of the single sultanates. Each *pangampong*, or when subdivided, each *suku*, has four lawmakers. But some *pangampongs/sukus* have more than one Royal House, ranging from one to four per four Lawmaker. The four Demarcation Sultanates are also not equally distributed since there is no border to Baloi. They only divide the area around the lake. This unevenness can be seen as an indication that Baloi joined the other sultanates later. The unequal number of Royal Houses

²¹⁰ Marohum Sarip Aulia Ala Awalo Zaman and Mrohum Sarip Sapaatula Akiro Zaman are mentioned as the Puphagidala sa Solotan sa Ragain, the heirs who are in line or vying for the Ragain sultanate. The first Sultan of Ragain was Maruhom Baraguir.

shows the autonomy of the single *pangampongs/sukus*. The even distribution of the 28 Lawmakers, however, signals that there is a loose but common order (*taritib*) of the whole *Pat a Pangampong*.

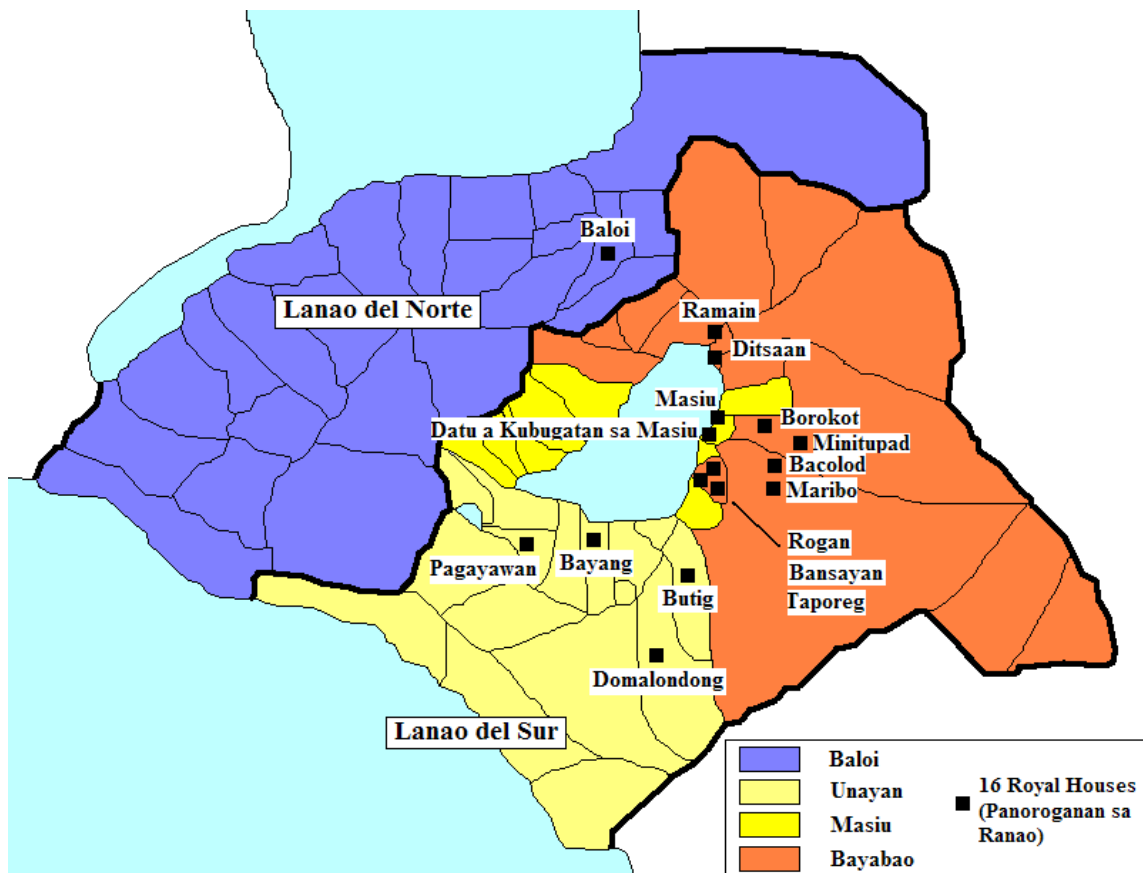


Graphic 8: Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao
Chart provided by the Sultan sa Butig, 2008.

Royal titles of the 16 and 28 are connected to a certain area. Originally the *inged*, township, of which the sultan was responsible, including surrounding *agamas* (communities), would be related to the higher-ranking descent line in the *inged*. High-ranking titles are thus connected to the name of a place, an *inged*, where the sultan also had his *torogan*²¹¹. The Sultan

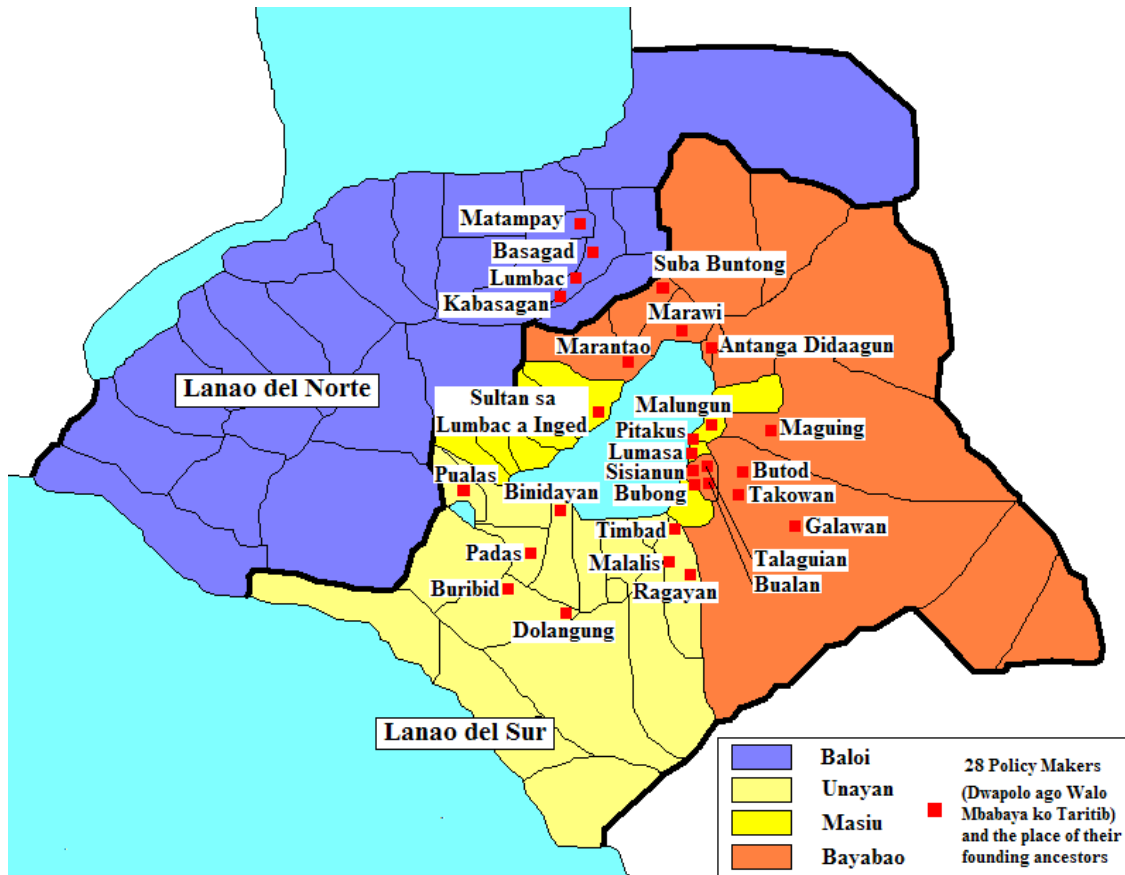
²¹¹ A *torogan* (derived from *torog*, to sleep), a palace residence of the sultan and his clan, is the venue where the sultan can hold his *majlis* (consultative assembly) and discuss solutions to social, political, and economic problems in his domain. A *torogan* is a sprawling wooden structure, usually 500 m² in a covered area, large enough to hold 1,000 or more people and 20 live-in families. The *torogan* in Bayang, which is 200 years old, is one such structure still standing. A *torogan* was built by *pagawidan*, and similar houses which are called *mala a walai* (big house) were built by the 28 Lawmakers. Other minor sultans also built their *torogans* in case there was a split of a major sultanate, like the one of Dayawan, which split from Marantao (one of the 28). The *torogan* in Dayawan became one of the places where selected Maranao *datus* (Madale 1996: 34) signed the Dansalan Declaration of 1935. With the decline of the sultanates, among others enforced by President Quezon, who did not recognize traditional titleholders,

sa Masiu is an exception. He carries the name of the *pangamong* and the place of the *torogan* was not Masiu but Taraka. This, however, may be a new development and has to be clarified through further studies. The following two maps present the approximate places of the lineage ancestors of the 16 and 28 within the *Pat a Pangamong*. This does not necessarily mean that the present titleholders will reside in these places.



Map 9: Map of the 16 Royal Houses and Their Approximate Places of Origin
Handmade map by the author; proportions may not correspond entirely with reality.

a sultan might have a big house or use community or public places instead of a *torogan*. The office of the municipal president became the center of community activities and a place for celebrations. People build some torogan-like houses (rather concrete than wooden constructions) without being titleholders, like mayors or those who take a liking in the *okir* designs. If the owner of the *torogan*-like house is a government official, the function of the house may be similar to that of an ancient *torogan*. The Capitol Complex of Marawi City is a modern version of a traditional *torogan*. Sultans today, however, usually do not live in a *torogan* anymore.



Map 10: Map of the 28 Law Makers and Their Approximate Places of Origin
Handmade map by the author; proportions may not correspond entirely with reality.

6. Administrative Division

Whereas the administrative division in the Philippines is by province, municipality or city, *barangay*, and *purok*, the division of the *Pat a Pangampong* is by *pangampong*, *suku*, *inged* (township arranged around supported descent line), *agama* (community), and *bangon* (3-5 families). Each descent line in the *salsila* has traditionally certain rights to land, which is usually the joint property of a kinship group. Land to which a community lays claim is called *gapa* and is subdivided into two categories. The first is *kakola*, comprising uninhabited land, like forestland, owned in common. The second is *mianggapa*, “settled land sub-divided among different kinship groups and classified under private ownership,” since it was “acquired by prior use and continued occupation” (Fianza 2004: 33; Saber and Tamano 1985-86: 114). Usually the sultan distributed free land. In case a farmer abandoned the land, the sultan could assign it to someone else. Those farmers working on the land generally gave parts of the harvest to the sultan (Madale 1996: 26). A study from 1989 found that the traditional modes of land acquisition and ownership continued

to prevail in the Muslim areas even though they were joined by Islamic laws and state laws (respectively, affecting 37%, 23%, and 11% of farmers) (Abreu/Rosa 2003: 9).

If a family lived outside the community for several generations, their claim to royal title and territory would be eliminated. This changed partly with the introduction of land titles. To keep a claim to land, traditionally one had to be from a certain descent line, which was represented by titleholders, and to maintain contact with the community in order to have one's claim recognized by its members. Today there are titleholders and claimants not living in the communities anymore. They still may have property or rights to land or land titles in the area of their claim. They may have left for employment in Marawi City, Iligan City, or elsewhere and only go back to their communities if there is a special event. Others send a representative — male or female — who contributes financially in the name of the *bai a labi*, the *datu*, or the sultan. One *datu a cabugatan* who lived and worked in Manila was represented by his elder sister, a *barangay* captain in Marawi. After a while, she complained and said, “Either you come back to Marawi or you resign.” The *cabugatan* decided that it was time to face the problem of earning a living in Marawi and organized a cooperative so he could survive and contribute according to his position.

One of the former sultans bequeathed land equal to 50 football fields to his direct descendants. Clan members staying on such land may pay taxes and have political loyalty to the family owning the land. A 1994 study found out that in Lanao, 26 Moro clans control large landholdings in the area (Abreu and Rosa 2003: 13). Among them, the Lucmans occupied a central position with about 5,000 ha consisting of coconut and cacao plantations bought from an American settler who was involved in a *rido* with the sultan of the region.²¹² The land was later on partly placed under the voluntary offer-to-sell scheme of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), while the rest was distributed among immediate members of the clan.²¹³

Some of the landlords in the Lanao area aligned with Moro insurgent groups against “land-grabbers,” thus making difficult the implementation of agrarian reform, as was demanded through CARP²¹⁴ in the ARMM. The MILF considers CARP “an instrument of assimilation by an external power” that threatens to weaken the struggle for self-determination (Abreu/Rose 2003:

²¹² The dignitary was Sultan Sarip sa Subuan in Sultan Gumander.

²¹³ In 2000 about 2,885 households in Lanao del Sur owned land, which was acquired through CARP (NSO 2000).

²¹⁴ CARP was initially applied for the whole Philippines by the Corason Aquino government after the downfall of Marcos, in order to distribute land more equally. The land reform program is still in the process of being implemented.

25). The consequence is that possible power abuses by traditional leaders have become a minor issue:

It appears a common view among the Moro liberation front leadership that the rules on stewardship and usufruct as laid down in *adat* and *sharia* and shown in practice among the Moros are sufficient to address democratization of asset distribution in the countryside . . . This view, however, would tend to disregard the fact that in many instances the traditional authority of the *datus* and sultans, the heads of powerful families within clans and tribes, has been abused, which led to privatization of ancestral lands. (ibid.)

According to the traditional land distribution system, descendants of different descent lines have rights to the land of each line they belong to. Thus, a person might have the right to build an estate on the land of the father's as well as on the mother's side. Common ownership of land poses a problem in case one of the descendants gives away land without the knowledge of the relatives. There are cases where, after a Maranao sold land to a Christian, the buyer got involved in a dispute or a *rido* with the relatives of the seller, who, not knowing that the land had been sold, regarded it as their property.

Where there were not yet land titles, land was sometimes given to non-relatives in appreciation for their services. For example, the former Sultan sa Marawi had land rights to certain *bangon* (lots): he distributed the land among his relatives but also lent some property to vassals or gave some away to non-relatives. After the introduction of the title system by the American colonizers, the land that was distributed by the sultan and should have been redistributed by his descendants became the permanent property of the residents. Some of them are thus not genealogically connected to the sultanate but reside there due to formerly accorded privileges. Conflicts over property erupted. As a remedy for the confusion of systems and its negative outcomes, a local NGO called Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO), Inc. provides resources to family members of the Sultan sa Marawi who claim the land in order to stop the *ridos* concerning property in the area.

Similar conflicts erupted in other regions of Lanao. Land may not be used because the family owning the land title is afraid of a *rido* or because there are old regulations that are still applied. The former Paramount Sultan Lucman, who possessed land titles in Kapai, Mala a Bayabao, gave peasants the right to cultivate some parts of the land without paying dues, as long as they lived in wooden shelters. The peasants let some fields lie unused until the son of the sultan gave them the right to use it. In some cases, the sultanates are still intact in relation to land

rights and taxes. Thus, peasants give some share of their crop to a strong *datu* of the area. The *datu* is obliged to protect and take care of them in the event of death, marriage, or financial need.

Land rights were deeply connected to descent line membership and thus traditionally families were mainly surrounded by their relatives. This is still more or less the case. In general, people living in a Maranao community have relatives there or an influential host. Either they are connected to a well-accepted organization or another arrangement, based on the friendship and thus protection of a local leader, has been made. Mistrust among different groups exists. People feel safe mainly when among relatives — especially if they are involved in a *rido*.

The traditional *agama* is composed of *bangons*, which belong to different descent lines. It constitutes one social, political, and religious (represented by a mosque) unit, having in most cases its own set and organization of royal titles, and forms an autonomous sultanate.²¹⁵ *Agamas* today do not always correspond to the superimposed political units of the *barangays*. There are several configurations: in some places, there are several *agamas* within one *barangay*;²¹⁶ in others, the *agama* is newly connected to an *inged* (township, headed by a high-ranking sultan, and consisting of a collection of *agamas*) that they originally did not belong to. This superimposition can also reduce the area of influence of one *inged* by cutting off its tributary sections or by elevating an *agama* that was traditionally a supporter of one *inged* to a government district (Saber 1979: 71, 107). One can still find the place names to which the 28 and the 16 are traditionally connected. However, hierarchy was sometimes disregarded by the new administration and thus they “‘divided and conquered’ the social and territorial organization of a traditional community” (ibid.: 107). Marantao, belonging to the 28, became a municipality, whereas the Royal House of Poona Bayabao, belonging to the 16, became a *barangay*. Marawi was initially a supporter of Ramin and Ditsaan, but finally the provincial government was established in this city and the high-ranking government officials, who in many cases belonged to the Royal House of Ramin, had to establish themselves in Marawi.

The superimposed administrative subdivision of a place can also change the connections between a sultanate and its area. In 1977, under President Marcos, today’s municipality

²¹⁵ *Agama* derives from Sanskrit, meaning faith. In Lanao it is sometimes traced back to the Arabic concept of *jam’a*, community or school of thought. Regarding the fact that an *agama* in the *Pat a Pangampong* is a community of people related by blood and centered around a mosque, the concept can be understood to refer to faith, community, and kinship/clanship.

²¹⁶ Tawagon (1987) states that almost every *agama*, which has a mosque, has its own set of sultans and *bais*. The number of *barangays* according to NSO (2000) in Lanao del Sur is 1,158. Since there are more *agamas* than *barangays*, it thus can be estimated that there are more than 1,158 sultanates in the province.

Buadiposo-Buntong separated from the municipality of Ragain-Ditsaan and formed its own entity. The descent line claimants in this newly created area belonged previously to the Sultanate of Ragain. After the split, they proclaimed their own set of sultans and *bais*. Hence, the sultanate branches out with the branching out of administrative divisions. It is problematic if two clans claim the same title. In consequence, some alterations were produced: two different clans would take titles at the same time, or in turns, and some new ones would be created.

Inged literally means place, but it denotes a seat of recognized authority. According to Tawagon (1987), there are 43 *ingeds* in the *Pat a Pangampong*, which were formerly divided into those that support (*pagawid*) and those that are supported (*pagawidan*) (1987: 85). The supported were the royal houses, the supporters the 28 Lawmakers. Mednick defines *ingeds* as *agamas* within which the superordinate descent lines are located. An *inged* can also be an association of *agamas* around a superior descent line (1965: 250). Marawi City, for instance, is known as the *Pamagsopa sa Marawi* (the Alliance of Marawi), a collection of five sultanates plus their satellites forming one *inged*. The five Sultanates of Marawi City are Bacolod, Buadi Sakayo, Guimba, Madaya, and Toros. The *taritib* was thus that the descent line among them, which holds the title Sultan sa Marawi, is the representative of them all and superordinate as being one of the 28. The founding ancestor of the Sultanate of Marawi had five heirs, namely (from eldest to youngest): Tobacan in Buadi Sakayo, Boriongan sa Bacolod, Saolangan sa Toros, Makalilay sa Madaya, and Timbang in Guimba. Abdul Hamidullah Atar (2007) from RIDO explains:

In other words, Dansalan or Marawi today has five unions and every union has its own sultan with territorial boundaries. Part of the values among Maranao ancestors was “kaseselae” or honoring, which they applied even in the selection of *grar* or titles. Since Tobacan is the eldest among our ancestors, they agreed that the Sultan of Marawi should be . . . the eldest son of Gomisa known as the descendant of Tobacan in Buadi Sacayo. The Sultan of Marawi is only confined and recognized in the territory of Buadi Sacayo comprising several Barangays with 19 clans.

Each of the five sultanates has a *barangay* named after it. They have their own set of sultans and other minor titleholders, which are affiliated with them. Some of these minor sultans have now their own *barangays*, as does the Sultan sa Rorogagus. Rorogagus was, according to the *taritib* in the 1960s, subordinated to the Sultanate of Guimba (Mednick 1965).

Altogether, Marawi City has 45 sultanates, which have their own sets of male and female titles. The Marawi Sultanate League²¹⁷ was founded to coordinate and connect the different sultanates but also to preserve the culture of the Maranaos. The son of one of the founders commented:

The main purpose of my father was to preserve our culture. Because according to him, without the sultanate we cannot call ourselves Maranaos. That is our identity. In order to preserve it we have to organize it, make it strong. And the way I look at it, the Sultanate of Lanao, among the 44 Sultanates of Lanao [the 16 royal houses and the 28 Lawmakers], the Sultanate of Marawi [as one of the 28] claims to be the biggest and highly respected. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

Finally, some places have no claim on a title. They are defined as *da-i-bangenda*, which means that they do not have any genealogical connection to local families from a certain place, and thus no social rank or status (Tawagon 1987: 94). Formerly such people were slaves, freemen, or non-Maranao. Today, this may be a community of Maranaos having claims elsewhere or a community of foreigners. The community of “witches” is also mentioned in this connection.

The *Pat a Pangampong*, being geographically divided as described in the chart below, developed hand-in-hand with the modern administrative divisions of Lanao. Baloi comprises the area of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur includes the other three *pangampongs*. Some royalties remained with this division but others divide the area differently and there are parts which belong to Lanao del Norte that are claimed by the *pangampongs* of Masiu and Unayan. The division of Lanao was introduced in 1959 (RA No. 2228) by Senator Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto (1955-1961),²¹⁸ who originated from the *pangampong* Bayabao and was the son of the Sultan sa Ragain. At this time, Baloi was mainly populated by Christian settlers, while most inhabitants of Lanao del Sur were Maranao Muslims. The division of the province was thus not protested, according to Mednick (1965).

²¹⁷ The present chairman of the Marawi Sultanate League is the Sultan sa Marinaot. He is one of the founders of the League and was Executive Secretary from 1974-1986. Even though his term was planned to last four years, he has been the chairman for more than 20 years now. Information about who is a member of the Marawi Sultanate League and especially the internal hierarchy within the sultanates are said to be classified, only kept for the elders. Information on the members, not the internal hierarchy, is nevertheless provided to the younger generation. The reason for this may either be that the information was never classified, as it is only classified for certain people, or that the general interest in the sultanate system among Maranaos is shrinking and thus the sultans are eager to reclaim their status, and in order to do so they de-classify knowledge.

²¹⁸ Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto was the son of Senator and Sultan sa Ragain Alauya Adiong Alonto (1934-1935, 1941-1945 and 1946-1947).

Table 6: Areas Claimed to be Part of the *Pat a Pangampong*

BAYABAO				
1.MALA A BAYABAO				
1 City	Marawi City			
8 Municipalities	Bubong	Buadiposo- Buntong	Kapai	Marantao
	Piagapo	Ragain-Ditsaan	Saguiaran	Tagoloan II
2.POONA BAYABAO ²¹⁹				
1 Municipality	<i>Poona Bayabao</i>			
3.LUMBA A BAYABAO ²²⁰				
4 Municipalities	Bumbaran	Lumba-Bayabao	Maguing	Wao
MASIU				
1.SEANGAN A MASIU (EASTERN MASIU)				
4 Municipalities	Masiu	Mulondo	Tamparan	Taraka
2.SEDAPAN A MASIU (WESTERN MASIU) ²²¹				
5 Municipalities	Balindong	Bocolod Grande	Madalum	Madamba
	Tugaya			

²¹⁹ Under the American administration, Poona Bayabao was called Gata.

²²⁰ Under the American administration, Lumba Bayabao was called Maguing.

²²¹ According to a publication of the 16 Royal Houses (2003), the municipality of Madamba belongs to the *pangampong* Unayan and the border between Unayan and Masiu is Madalum. The same border can be found in Mednick (1965: 293). This change of border might stem from the fact that the demarcation sultanates are said to have not been able to decide to which *pangampong* they belonged and thus sometimes were counted in the one and sometimes in the other area. The Royal Houses also mention Munai as part of Masiu and not of Baloi.

UNAYAN				
1. SEBANGAN A UNAYAN (EASTERN UNAYAN)				
5 Municipalities	<i>Butig</i>	<i>Domalondong</i>	<i>Lumbaca-Unayan</i>	<i>Lumbatan</i>
	<i>Lumbayanague</i>			
2. SEDAPAN A UNAYAN (WESTERN UNAYAN) ²²²				
12 Municipalities	Balabang	Bayang	Binidayan	Calanogas
	Ganassi	Kapatagan	Malabang	Marogong
	Pagayawan	Pualas	Sultan Gumande	Tubaran
BALOI ²²³				
1 City	Iligan City			
22 Municipalities	Bacolod	Baloi	Baroy	Kapatagan
	Kauswagan	Kolambugan	Lala	Linamon
	Magsaysay	Maigo	Matungao	Munai
	Nunungan	Pantao Ragat	Pantar	Poona Piagapo
	Salvador	Sapad	Sultan Naga Dimaporo (Karomatan)	Tagoloan
	Tangcal	Tubod		

²²² According to a publication of the 16 Royal Houses (2003), Unayan includes the municipalities Lala, Koramatan (Sultan Naga Dimaporo), and Tubod in Lanao del Norte. Thus, large areas that are attributed to Baloi are claimed by Unayan. The publication does not mention Pagayawan and *Lumbaca-Unayan*, which may automatically be attributed to Unayan. Mednick (1965) did not mention areas belonging to Unayan in Baloi but included places in Maguindanao. He listed the following distribution of communities for West and East Unayan: (1) East Unayan: Bayang, Binidayan, Ganassi, Lumbatan, Madamba, Taratikan; (2) West Unayan: Butig, Pualas, Tubaran, and the 99 *lipongan* (dependent places) stretching southwest to the coast and taking in “Barira and Buldun in the Parang district of Cotabato” (p. 275). Mednick might also have referred to Barira, Buldon, and Parang of the Maguindanao Province.

²²³ The 16 Royal Houses (2003) do not mention Baroy, Kapatagan, Nunungan, Salvador, and Sapad in their publication, and they might thus either not be counted or belong to Unayan, since it “covers the South of Lake Lanao strictly from the Barira, Matanaog and Parang of Maguindanao Province and the long coastal area parallel to Illana Bay going Northwest up to Zamboanga-Lanao border.” Munai belongs to Masiu.

The first Lanao del Sur governor after the division was the younger brother of “Domocao,” Abdul Gafur Madki Alonto (1959-1967). Rashid Lucman, husband of the sister of “Domocao” Alonto, became congressman of Lanao del Sur (1962-1969). With the subdivision, Senator Alonto secured the province for the rule of the Alonto-Lucman families until the Marcos government supported their opponents, the Dimaporos.²²⁴

After Marcos’s downfall, the Dimaporos, coming originally from the *pangampong* of Masiu, retreated to Lanao del Norte — the *pangampong* of Baloi, giving way to the Alontos in Lanao del Sur. In interviews Maranao clan members, of clans which had been strong in Lanao del Norte before the Dimaporos arrived, complained that this political family is actually not from the area and that other clans and royal families hold the traditional authority in the place. Abreu and Rosa (2003: 15) report that the Dimaporo brothers, Naga and Ali, bought land in Lanao del Norte from a *datu* who sold it without the knowledge of his kin group. The latter only got to know about the sale when they were chased away from the land by the brothers, who were better armed than the locals were. Mohammad Naga Dimaporo was killed and the *rido* was still ongoing in 2000 (Gonzales 2000: 93).

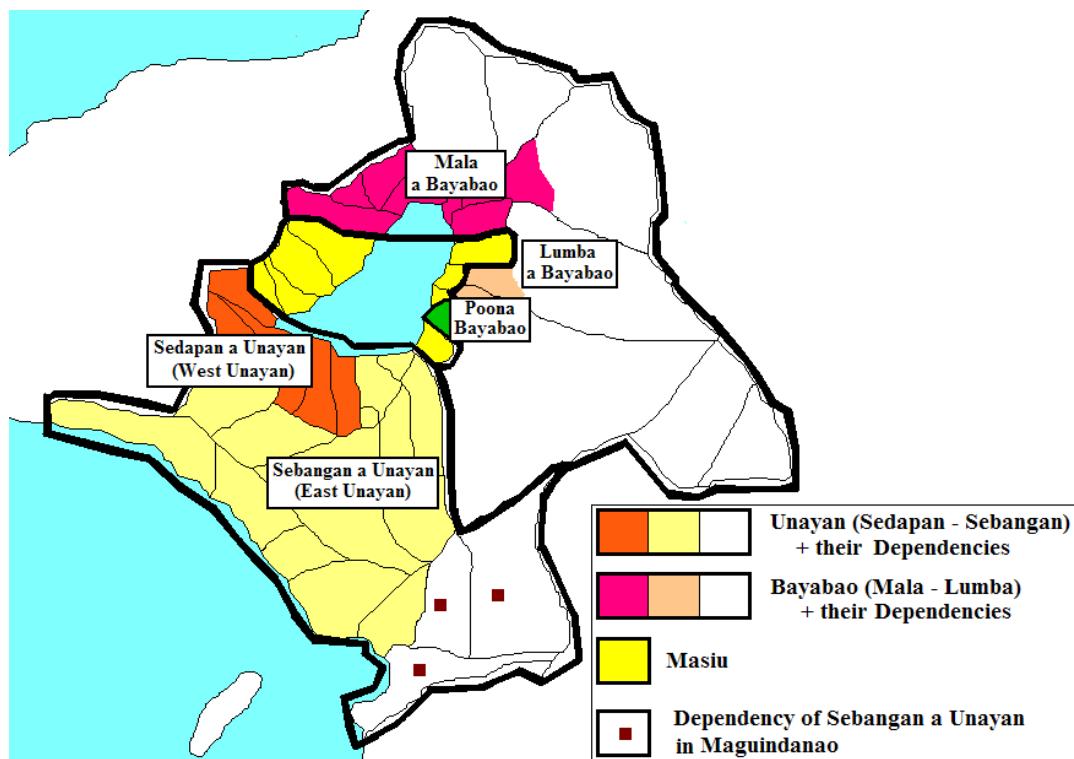
The political power of the Dimaporos developed out of their possession of vast plantations and fishponds, and trading ventures. Their Christian political opponent, Arsenio Quibranza, became finally an ally through intermarriages between the families. During the 2000 all-out war, the original inhabitants of the land supported the MILF and launched attacks against the Dimaporos, while the political clan supported the AFP. Thus the local conflict, about traditional land claims that could be traced back to the sultanate system, added to the confrontation between the MILF and the AFP, showing that ancestral land rights are still important and fueling the “no war, no peace” environment.

As the following maps illustrate, the regulation of which areas belong to which *pangampong* is not entirely fixed. Claims and belongings changed over the years, while areas of dependency vanished. The division into four *pangampongs* and the number (four) of Demarcation Sultanates nevertheless remained the same in every description. The first map shows traditional area claims by the *pangampongs* Bayabao, Masiu, and Unayan documented by

²²⁴ The new Lanao del Norte governor (who previously had been governor of the whole of Lanao) was the non-Muslim Salvador Lluch. He was followed the Maranao Congressman Mohamad Ali Dimaporo (1960-1965), who, in 1966 became the congressional representative the of province, while his vice-governor and opponent Arsenio Quibranza became governor. Their rivalry led to the development of local Muslim and Christian private armies in the 1970s.

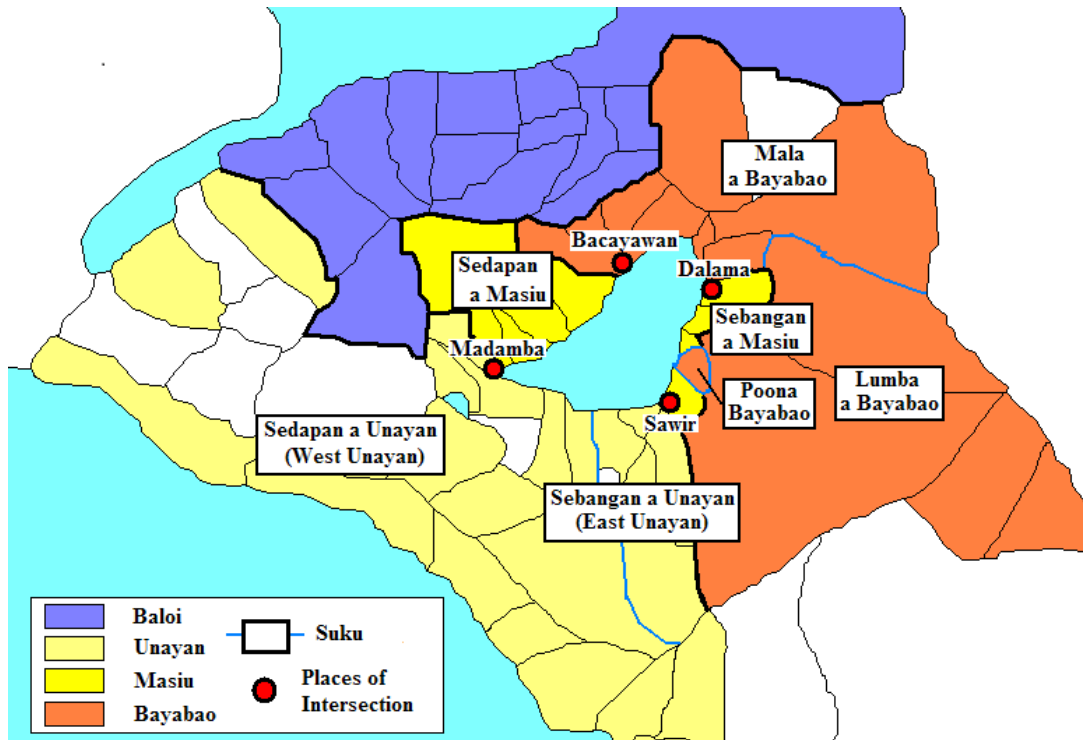
Mednick in the 1960s. Areas of dependency are included not only in Lanao but also in the Maguindanao area. The second map shows claims made by the 16 royal houses (as of 2003). This map does not include areas of dependencies, and does not divide the *pangampongs* into *sukus*, making the principalities rather unified constructions. In particular, the area claims of Unayan are huge in comparison to the other *pangampongs*. Baloi, which usually is equated with Lanao del Norte, lost some of its area to Unayan and Masiu.

It is not completely clear whether the traditional subdivisions were used as a basis to subdivide Lanao into its present form or if claims of the *pangampongs* lie at the root of today's subdivisions. There is, however, an influence of the two systems of land and political division, resulting in a fusion of both. The division of Lanao as well as the subdivision of Lanao del Sur into two political districts, which start and end at the Demarcation Sultanates of Sawir and Bacayawan, cutting Masiu into two parts but leaving Bayabao and Unayan whole, illustrates this (see map 13).



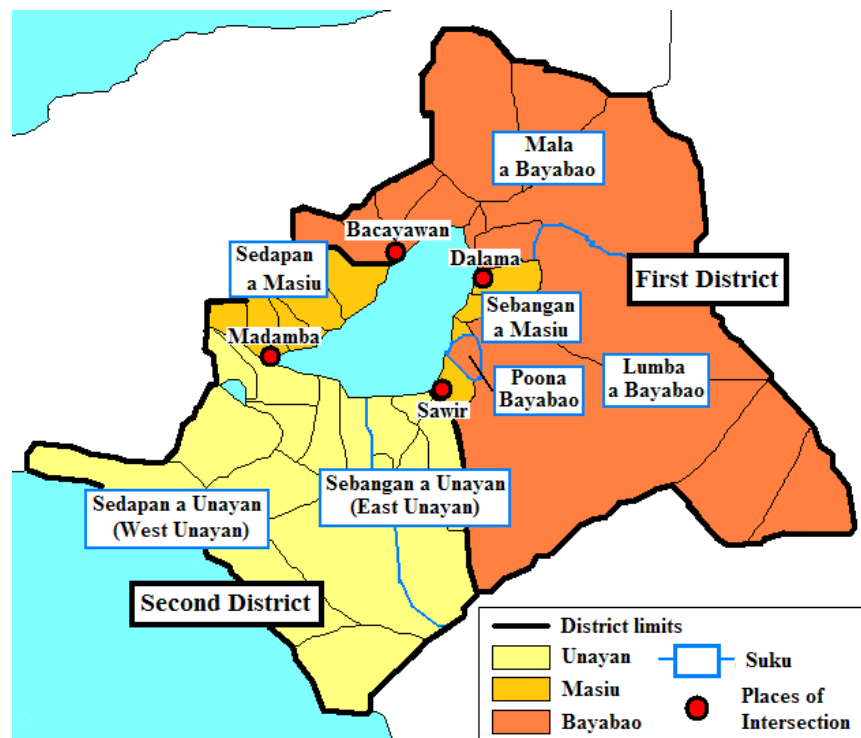
Map 11: Map of the Pat a Pangampong according to Mednick, 1965

Information on Baloi is not available for this period. Mednick mentions Barira and Buldun in the Parang district of Cotabato as being dependent on Unayan. In this map, it is only supposed that the described areas are meant, based on data of the original map. Handmade map by the author; proportions may not correspond entirely with reality.



Map 12: Map of the Pat a Pangampong according to the 16 royal houses, 2003

The *sukus* are not mentioned, making the *pangampongs* rather unified constructions. Handmade map by the author; proportions may not correspond entirely with reality. The white spots are not mentioned in this dissertation.



Map 13: Map of the Pat a Pangampong and the Political Divisions in Lanao del Sur, 2008

Handmade map by the author; proportions may not correspond entirely with reality.

B. Arrangement of Lineages

1. Order and Agreement

The *Pat a Pangampong* developed out of a *datu*-ship system into a sultanate system. This development is locally explained in relation to *taritib* and *igma*. These are Arabic notions meaning system, order or arrangement (*taritib*) and consensus (*igma*). The term *taritib* replaced the Maranao term *attoran* (Macabando 2008: 4). Macarampat (2008), a Maranao writer, explains the origin of *taritib*:

Allah first created *taritib* fifty thousand years before creating Prophet Adam (Alaihi Salam). *Taritib* is one of the foundations of Islam. Islam is *taritib*. When one follows *taritib*, he is rightly guided. When he is incomplete in it and extremist in it, as well as makes errors in it, then that is his injustice. *Taritib* is natural to all creatures and comprehensive to everything. Error is a great fault to Allah. *Taritib* is an Arabic term which means system, order, arrangement, life ways and mores. That is the relationship between man and his creator, the system of man in everything he does and his relationship to his community. (ibid.: 39)

According to the author, *taritib* has two forms. One is used by Allah to systematize himself, his creations, and the way to worship him. This *taritib* cannot be mended. The second *taritib* is the one of human beings as caliphs or vice-regents on earth. “That is the *taritib* which is to be added and be deducted of which measurement is the Book of Allah.” (ibid: 40).

The *taritib* of the *Pat a Pangampong* consists of geographical and social regulations within and between the sultanates and it divides them according to a hierarchical order of descent lines. On the one hand, the *pangampongs* are connected through the *taritib*, while on the other hand each *pangampong*, and accordingly its subdivisions (*sukus*) and sultanates, have their own *taritib*. The *taritib* includes titles and their duties, their place in the hierarchy, and the length of terms. A traditional *taritib* can also indicate special behavior towards the sultan or the *bai*. For example, one should not overtake a sultan when he is walking; one should bow when a sultan passes; a *bai* has to go in front; if a man enters a house where a woman is alone, or he would like to meet a woman he could marry, he has to pay an *adat* (share) to her family; a man crossing the path of a woman who is not his wife should always go to the side where the wind blows in order not to smell the woman (Cayongcat 1986: 23). *Taritib* also influences the outbreak and resolution of *ridos*, since it specifies the relationship and the hierarchy between different descent lines. Thus, an offense against someone from a high-ranking descent line may be perceived to be worse than one against someone from a lower ranking one, and the punishment would be different

accordingly. When the *taritib* is not followed, it may become a matter of *maratabat* (honor). *Taritibs* were orally transmitted; they have only recently been codified by some sultanates. Basically, the *taritib* can be seen as a tool to connect the multifocal power structure of the *Pat a Pangampong*. It sets the borders between the groups and defines their internal and external relationships. The single sultanates stay relatively independent in the organization of their own place. Thus, authority does not go much beyond kin groups or clans, which are the actual basis of the sultanate system. *Taritib* is flexible and can be amended through *igma*. *Igma* is said to be ideally realized via the “seven ways of perfect brotherhood”: consideration (*kapamagongoai*), respect (*kapanagadata*), glorification (*kaphoparoi*), giving weight (appreciation) (*kapuphunuda*), help (*kathatabanga*), protection (*kazisiapa*), and magnification (*kazuzulai*). When a major agreement is made, it is connected to a pledge on the Qur’an. Such agreements can be manifold; one example might be the creation of a new title and function within a sultanate.

The *taritib* existed in Lanao before the arrival of the Shariefs but it was changed afterwards based on a knowledge of Islam, Islamic leadership, and Islamic blood (meaning genealogy based on intermarriages with the Shariefs). Sultan sa Butig explains:

[The f]our Shariefs came, lived in this place, begot children, and introduced to us the sultanate system. The first to have the sultan title among the Shariefs who came in the east was Sharief Radia Baguinda. He was the first to have the title Sultan Sharief Radia Baguinda. Then came Sharief Abubacar, the first to reign as Sultan of [Sulu], the first Sultan of Jolo. From the Shariefs, because when the *taritib* and *igma* was made, they have indicated that it may be added or subtracted. Why did our parents prepare our *taritib* and *igma* and emphasize that it may be added or subtracted? They did it because they had precautionary measures of the happenings in the future. They were also determined that their leadership should be directed towards seeking the pleasure of our Creator, our only God, thus they included the phrase *omanan a lbatan*, which literally means “to add or to subtract” [*omanan a labatan*, add and subtract as needed], thinking that they might have included laws that are not good, and so this could be subtracted or deleted. On the other hand, people may think of good things that are useful, that are based on the teachings of our Holy Qur’an and Hadith, and so this can be added. This is the reason for the inclusion of the phrase “*omanan a lbatan*.” (Speech given in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

Maranao traditionalists see the *Pat a Pangampong* as the perfect defense and protection of Islam in Lanao. This is explained by the fact that Islam remained in the southern Philippines but vanished in Luzon and the Visayas. The “four kinds of defense for Islam” are: *taritib*, *igma*, *adat* (derived from the Arabic *ada*, customary law) and *bangsa* (genealogical connections)

(Macarampat: 40). All these regulating structures are judged as being in accordance with the Islamic creed.

Taritib are the old ways of the ancestors, handed down through the generations and *igma* are the newer agreements in the community, which became *taritib*. *Adat* are customs on which the community has agreed, for example regarding marriage or death. Additionally, there is *kitab*, which are regulations based on the Qur'an and the *hadith*. *Kitab* are more rigid than *adat*. In many cases, *adat* would be changed in order to fit *kitab*. The openness of *adat* rights to religious modifications also means that women cannot necessarily rely on traditional laws to prevent restrictions through Islamic law.

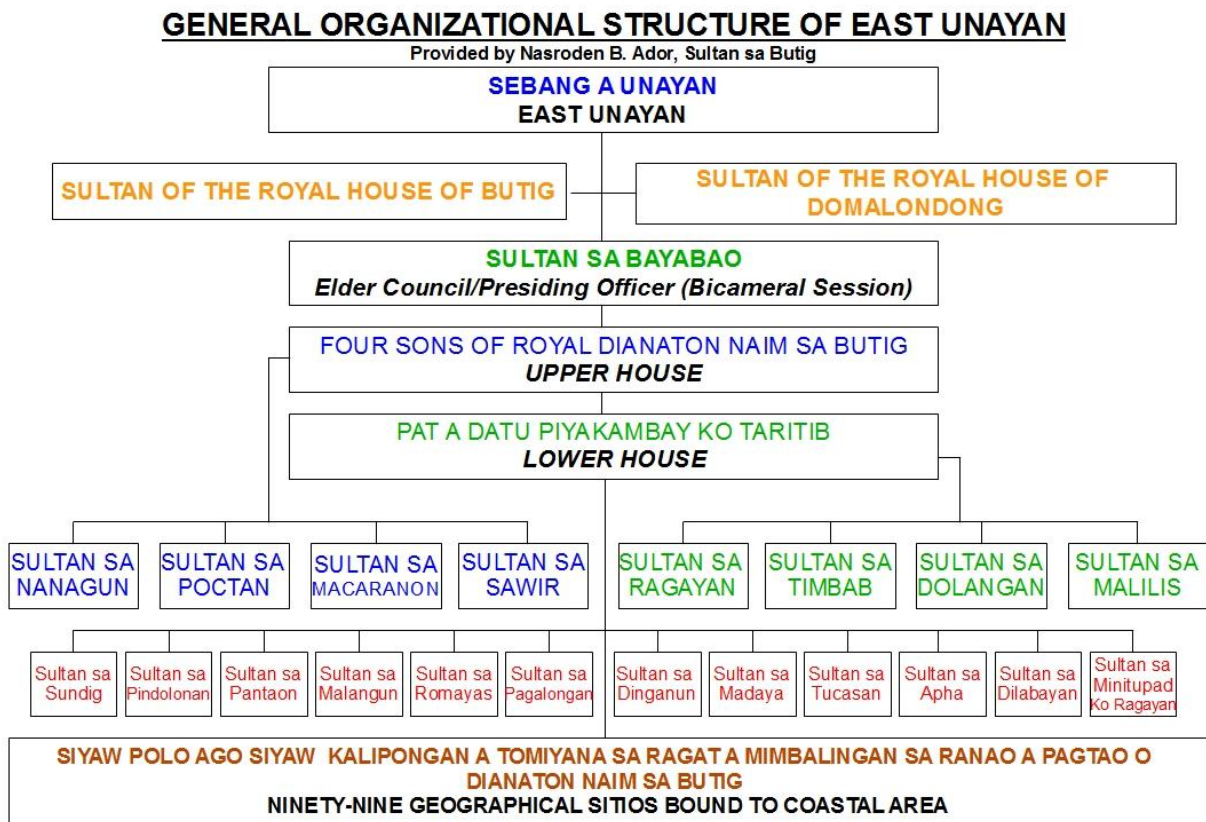
Igma is valid when it is based on *kitab* and *taritib* (Saber and Tamano 1985-86: 117). *Bangsa*, the genealogical connection to the Shariefs linked to rights to places, serves as the main justification for leadership in a sultanate. Mednick (1965) writes that high-ranking descent lines were seen as *kabarakat* (sacred) (1965: 306). Still today, it is said that those who break the *taritib* risk becoming cursed. A *datu* recounts the following incident:

For example, there was a case of one claimant *bai a labi*, which was forcibly enthroned as *bai a labi* even though it was not her turn. People were saying that she could suffer the curse of her ancestral spirits, *kaga ba'an*, because she violated the rules of succession to the detriment of public interest. Thereafter many bad things happened to her family: she entered into an affair with another man and her husband lost his job, followed by a divorce, loss of credibility within the community, wealth and prestige. The husband could not exercise his *maratabat* and retribution because the wife belongs to a major clan. To compound the problem, her husband married another woman, his first cousin, and declared her as *bai a labi* . . . against the will of claimant clans, the sultan and other *datus* of the sultanate. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

The remaining weight of this traditional concept reflects itself also in several stories about persons who enthroned themselves against the *taritib* and subsequently died as the result of a curse.

2. Eastern Unayan as Example of an Autonomous Sultanate

Each *suku* has its own *taritib*. Whereas in *taritibs* of the 1960s, *apos* and *agamas* as well as their hierarchical organization were named (ibid: 207), recent ones are publicly presented in the style of a modern government. Titles and their hierarchical order are shown but not the *apo*, the *agama*, or the place of origin. To illustrate this recent form of representation, I will describe the system of the East Unayan *suku* as the Sultan sa Butig presented it in more detail.



Graphic 9: Organizational Structure of the East Unayan *suku*

Information provided by the Sultan sa Butig, 2008.

On top of the hierarchy in East Unayan are the chief executives, sultans of the Royal Houses of East Unayan (Butig and Domalondong). Next in line is the (usually mixed-gendered) council of elders (*pelokelokesen*), which is bicameral. The upper house consists of descendants of the four sons of Datu Dianaton Naim sa Butig. These are *datus*, but they cannot become *panoroganan*.²²⁵ The lower house consists of descendants of four of the 28 Lawmakers. The 12 sultans who do not have legislative power but whose task is to inform the descendants of the *apo* about the laws that are to be implemented comprise the next level below them. Finally, there are the 99 small units (*kalipongan*) along the coastal area. The number refers to men of Dianaton Naim of Butig, who inhabit units within the domain of Eastern Unayan.

²²⁵ The reason why the four sons of royal Datu Dianaton Naim sa Butig cannot claim the highest titles is that Dianaton Naim, the *apo* of Butig, married two times. With Paramata Asia, whose genealogy can be traced back to Sharief Qudarat (and thus to Sharief Kabungsoan), he had five daughters, one of whom, Saimbo, is the *apo* of the titleholder of Sultan sa Butig. With Insano sa Bayabao, he had five sons; the descendants are today the Five Datus of the Upper House.

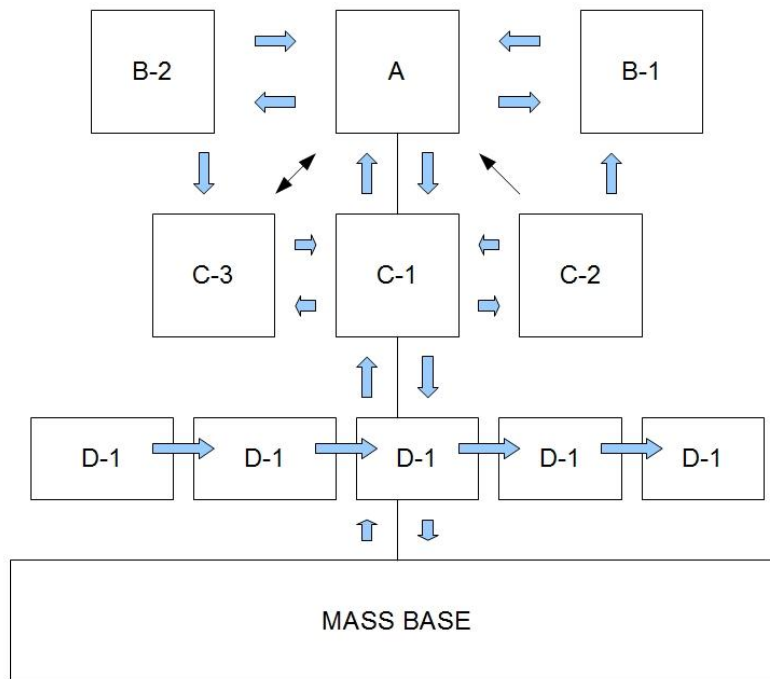
The two chief executives are from the descent lines that are supported. They derive their ancestry from *apos* who have the right to the title Sultan sa Butig and Sultan sa Domalondong. The Council of Elders normally consists of the parents — male and female — of those who have a claim on a title. Each clan with a claim on a title has its own elders who decide which clan members will carry the title. When there is more than one clan that has claims, a consensus is needed. The *apo* of the Sultan sa Bayabao, the presiding officer in East Unayan of the Council of Elders, was a brother of Lilangun, the mother of Punduma and the four Lawmakers who decided to support the first *panoroganan*. The Sultan sa Butig provided no further information on the 12 *datus*, except that six of them belong to Butig and the others to Domalondong. This is the general *taritib* of East Unayan. Its arrangement is based on lineages of the *apos*, even though those may have been recognized only recently, like the Sultanate of Domalondong. There are further *taritibs* in smaller sultanates in East Unayan that are subordinated to the Royal Houses and that trace themselves back to this *taritib*. Women in this hierarchy are not particularly mentioned as representatives even though it is usually the case that there are women among the elders as well as counterpart female titleholders (each male title has a female counterpart).

3. One Arrangement for the Pat a Pangampong

Every domain has its own *taritib* but there is also a common structure for the whole *Pat a Pangampong*. Sultan Mansing Macabando sa Marinaot, chairman of the Marawi Sultanate League, explained that the sultanates have one law, even though the protocol might be different in each unit. Every sultanate has its own set of sultans, *bais*, and *datus*, but it is against the *taritib* to establish another royal house or *mbabaya* without the consensus of the 16 and 28. Thus, there is a certain control and an all-encompassing *taritib*.

According to Macabando, the structure of the *Pat a Pangampong* has the following order. On top, the 16 Royal Houses have authority and supervision over their respective domains. They are assisted by the 28, who make up the legislative body, dealing with local customs, traditions and laws, which are then brought to the Royal Houses and, after them, the Council of the Elders and the Board of Advisors. The two latter arbitrate, mediate, and recommend a solution in case of conflict or misunderstanding between the Royal Houses and the 28 or any other sector.

Structural Chart of the four Pangampongs



- A : Royal House of the Royal Sultan who is the Chief Executive of the Pangampong (16)
- B-1: House of the Policy Makers (28)
- B-2: House of Olamas as the Legal and Religious Advisers and Judges
- C-1: House of the Council of Elders equivalent to a Executive Secretary and Judiciary
- C-2: House of the Landmark Sultanates (4)
- C-3: House of the Ladies (Bae, Bai a Labi and Putri Maamor)
- D-1: House of the Board of Advisers

Graphic 10: Structural Chart of the *Pat a Pangampong*

Information provided by Sultan Mansing Macabando, chairman of the Marawi Sultanate League, February 9, 2008, MSU Marawi.

Macabando (2008) compares the structure of the *Pat a Pangampong* to the national government. The royal houses and the *mbabaya* are, respectively, the chiefs of the executive and the legislative powers, while the *ulama* constitute the judiciary. Thus, in case there is a violation of established rules, the *mbabaya* will “bring the matter to the attention of the *panoroganan* for him to call for a council. After the council’s deliberation, they will submit their findings to the *ulamas*” (p. 7). The *ulama* are classified into three groups: imams, kallis [qadis], and gurus. The *imam* is the head leader “in the observance and performance of the five pillars and the six articles of faith in Islam. He is the ultimate keeper and custodian of the mosque and the executive

authority about the Islamic religious affairs in the community.” The *kalli* has the authority in matters of justice based on *sharia* law. The *guru* is the teacher of Islamic knowledge.

In the *Pat a Pangampong*, women are also titleholders. This tradition goes back to the times of the *datu*-ships. Female as well as male titles experienced a change when being transferred from the *datu* into the sultanate system. The major male titles were *ayonan* or *simbaan*; later they changed into sultan. The major female titles were *bai*, *potri*, and *paramata*. Today *bai a labi* is the highest female title, signifying a major royal lineage within the sultanate, the lineage of Sharief Kabungsoan and the right to a certain place, which is added to the title. The descendants of a *bai a labi* have the right to be crowned as sultan. Some titles of *bai a labi*²²⁶ are without any connection to the place, in which case a lower title indicates an absence of rights to the place. For example, the *bai a gaus* (finance) can become in some cases a *bai a labi a gaus* because financial recourses are highly appreciated in some sultanates. Nevertheless, the *bai a labi* of that place is a higher-ranking title.

The first female titles in the sultanate system were those given to a female relative of the male titleholder coming from the same *apo* (sometimes from different elders). In most cases, she was the sister of the titleholder. Major female and male titles were thus held by close relatives within one clan. Titles are inherited, bilateral, and rotational, and female titles do not depend on male titles. On the island of Pohnpei, Micronesia, the wife receives a title, which is the counterpart to the title of her husband, but she does not retain the title in case her husband dies (Keating 2000: 306). In Mindanao, the male and female titleholders may act more independently, both being supported by their respective kin groups.

Mednick (1965) writes that there were only a few female titles in comparison to male titles. They were mainly honorific and not recognized with the community at large in the manner of male titles (1965: 242). Female titles are still not recognized as much as male titles but there is a large quantity of them. The supposed change in number of female titles has many reasons. One reason may be that the number of women taking part in professional life has increased since the time of Mednick’s research. Since one major task of a titleholder is to contribute financially to community activities and social events of relatives, like weddings, a professional or rich person is preferred. Titles for both men and women go where influence is. Marcus (1984) likewise

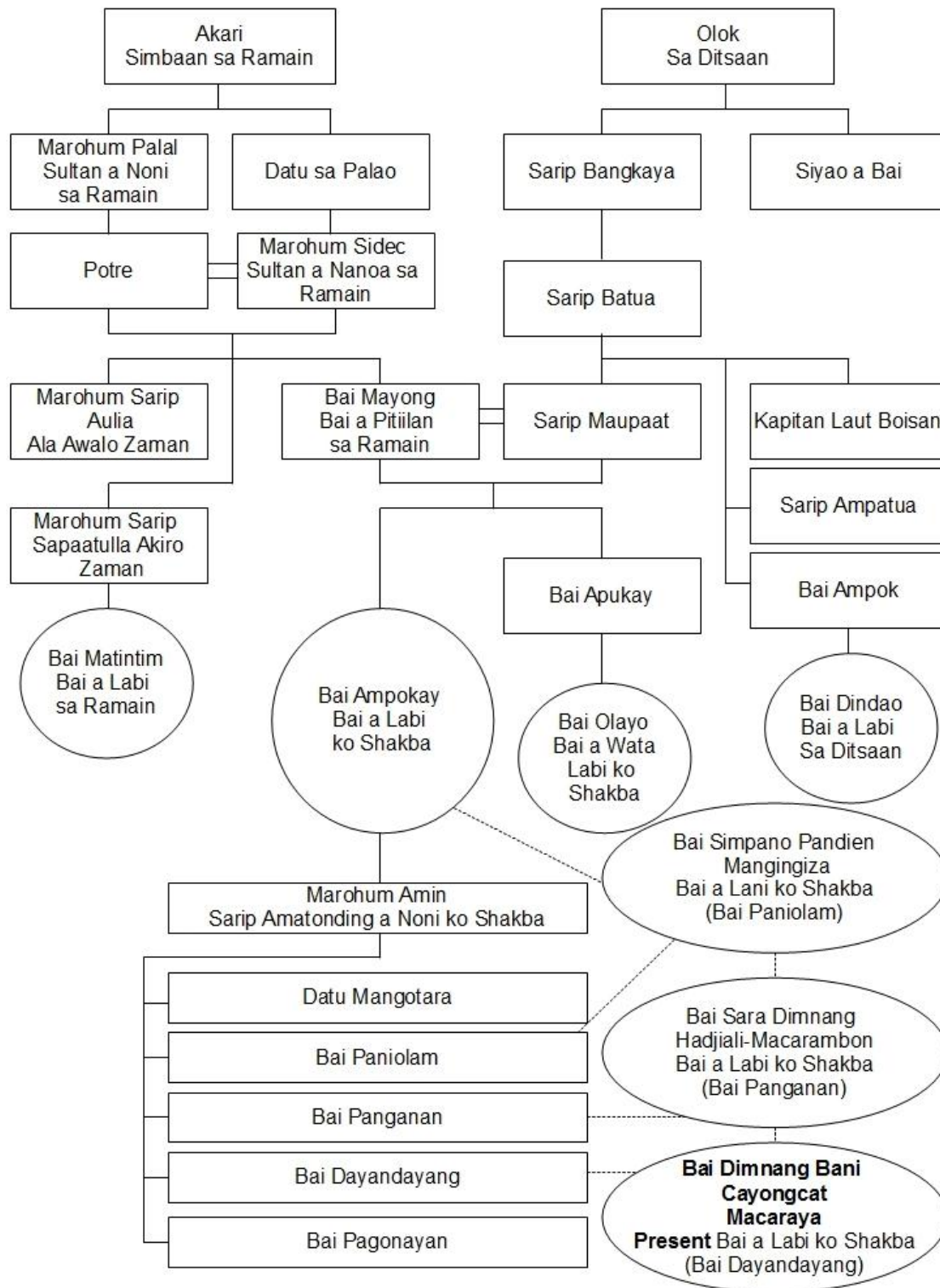
²²⁶ Royalty are convinced that initially there was only one sultan and one *bai a labi* per sultanate, but several additional titleholders for *bai* or *datu*. Today, there may be several different sultans and *bai a labis* in one sultanate.

observes for Tongans in the South Pacific Ocean that those who are dependent on the nobles make their “value” possible (see also Matsumoto 1989; Wolfowitz 1991).

One example for this is Baicon Cayongcat-Macaraya, one of the young women leaders working for a local NGO who later achieved a position at the office of the United Nations World Food Program in Iligan City. She quit her law studies during the 2000 all-out war and began working with victims in the Baloi region. Under her initiative and with the support of her NGO, 500 houses, six mosques, and five schools, once destroyed by fighting in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, were rebuilt (Gutoc 2008a). For her community work, she was offered two major titles: Bai a Labi sa Masiu and Bai a Labi ko Shakba. The first was conferred from her father’s side but since she has more contacts in Marawi, she decided to take a title from the *pangampong* Bayabao from her mother’s side.²²⁷ The chart below shows her genealogical connections to the first Bai a Labi ko Shakba and her place in the rotational system of inheritance. She has a rightful claim by birth but was also chosen because of her personal qualities as youth leader and professional.

²²⁷ When she occupied the title, the inheritance of the title was changed on her suggestion. Thus, she did not serve for a lifetime but only for six years, since there were others who were waiting their turn to serve the people. Under her, other titleholders of the region were enthroned, replacing old titleholders. Each of the new titleholders now serves for six years. The *bai a labi* is related to both Royal Houses in the area of her title (Ramain and Ditsaan), putting her in a good position to settle *ridos* based on her descent line connections.

Bai a Labi ko Shakba



Graphic 11: Genealogical Connections of the Bai a Labi ko Shakba

Information provided by the present Bai a Labi ko Shakba, who can trace back her ancestry to Bai Dayandayang, 2008.

The *bai* is the partner of the *datu* or sultan “in building, formulating and leading a sultanate community” (Macabando 2008: 7-A). Macabando defines the role of the *bai a labi* in relation to two of the wives of Prophet Mohammed, Hadrat Khadidia and Aisa, “who were always acquainted with all the problems in the community.” She can act in behalf of the sultan, in case he is not available, and be a leader in peace and in war, “like when Hadrat Rofaida was selected to lead a battle against the infidel and won the battle for the Muslims.”²²⁸ Further, she acts as “conciliatory in every dispute in behalf of the sultans and elders in the community” (ibid.).



Picture 9: Enthronement Ceremony

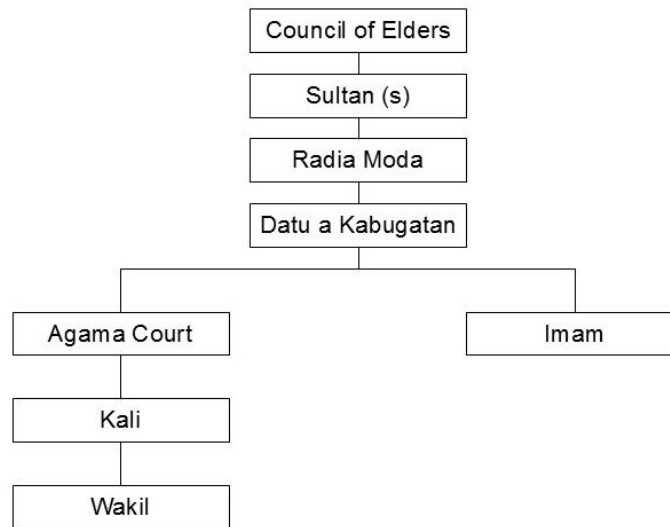
Bai a Labi sa Noni Amina Domato-Sarip and husband Sultan Taha Guro-Sarip. Photo kindly provided by the couple.

Whereas Macabando integrates female titleholders into the system of the *Pat a Pangampong*, they are ignored by most other sources when describing the authority system of the sultanate. The Royal House of Masiu published a list of the 16 *kalipa* of Gapao Balindong (who are mandated as the advisers of the Sultan sa Masiu and the Datu a Cabugatan sa Masiu), in which women are not included. In addition, the Maranao historian Tawagon (1987) does not include women in his structure showing officials on an *agama* level (they may, however, be included among the elders).

²²⁸ On the debate on female Muslim leadership and the participation of Muslim women in war and peace during the time of Prophet Mohammad, see Schröter (2008). For the active participation in battle of MNLF women, see Angeles (1998: 224).

THE AGAMA SHOWING TRADITIONAL OFFICIALS

By Manuel R. Tawagon



Graphic 12: Traditional Hierarchy on the *agama* Level according to Tawagon (1987)

The *radia moda* and the *cabugatan* (or *kabugatan*) are defined as the heir presumptive, crown prince, prime minister, or assistant of the prime minister, depending on the regulation of each sultanate. The *kali* (local version of the *qadi*) is the judge at the *agama* court and the *wakil* the legal counsel.

The Sultanate League of Marawi mentions in documents provided to me female titles only as minor titles, and official members of the League are mainly men. Women with titles, even though they belong to the sultanates, join meetings only when invited. In addition, Mednick, writing his dissertation about the *Pat a Pangampong* in the 1960s, stated that female titleholders had rather symbolic positions. He nevertheless added that women from the *datu* class, when older, were increasingly involved in community affairs:

After marriage, and as she grows older, a woman participates more and more in the informal channels of the society, particularly the kinship universe. She is the line of communication between scattered bodies of kinsmen, relaying requests for aid, mediating and smoothing out potential or actual conflicts, and arranging marriages. (Mednick 1965: 57-8)

Female titleholders, however, can have more than symbolic authority, especially if they are from a prominent clan or have an influential economic or political position. Also, the fact that titles are inherited bilateral, and rotational gives some women the chance to have influence since they are not directly related to the sultan and thus may have support from their direct kin. However, female influence on the community does not derive from the possession of a royal title alone,

which has a rather symbolic nature, but more from the woman's social, economic, and family background and qualities.

When a new sultan or *bai a labi* is chosen, they and other members of the clan might replace the set of titleholders of the former clan. A whole set might be up to 14 or more male and female titleholders for one sultanate who are crowned at once. The former clan might take other titles, since it is a rotational system. The rotational system means that there are several descent lines, originating from one ancestor. A certain title rotates among those lineages, and this is regulated through *taritib*. The titleholders can keep their titles for life or may agree on terms. In some cases, the title stays with one lineage since no better replacement can be found. When the set of titleholders changes, the former titleholders officially resign but keep their title even though it is not connected to their function anymore. In many sultanates, there is an heir apparent, a *cabugatan* or *radia moda* from another clan than that of the sultan. According to the rotational system of inheritance, it may be presumed that he will become the sultan after the former sultan dies. But this is not always the case, since sometimes the *cabugatan* may have the descent line but not the requisite means, local connections, experiences, or knowledge, for example because he lives in Manila. In consequence, a conflict can occur in which a person with a rightful claim but without the social connections will be challenged. A possible claimant to the title Sultan sa Marawi explains:

If the Sultan of Marawi will die right now . . . the next sultan . . . it might be succession, it might be a decision by the body. A decision from the body is for example that they will elect a person who is already experienced, has support in the community in the past, but is still fighting with a person who is in Manila who has no participation in every social activity to be the sultan. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

For women there are similar jealousies about titles. In some cases, claims by others are ignored and several enthronements of the same title by different families may occur. To prevent a conflict a new title can be invented. Clan feuds can break out because women are competing for a title. Carrying a title is a question of status. Even though the title does not itself confer authority, it provides status for women and men alike, not only for the titleholders but for the whole lineage, whether it is a male or female title. A *datu* comments on a statement made by a religious woman who complained about the harm the title of *bai a labi* had brought to the community. He explains the impact that jealousies about titles can have on the distribution of titles but also on social relations among relatives:

She [the *alima*] is referring to a spat between two close relatives, ten years ago, who vied for the same title as Bai a Labi of Bayang and this created animosity and disunity among the Lucmans, who took sides. The other claimant, the first party, insulted the other side as inferior in bloodline, which instigated the *maratabat* [status-honor] of the second party. An insult would shame a person and shame is worse than death. The embarrassment called for a violent act as revenge. The relatives of the second party swore to spare no expense, time and energy to prevent the first party from assuming the title of *bai a labi*. The rivalry caused such dissension and bad blood that the Council of Elders refused to name the next Bai a Labi of Bayang. The position is still vacant as of this writing. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

C. Clan Organization

1. Clans as the Basis of the Sultanate

The Sultan sa Marinaot explains *taritib* as following: on the one hand, there is the division into geographical areas; on the other hand, there is the hierarchical division of these areas according to genealogy. The hierarchical order includes the 16 Royal Houses, the 28 Lawmakers and the Council of Elders, followed by the clan. Every clan is led by elders.

Each unit under an elder devised a system of designation and recognized leadership assigning a title (*grar*) to a ruler, which effectively avoided interference and rivalry among a given unit. The arrangement will last, unless modified later by agreement of a given clan. (Macabando 2008: 5)

The elders decide who will carry a title, if new titles within a certain descent line will be added or subtracted, and how terms are arranged. When deciding, they rely on the *taritib* but this structure can be rearranged through *igma* if needed.

The sultanate system thus is based on clan structures, a connection which is manifested in the enthronement oath. The Sultanate Patani in Ragain is one of a collection of 12 *agamas* which had been founded by 12 relatives, named according to their number (*sapolo ago dowo ka agama: 12 agamas*) in Mala a Bayabao, and all are subordinated under the Sultanate of Ragain. When enthroned, the titleholders (male and female) have to pledge to deal in a proper manner — according to *taritib* and *igma* — with those clans that are higher in the hierarchy:

Because of our belief in the wishes of God, almighty Allah, in the choice of leaders and because of the descendants of the Sultan a Pithi-ilan sa Patani, I accept the trust and confidence in our designation as leaders of our community, to the best of my ability, which is in accordance with Islam and in defense of the truth, to protect our community from humiliation and harm. To preserve the dignity of our bloodline, may they take the right path, the honest way in dealing with the bigger

clans, bigger principalities. May God have mercy on us; may he give us strength and power to preserve the legacy of the Sultan a Pithi-ilan sa Patani. (Translated from Maranao by Norodin Alonto Lucman, Marawi City, 2008, translation modified)

Despite the overall *taritib* of the sultanate system, the single sultanates are autonomous, though in times of crisis or need the ranks are ideally closed and the hierarchy accepted. Otherwise, the order is rather symbolic. It is not a top-down but bottom-up organization where the family is the smallest unit of decision-making, being part of a multi-centric clan society. The clan and inter-clan relationships are particularly important in crucial moments of a person's life, like marriage, the beginning of a job, illness, and death, and in times of conflict, and are also important in determining the order of supporters and supported in traditional and political leadership.



Photo 10: Enthronement Ceremony, Sultanate of Patani, Lanao del Sur
Photo by author, 2008.

The sultanate system is based on clan arrangements. The clan, however, is not dependent on the sultanate structure and has its own regulations. Mednick (1965) gives an introduction to the basic clan (*tonganai'i*) organization in the *Pat a Pangampong*:

[*Tonganai 'i are*] all persons who are related to each other within the fourth degree of consanguinity (*tongod makapat*), that is, who share at least one set of great-great-great-grandparents (antecedents in the fifth ascendant generation above an ego) . . . They form the largest and most inclusive group of kinsmen. This group comes into being through the combination and recombination of kinship circles termed *mbota 'a*. An *mbota 'a* is a three generational group traced down from ego's grandparents. It includes the two sets of grandparents and their descendants, but does not include the siblings of the grandparents and their descendants. To this *mbota 'a* is added the *mbota 'a* of each of his parents, and this grouping is known as the *mbota' mbota 'a*. This group then starts with ego's great-grandparents, but not their siblings, and includes the siblings of his grandparents and their descendants. Such a descendant in ego's generation is termed a *tongod makadoa*, relative or cousin of the second degree. The child of such a cousin would still be in ego's *mbota' mbota 'a* and be referred to as *pakiwata 'an sa tondog makadoa*. The same child, however, would not be a part of the *mbota' mbota 'a* of ego's offspring since the relationship between them would then be that of *tongod makatelo* (relative or cousin of the third degree).

The effective kin group for most intents and purposes is the *mbota' mbota 'a*, that is, persons who are no more distantly removed from each other than as "relatives of the second degree" *tongod makadoa*. (p. 77)

The effective kin group is the *mbota mbota 'a* (or *mbata bataa*), which is also defined as *opakat* or *saksakb*, partnership on a larger scale. It covers all aspects of cooperative survivability as a communal component. Clan members, especially those living in one *agama* (or *barangay*), are ideally connected by mutual support (*kapamagawida* or *awid*) or mutual help (*katatabanga*). The mutual help, or reciprocity (*awidan*), that the clan provides is regulated by *kokoman a kambhatabata 'a* (the law of kinsmen) (Intuas 1996: 93). This is among others applied in times of conflict or when, in rural areas, clan members help each other in farm work (Fianza 2004: 22, 33). Saber (1979) explains that in a clan the "roles shift alternately between interacting members and kinship groups performing traditional duties" (p. 105). For instance, the civil elders are supported by their religious counterparts in their activities; in turn, the latter receive support from the former in religious affairs. While elders are supported by non-elders, elders also help non-elders in activities that enhance the membership strength of the kinship group. For instance, if a clan member contracts a marriage to someone from another descent line to bring about an alliance with a certain clan, the elders, when in agreement, support him or her by contributing to the ceremonial expenses of the celebration (*ibid.*).

Clanship is bilaterally inherited. A clan member might thus belong to four different descent lines. His or her name is mentioned along with a number of family names in case there is

a public announcement.²²⁹ During marriage ceremonies, eight families are given turns to speak and explain their roots and connections to other families and clans, ostensibly to assure all that the soon-to-wed couple comes from an illustrious family background. According to a Filipino naming custom based on the Spanish system, a child has two last names: the one used as middle name comes from his mother, which was the last name of her father. The one used as the last name, refers to the father, and was the last name of his father. When a male child marries, he keeps these two last names. In the Maranao case, he might also add the two other last names of his parents. If a girl marries, she normally loses the last name of her mother (her middle name) and the name of her father becomes her middle name the name of her husband (the one he inherited from his father) becomes her last name. The female line, however, can still be mentioned, especially if the line is of importance. This is even encouraged, since the purpose of a clan is to broaden the kin relations to other families for political and strategic reasons. This means the official naming system is not connected to clan membership, since one belongs to the clan up to the fourth generation, no matter whom one has married and what last name one officially carries. Disoma (1999) writes that Maranaos accept the country's surname system for official purposes but that it does not have an even pattern. One can take the surname of the father, grandfather, or a well-known kin member (1999: 74). Some last names are clan or sub-clan names. In some cases, a person can be registered with one surname in one *barangay* and with another surname in the next *barangay*, based on bilateral descent line rights to land and, hence, to voting (Warriner 1975a: 78).

Marriage politics are designed ideally to strengthen one's family and clan connections. One can marry exogamously in one generation but the next generation normally marries back into the clan or family. The male offspring of the Alontos intermarried with the Adiongs and Alangadis and occupied important political positions for two generations in Lanao del Sur. Their female offspring intermarried again with the Adiongs and now their male progeny occupy the most important political posts in the ARMM and in Lanao del Sur.²³⁰ Inter-marriages with members of other families from the same or higher rank are one way to keep a hierarchical

²²⁹ If a *datu* gets married, the welcoming banner might state all the names of the immediate families. If the family prefers the Arabic version, this would be: given name; name of the sub-clan or family one belongs to, for example Alos, Adiong, Alonto; *ibn* (son); first name and last name of father.

²³⁰ Other Alontos who occupy political positions are Cabib Alonto Tanog, mayor of Pualas; Bai Normallah Alonto Lucman, who became the Liberal Party provincial chairman in Lanao del Sur (2009); Norodin Alonto Lucman, deputy governor on Muslim Affairs of ARMM (2010); and several young Alontos like Assemblyman Ziaur Alonto Adiong, Assemblyman Yasir Alonto Balindong, Board Member Alexander Boyet Alonto, and Board Member Che Alonto Balindong.

structure. Marriages between cousins, also on the first level, are no exception and are another way to maintain high status. Clan endogamy is not sufficient in maintaining a high descent line status; one has also to have kinship relations to other high-ranking clans all around the lake.

It is the task not of a single person or family but of a *mbota mbota'a* to defend and nourish a bloodline in a certain community or principality. Thus, the marriage rule is rather general: Maranaos should marry among their ethnic group. However, especially among political clans, strategic marriages involving particular descent lines are made to uphold the status and strength of the kin group. The Alontos, for example, are members of the lineage of the *Patka Inaan sa Maul* (the Four Matriarchs of Maul). Bai Etha, Bai a Labi a Makadmpas, who lived at the turn of the eighteenth century, headed the matriarchs.²³¹ Her descendants branched out to different sub-clans, which number about 5,000 members (as of 2008). The family claims that they and the Alangadis were the ones initially occupying important pre-colonial posts in Mala Bayabao. To strengthen this position, they intermarry with other important families, not only from their own clan but from all around the lake. The political connections of the Alontos today are stabilized by intermarriages with powerful political families from the same area like the Balindongs,²³² the Macarambons,²³³ the Pacasums,²³⁴ and in particular the Adionsgs. In many provinces in the Philippines, dominated by family politics, a family occupies in tandem the governorship and a seat in Congress. *VERA Files* explains the importance of this:

²³¹ Bai Etha was the daughter of Datu Tato and Bai a Pitiilan sa Maul (in Marantao), which means she was the descendant of local *datus* and *bais*. According to local transmissions, Bai Etha participated in battles against foreigners and tribal enemies and ordered the assassination of the Sultan of Sulu, who was accused of conspiring to kill the Sultan of Maguindanao. Etha supported her uncle, Sultan Alamada, who ruled Marantao during the years of Spanish incursions in Lanao. She was married to Datu Patao, son of Bai a Labi a Torogan sa Uato and great-grandson of Rilaola and Bai sa Osonan, descendants of Sharief Kabungsoan. The Marohombsar and Dimakuta-Mandangan clans also claim descent from this bloodline, which connected local *datus* with Sharief Kabungsoan. *Patka Inaan* in 2008 was headed by the Alontos and Aloz', who wielded political power for many generations. They are supported by the Alamada, Calacas, Casidar, Cadalay, Cornell-Gutoc, Dimalutang-Gubat, Disomimba, Guro, and Tanggote families, who emanated from the same bloodline.

²³² Representative Pangalian Balindong was a member of the MNLF and an assemblyman of the ARMM (1993-1996). Later he became representative of the 2nd District of Lanao del Sur (2007); a position to which he was re-elected in 2010. He is married to Jamela Malawani Alonto. In 2008, Hafsa Dimaporo Balindong married the newly elected assemblyman of the 1st District of Lanao del Sur, Ziaur Alonto Adiong. Ziaur is the youngest son of the late Lanao del Sur Governor Mamintal "Mike" Adiong and Hadja Soraya Alonto Adiong, while Hafsa is the daughter of Vice-Mayor Alinader Balindong and Hadja Omaima M. Dimaporo. Her grandfather is the late political kingpin Mohamad Ali Dimaporo. She is also related to Sultan Mohammad Naga Dimaporo on her mother's side and Sultan Picong Balindong on her father's side. Ziaur is the grandson of Senator "Domocao" Alonto and Princess Tarhata Alonto Lucman, and the youngest brother of Lanao del Sur Governor "Bombit" Alonto Adiong and ARMM Vice-Governor "Hooky" Alonto Adiong.

²³³ Benasing Macarambon was congressman from the 2nd District in Lanao del Sur for two terms (2001-2004; 2004-2007).

²³⁴ The family occupied several political positions in Lanao. See chapter three.

The posts of governor and representative are both crucial at the local level. Governors control local officials from mayors down to barangay captains and *kagawads* [member of the *barangay* Council] who constitute the political machinery that could spell victory in future elections. They also enjoy a sizable chunk of the internal revenue allocation, the chief source of revenue for many local government units. Members of Congress, in turn, control pork barrel allocations. (14 May 2010)

Representatives normally have to beg governors for political support, while the latter have to beg the former for pork barrel allocations. It is thus crucial that they either are party mates or have good working relationships. *VERA Files* further reports that at least 34 out of the 80 provinces in the Philippines are governed by such a tandem (*GMA*, 22 July 2010). The Alonto-Adiongs governed Lanao del Sur for a cumulative 19 years out of 64 (since 1946); the longest time a political family could hold the governorship in this province. In addition, they have held major political positions continually since 1992. However, they currently do not have one seat in Congress. Instead, there are intermarriages between leading political families holding congressional seats. Affinal relations can lead to financial and other support between different families. The Alontos, Lucmans, and Amai Disalongans are connected through marriage. They are categorized as political and religious clans as well as scions of the ancient royal houses. In case of danger, they can produce about 2,000 high-powered firearms at any given time in an emergency, “in order to discount other political families,” as a local *datu* put it.

Families and clans may be linked to certain classes. The Maranao writer Macarampat (2008) defines the classes in the *Pat a Pangampong* as the leaders, the *ulama*, the rich, and the poor. One can add the warriors. A clan is ideally connected by blood and affinity to all these different classes. Leading political clans today may have a well-developed network with access to many forms of authority; these can include traditional high-ranking titles or claims, political positions via networks linked to Manila (political clout), economic success, religious authorities, or rebels. All these elements can be included within the social and kin network of a powerful clan to stabilize their situation. A clan structure is not only connected by blood and alliances but also by its code of silence. A person will usually not give negative information on someone higher in the hierarchy of his or her clan, among other reasons because he or she would then have to fear retaliation. Thus clan members, and especially elders, can do things that normally would be considered as shameful, as long as they do not get publicly talked about, like, for example, engaging in secret love affairs, but also drinking alcohol, drug pushing, criminal activities, or vote buying. Indirectly some “lapses” are considered normal. Vote buying may jokingly be called

“poverty alleviation” since this is a way in which people get money from their political leaders. Other affairs are judged as of too low importance to risk getting involved in a conflict, even though they might be seen as shameful or wrong. An example is if a politician does not pay his or her non-Maranao employees, who then ask for help from relatives of the politician. The relatives may not confront the politician with his or her wrongdoings since this may be considered as an attack against the *maratabat* of the family and clan and not worth a confrontation.

In short, the clan structure is the basis of the sultanate. The latter organizes the former through genealogical hierarchies, which are, however, penetrable through strategic marriages and bilateral and rotational inheritance of titles. While the sultanate system has declined, clan structures on the *agama* level have remained strong. Political clans developed: they have the needed descent line status to enable members to belong to the “good people,” but do not need royal titles to justify their leadership claims.

2. Political Clans

The decline of the sultanates in lieu of governmental officials does not signify a decline of clan society but a shift from a clan system that was connected to a sultanate to a structure that is additionally connected to the national political system. The provincial government in Lanao del Sur includes a Council of Elders (a mixed group of women and men) and a Council of *Ulama* (consisting of segregated groups of women and men). Both assist the governor, who is, in the case of the Adiongs, from the Royal House of the area (Ramain, Mala a Bayabao). Leadership based on clan affiliations is maintained by political dynasties, political clout, and the support by the clan of its political candidates, as well as through intermarriages between prominent clans. Royalty alone does not enable one to become a leader. The material conditions changed with the introduction of a new political system giving more people access to political leadership, not foremost through genealogy but increasingly via economic, professional, educational, social, warlord, or religious authority. Leadership (political and non-political) and social security nevertheless rarely go beyond kinship groups and each group has its own representatives — be they be politicians or royalty, MNLF or MILF, an *alim* or a person of means or with political clout. Decisions are mainly made in the framework of a family or clan, not based on the larger community. Thus supporter-supported, or “patron-client” relationships are important and have to be frequently cemented by those who would like to remain in leadership. There have been only rare and very limited cases when one system, clan, or person could claim authority over all the

others. One example is that of the Paramount Sultan Rashid Lucman, who combined political and traditional power with leadership in the rebellion for a short time. He nevertheless was not successful: he had to leave his political post and the rebellion was taken over by the younger generation.

Power among political clans is partly maintained through intermarriage, thus through the stabilization of relationships and the support of several lineages. A decline in political importance of a family can be due to a change in material conditions, intermarriage, connections, or support by Manila, as well as the influence of the Islamic resurgence movement. The Alontos initially took a stand against the arriving American colonial forces joining the independence movement. Later, they became *amigos* and occupied political posts during the American period, in the time of the Japanese, and after Independence.²³⁵ During the Marcos period, the Alonto rival and Marcos crony Mohamad Ali Dimaporo (1976-1986) governed for ten years in Lanao del Sur (Bentley 2007: 246). There were intermarriages between the Alonto Lucmans and the Dimaporos. In order to settle a *rido*, the son of Rashid Lucman was married when he was eleven years old to a relative of Ali Dimaporo. However, the influence of the Alontos could not be restored during this time. After Marcos was ousted from power in 1986, they occupied the governorship only for a short time after Tarhata Alonto Lucman was appointed governor (OIC 1986-1987). Saidamen Pangarungan (Officer in Charge (OIC) 1987-1988) then replaced her, to keep the peace in Lanao del Sur between the Alontos and the Dimaporos. Saidamen Pangarungan, when he was elected (1988-1992), was said to have broken the rule of the traditional elites. This is only partly true since his family — known as American *amigos* (Madale 1997: 144) — also had relationships with local royalties and politicians. He married Princess Johayrah Diamond Ali Pacasum, Bai a Labi a Gaus sa Ranao, who in 1978 became the first Maranao assemblywoman, coming from a prominent political family from Baloi. Pangarungan held the governorship only for one term; he was followed by Mahid Mutilan, from the religious OMPIA Party. Mutilan governed for three terms, between 1992 and 2001, before becoming ARMM vice-governor (2001-2005). The growth of religious parties was possible after the end of the Marcos dictatorship when democratic

²³⁵ Sultan sa Ramin Alauya Adiong Alonto was senator in 1934-35, 1941-1945 and 1946-1947. His son, Ahmad “Domocao,” became Lanao governor under the Japanese occupation in 1942, then congressman from Lanao (1954-1957) and later senator (1955-1961). His second son, the attorney Abdul Gafur Madki Alonto, became Lanao governor for eight years (1959-1963 and 1963-1967); his son in law, Rashid Lucman, congressman of Lanao for seven years (1962-65 and 1966-1969); and his daughter, Tarhata Alonto Lucman, Lanao del Sur governor (1971-1975). Tarhata Alonto Lucman was repeatedly engaged by her family to respected Maranaos but she broke off all the wedding plans because she wanted to marry a man of her choice. Finally, she married her mentor, Sultan Rashid Lucman (Gutoc 2008a).

processes enabled oppositional parties to take part in elections (see McKenna 1990). However, after several years, the traditional political families made a comeback in politics, replacing the religious parties. The Alonto-Adions entered Congress in the 1990s with Mamintal “Mike” Adiong Senior (1992-2001), and were soon followed by others.²³⁶

Table 7: The Return of the Traditional Political Families

Families	Person	Elective post Lanao
Alonto	Normallah Alonto Lucman, the Daughter of Tarhata Alonto and Rashid Lucman	Lanao del Sur Vice-Governor 1995-1998
Adiong (married to an Alonto)	Mamintal “Mike” Adiong Senior ²³⁷	Lanao del Sur Governor 2001-2004 (died in office)
Alonto-Adiong	Ansaruddin-Abdulmalik Alonto Adiong Son of Mamintal “Mike” Adiong Senior	ARMM Vice-Governor 2005-2009 ARMM Governor 2009
	Mamintal ‘Bombit’ Alonto Adiong Junior Son of Mamintal “Mike” Adiong Senior	Provincial Board Member 1996-2001 Lanao del Sur Governor 2007

In Lanao del Sur, there has been a return of traditional political families into high-ranking provincial posts since the 2000s. A similar development can be observed for the ARMM, a change of authority that went along with a decline in MNLF and religious representatives.

In order to win local elections, political connections to Manila are not sufficient: in fact, elections are in large part clan affairs. Before the elections in Lanao del Sur in 2007, political clans connected to the Alonto-Adiong families gathered to bring a change to the political leadership in the province and to regain the governorship. Mamintal “Bombit” Alonto Adiong posed his candidacy at this meeting and other clan members announced their support. A participant remembers the gathering:

Before the 2007 elections, as chairman, I called on the four major clans, as clan chairman, for a general meeting at the JPI [Jamiatul Philippine Al-Islamia]

²³⁶ Mamintal “Mike” Adiong recovered the Lanao del Sur governorship in 2001 after Mutilan had finished his third term and kept it until 2004, when he died the day of his proclamation and was followed by his vice-governor the *alim* Basher “Mustaqbal” Manalao.

²³⁷ He became congressional representative of the 1st District. The Alonto-Adions are descendants of the sultanates in Mala a Bayabao. Alauya Adiong Alonto, the grandfather of Mamintal’s wife, Soraya, had been the Sultan of Raman, one of the 16 Royal Houses.

quadrangle. It was attended by more than 3,000 people, mostly clan and ward leaders, professional and women leaders. [The clans represented were:] Patao-Etha (Alonto and Alos Clans), Darnding-Purad (Adiong Clan), Maruhom Baraguir (Alangadi Clan), Malawani Clan. I asked each clan to speak and give [a] status report whereupon they granted my request and spoke about the state of affairs of their respective clans. Speakers lamented the lack of unity and selfishness of Alonto clan leaders that led to its deterioration as a major political clan. Most speakers spoke about the glorious generations of the Alontos who produced Senator Alauya Adiong Alonto, Datu Birua Alonto [first elected mayor of Dansalan 1938-1940], Senator “Domocao” Alonto, governors Madki Alonto and Princess Tarhata Alonto-Lucman, wife of the late Sultan Rashid Lucman, whose leadership and influence not only touched the Mindanaoans but the entire country as well. The Alonto leaders were instrumental in introducing Muslim Mindanao to the Islamic world thus becoming part of the international Islamic community. The Alontos were instrumental in organizing Islamic nationalist movements, sending Islamic scholars to the Middle East for Islamic studies in Egypt and Saudi Arabia since 1955, guerilla trainees to Malaysia and Egypt and building state universities and schools to educate the Muslims in Mindanao. This was the beginning of Islamic resistance movement that gave birth to Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), now a major armed movement dedicated to the objective of creating an independent Islamic state in Muslim Mindanao.

In the speeches that followed, it was noted that there was widespread discontent that the Alonto clan had retrogressed into a supportive role in politics, meaning “pagawid,” a condition that dishonors the memory/maratabat of the Sultanates of Ramain and Bayang. And that the clan should put up a candidate for governor of the province thus restoring the honor of the clan as “pagawidan,” supported, as in the past. The people clenched their fists and emotionally pledged support to an Alonto as candidate for governor. Thereupon Mamintal “Bombit” Alonto Adiong, Junior stood up and announced his candidacy as governor of Lanao del Sur. He announced that his family will use up all its economic resources to sustain the campaign and win the election. His mother, Bai Soraya Alonto Adiong, tearfully supported her son’s declaration and pledged that her remaining assets and wealth will be used for the honor of the clan. The Sani clan of Marawi [Asgar Sani is the Sultan sa Marawi], in-laws of “Bombit” Adiong, also declared full financial and manpower support to his candidacy. “Bombit” Adiong won as governor of Lanao del Sur in the 2007 national and local elections. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

A collection of clans might decide whom to vote for but usually they do not have influence with other descent lines. The candidate may get about 90% of the votes in certain areas, but few votes in others. In efforts to win larger support, intermarriages, vote buying, which is covered under the notion of “giving *kandori*,” as well as shootouts are rampant during elections (see chapter one).

Clan and family politics also had their effects on the new ARMM government. According to Maulana “Bobby” Alonto, a member of the MILF peace panel and of the Alonto clan, the

ARMM government developed through the downfall of the Ampatuans and the rise to power of the Adiong-Alontos “from barbarism to mediocrity” (Alonto 2010). Although less violent, family politics remain an issue. Thus by August 2010, several offices in the ARMM were headed by Maranaos, mainly relatives of acting Governor Ansaruddin Adiong.²³⁸ The ARMM even considered moving its head office to Marawi City. Appointments also involved Maguindanao province, where Adiong was responsible for choosing an OIC member for the governorship after the 2009 massacre. His choice, backed by his Council of Elders, was Datu Gani Biruar, husband of Bai Annissah Alonto. The public campaign by 16 Bangsamoro civil organizations did not succeed in the efforts to place in office Ina Ambolodto, Maguindanao vice-governor and first female (acting) governor of the province.

II. The Importance of Status

A. Datu Society

1. *Competitive Equality*

Mednick (1965) describes the different classes that existed when the sultanate system first developed in Lanao, before the colonial interventions. On top of the traditional system was the *datu* class, which included every Maranao having a claim on a title or being an actual titleholder. He emphasizes that the line between the actual titleholder and those having a claim to a title is a thin one:

All title claimants, and therefore all members of the *datu* class, have the obligation to maintain the communal status and the authority symbolized by the titles with which they identify, or are identified. Thus, all members of the *datu* class as actual or potential title-holders are leaders or supporters in the carrying out of the traditional order of the society as laid down in the organizational code, the *taritib*. (p. 52)

The *datu* class was distinguished from the other classes not only by its blood status but also by a certain lifestyle based on the heroes of the *Darangen*. Its members lived in a *torogan* or similar house, which was richly decorated with silk, trays, and boxes of copper, brass, silver, and gold. They had large households with supporters and slaves. The house was open for everyone and guests would be served with betel nuts. Community celebrations and gatherings of a secular and

²³⁸ Lininding Pangandaman, the first Maranao and the second ARMM governor (1993-1996), similarly appointed relatives and friends from his town to office. He thereby followed the politics of the previous governor, Zacaria Candao, but on a larger scale. When accused of nepotism, he argued that Candao had left him an empty office and that he had to put his own people in charge of sensitive departments in order to prevent further damage (see Gutierrez and Vitug 2000: 191).

sacred nature would take place in the *torogan*. The *datu* was expected to contribute financially to community celebrations, the building and maintaining of the mosque, and other community projects. He would also give a financial contribution to his relatives in case of marriage, death, or a conflict settlement (ibid.: 55).

Unmarried male members of the *datu* class would follow and serve older members. Whereas married ones would not do physical labor, younger members helped in the fields on request. In return, they would be helped with their bride price, “the size of which itself is an index of his (and his family’s) status” (ibid.: 56). Unmarried women as well as men learned instruments, songs, and dances and would perform on public occasions. The instruments were played together, the women playing the *kolintang* and the men playing the *agongs*, the *debakan*, and the *bebendir*,²³⁹ but dancing together was not allowed. Women performed in front of men at weddings or other communal gatherings where the performance could also be understood as an “advertisement to would-be suitors for her future marriage” (Sani 1979: 109). Playing music as a mixed gendered ensemble decreased in its popularity during the times of the military occupation (martial law) (Disoma 1999: 70), but it can still be found, for example, in case a high-ranking foreign politician visits Marawi City.

Before colonial times the dress and behavior of a woman of the *datu* class was stylized. As children, royal women performed the *bayok* (the traditional song said to be derived from Bumbaran, the mystical realm of the *Darangen*), the chanting of verses from the Qur’an, and the *kakinikini* (walking gracefully) (Mednick 1965: 57). Unmarried woman (*raga*) rarely participated in family life or the ordinary life of the community. Women of high-ranking descent, especially when they were very beautiful and beloved, stayed in a room attached to the *torogan* in a *lamin* (woman’s dormitory tower, built to stand out from the *torogan*) accompanied by other women. The daughter of the titleholder remained there especially when guests arrived. In some families, a daughter lived in the *lamin*. In others, she hid there when someone visited but usually lived in a *gibon*, a bedroom close to the sleeping place of the sultan and his lady (Tawano 1979: 59). When a man was interested in her with the parent’s consent, he would come with his companions for a *kandadaonga* session, where verses are exchanged between the girl and the boy in which their

²³⁹ The *kolintang* consists of eight graduated sizes of small brass gongs laid horizontally on a stand called *langkongan*. Women usually play it but men can also play it on informal occasions. The *agong* is a brass gong. The two brass gongs *pemalsan* and *penanggisa’an* are played as a pair by two men. The *debakan* is a large drum carved out of wood, which is usually played by men. The *bebendir* is a gong that is smaller than the two main gongs. All instruments taken together form the *kolintang* orchestra. (Information provided by the Aga Khan Museum, Marawi City.)

feelings are indirectly expressed. After marriage, the girl moved with her husband to the common sleeping place in the *torogan* until they had their first child and the last part of the bride price was paid, after which they might move to the community of the husband. The scope of activity of a woman from the *datu* class was her home; she seldom left the house of her parents before marriage. This image became an idealized picture among *bai a labis*. The royal woman of the past is imagined by female royalty to have been highly respected, not having to do anything apart from beautifying herself, since she had slaves and, for her tasks in society she sent her representatives. Women of the traditional elite today instead see themselves rather as “working *bai a labis*.” Since one main factor in having a title is to be able to contribute financially to social events or relatives in need, *bai a labis* in Marawi City are in most cases professionals.



Picture 11: Maranao Courting Song

In this performance at a *pagana Maranao*, a traditional celebration to welcome guests, the woman “snobs” and plays hard to get. Photo by author, 2007.

The next social pre-colonial class, the *sakops* (freemen/followers/commoners), lived not in the *inged* (township), the place of the *datu*, but in little houses in the hearing range of the gong, which was used to assemble members of this class. Freemen subsisted mainly on agriculture,

sometimes on the land of the *datu*. They supported the latter and in return he offered his protection. When he needed armed men, the *sakops* were asked to come. The female followers, on whom little or no bride price was placed, served as second wives to the *datu*s; they were known as *sandil* (concubines). The *sakops* were not allowed to build their own mosques or to carry the color yellow, which was reserved for the royalty. During my research, the word *sakop* was not used and the former freemen I encountered mostly had royal ancestry and royal claims because of frequent intermarriages with the former *datu* class.

The *bisayas*, which means slave in Maranao,²⁴⁰ composed the lowest pre-colonial class. They did not have any claim on titles, nor relatives among Maranaos. Some *datu*s took slaves as their wives or married slave men to widows or to women with lesser marriageable qualities. The marriage would bind the slave to the family, especially when there were children. Slaves lived in the house of the *datu*, and slept and ate there, and they had to serve the *datu* and his family in the house or the fields.

The pre-colonial social classes could not be found anymore in the 1960s, when every Maranao claimed to have royal descent and social difference was partly constructed by lifestyle and not primarily by birth. The lifestyle of the elite followed those of the *datu*s described in the legendary tales of the *Darangen*:

Upward mobility becomes symbolized in terms of distance from the way of life of the *sakop* or *bisaya*, while downward mobility is limited by ascribed position within the *dato* class. To live in a small house made of bamboo, to work steadily in the fields, to own no items of silver and gold, to possess no titles or connection to persons who do, remain as signs of a lower class status. Thus, as a Maranao gains the means, even today, he is likely to build a big house of lumber, withdraw from field labor, acquire items of *dato* status, take a title and try to arrange marriages to influential persons. On the other hand, the simple fact of having been born of acknowledged *dato* parentage continues to act as a cushion for downward mobility. (Mednick 1965: 69)

The stylized lifestyle remains a way of creating in-groups in the 2000s and is based on the acquisition of modern status symbols like fancy houses, big cars, and jewelry but also traditional, educational, religious, or governmental titles. A certain way of speaking is a sign that one belongs to the royalty, as it can only be acquired through socialization. The amount of the bride price certain families demand publicly helps to maintain a certain social status. Disoma (1999a) even reports that the title *hadj* is sought primarily not for religious reasons but to display economic strength, which connotes power and influence (p. 96). The maintenance of such a lifestyle is

²⁴⁰ Bisayas were kidnapped Christians from the Visayas.

called by some Maranaos the “rat-race” for status symbols. Status is thus given initially by birth but has to be constructed further in order to be maintained or to be changed.

As has been noted for other societies like Pohnpei, Micronesia, among Maranaos it is difficult to find a person “who will identify himself or herself as a commoner” (Keating 2000: 307; see also Best 1924: 346 on the Maoris; and Ortner 1996: 64 on Polynesian societies). Most Maranaos during my research claimed to be of royal descent, even though some refuse to carry or do not get offered a title. Mednick (1965) defines the supposed pre-colonial three-class order as “ideally conceived” and identifies the social system as “one without classes” (p. 68). He additionally points out that there probably never was a proper class system since there is no rule forbidding intermarriages between different classes as long as the bride price can be paid, and royal titles can be inherited from either the father’s or the mother’s side. This automatically broadens the possible range of candidates for a certain royal title and for membership in the *datu* class.

Mednick defined *datu*s primarily through their lifestyle. Others, writing twenty years after him, in the 1980s, identified a *datu* by his interest in the welfare of his community. According to Cayongcat, the title *datu* connotes social rank and respect: it is an attribute given by the community members to people to show respect *and* an honorary title to which one has a birthright (1984: 14). Membership in the *datu* class thus was never strictly inherited. Warriner (1975) questions the use of the notion of class system, since “such systems involve mutually exclusive categories into which persons are placed by inheritance or achievement” (p. 43). He argues that it would be proper to speak instead of a lineage system consisting of “ranked lines of descent in which a person inherits the rights and duties of each of his ancestries.” Certainly this definition ignores that one can also become a *datu* without being born one and that those who are born *datu*s may not be recognized as such. This nevertheless may also be a recent development.

Tawagon (1987) likewise detects a dissolving of the former social classes as described by Mednick. He points out a recent social division between those having high descent (*mala bangsa*) and those having low descent, called *mabeba-a tao* (low people). Those having *mala bangsa* are descendants of many high-ranking descent lines. These people are also called *mapia-a tao* (good people). They include the former *datu* class, thus the *pagawid* (supporter) and *pagawidan* (supported). The *pagawid* and *pagawidan* before were the only groups to have genealogical connections to the Shariefs and thus were the only lineages mentioned in the *salsila*. Apart from the *pagawid* and *pagawidan*, there were the freemen and the slaves, who were not mentioned in

the *salsila* and had no right to titles. Because of frequent intermarriages and bilateral inheritance, families initially having no *bangsa* might have low *bangsa* (only one parent is from the former *datu* class), being included in the *salsila* and accordingly having rights and obligations within the sultanate system (p. 95). Beside the effects of intermarriages, the introduction of the modern state and the modern educational and economic systems, the prohibition of slavery under the Americans, and the non-recognition of royal titles under the Filipino government have affected social arrangements. Former slaves could earn an income and were then able to pay the bride price of a higher-ranking descent line. Some *datu*s lacked the economic support of their subordinates and were not able to pay high bride prices anymore. Not only does almost every Maranao claim to be from the former *datu* class, but to call someone “*pagawid ka*” (supporter) is an insult for which one can get killed because of *maratabat*.

To conclude, the hypothesis of the existence of a rank society in lieu of a class society is questionable,²⁴¹ since there are different material conditions and social stratifications that are not limited to rank.²⁴² Hierarchies are not entirely connected to birth; they are penetrable and can be constructed on the basis of lifestyle. The fact that almost every Maranao claims to be royal should be considered as a sign not of an egalitarian, class, or rank society but rather of a system characterized by “competitive equality” (Toren 1990), meaning that “hierarchy is not a status quo but must be constantly achieved” (Keating 2000: 306). Leadership is easily challenged, not only among titleholders but also among politicians, intellectuals, religious groups, or rebel groups. Even within a clan, there are families in competition for a certain title or political position. In the case of marriages between persons from two different clans, if one gets offered a title, it may be that the partner also claims one so as not to be inferior to his or her spouse.

2. Descent Line Status

Descent lines did not lose meaning as most Maranaos came to define themselves as royalty, but the quantity of claims became more important. Descent line connections are divided among “good people” (*mapia a tao*) — who have many and high-quality claims — and “low people” (*mabeba a tao*) — who have few and lesser claims. This definition is based on the descent line status combining the “class rank” (number of claims) and the “descent line rank” (quality of claim) (Mednick 1965). Thus, two ranks are combined: the one a person claims by

²⁴¹ On egalitarian societies, see Flanagan (1989: 262), Kuipers (1986), and Sahlins (1958, 1963)

²⁴² On rank and class societies, see Ortner (1996: 64).

referring to a particular title of a descent line (quality) and the one a person draws on by referring to claims on titles from several descent lines (quantity). Rights based on a particular title are only recognized in the place of the claim, whereas the quantity is recognized beyond this. Descent line status is connected not to actually having a title but to the claim. Persons without a title can be recognized as being *mapia a tao* and can thus rank higher than people with titles.

Intermarriages between *mapia a tao* and *mabeba a tao* are possible and in some cases even favored in order to spread the supporter-supported relations of a clan. Arranged marriages are thus strategic in the sense that one may try to marry into other descent lines in order to increase his or her own descent line status or to strengthen bonds with possible supporters. The conferring of titles does not always benefit the person with the highest descent line rank or class rank. Even with few and low quality claims, a person can be better off, have more social and political connections, and be the one to be asked for advice most frequently by community members. Such a person has a chance to either get offered a title or, through strategic marriage, to offer a title to his or her children and thus rise in descent line status. However, in some communities, the titleholder has a high descent line status but little influence. The reasons for this are numerous: a lack of money, a loss of contact with the community (absence of regular visits by the titleholder of the community to which the title is connected), or the presence of a more influential relative.

Status within the society is provided not only by birth and possible claims on titles but also by means, social connections, lifestyles, and professional positions. If a person is of means and high birth, he or she will receive frequent invitations as representative of the descent line and be asked by community members for financial support. A person of high birth without means and social connections will receive fewer invitations and may be not a representative of the descent line but a follower. In addition, he or she may not be supported in his or her claim to a title and receive less *adat* (share). Being rich is one way to gain a higher social status: one can establish the social contacts that one needs to be of influence by providing financial support, can buy oneself into a high-ranking family by being able to pay the demanded bride price, and may even gain a minor title, which may be newly created for him. Some persons, however, are very effective in establishing social connections even without having the means. They may be financially supported by their relatives or by foreign donors. Those who may gain from a person's proclamation or election will often support his or her claim to a title. This is one reason why social networks are of crucial importance in order to gain a title and status, and are a reason

why relatives often support a claimant, since, with the upgrade of one member of the kin group, the whole kin group is upgraded.

Authority and status are not conferred by birth, nor is a title; they are determined mainly and foremost by the number of supporters one is able to mobilize and can continuously maintain (Ampaso 2001: 12). Interactions between descent line status (traditional background) and social contacts and networks, economic means, or professional status (modern structures) are thus of importance. The status of a person is the result of a combination of the two. Titleholders and people of influence are consequently in many cases professionals and can thus contribute financially to community activities according to their status. In addition, status and influence are determined by the “no war, no peace” environment. For instance, a drug lord with a low descent line status can “buy” himself political influence and a royal title. Both will be accepted as long as he can maintain his supporters. Status, thus, does not derive merely from birth and good deeds to the community but also from the means, the connections, or the weapons a person can mobilize to defend or increase it. Status is connected to authority; having a high rank in society also means that one has leadership possibilities. To reach or maintain this rather unstable rank, one has to defend his or her own status, which is partly conferred by birth but has additionally to be deserved.

3. *Maratabat (Status Honor)*

The rank of a person within the society is not entirely fixed by birth and can change through marriage as well as other factors like acquisition or loss of wealth or political position, a broad network of kin relations, and actual or even symbolic behavior and achievements. In consequence, a person has to be observant about his or her status because it can eventually influence the descent line status by his or her being recognized, or not, as a person of high status, since the status of the whole kinship group can be influenced. This sensitivity to rank is called *maratabat*, which is partly based on *taritib* and *igma*, the descent line organization of the *Pat a Pangampong*. The concept serves as a measure to arrange and strengthen status hierarchies within the society.

The notion of *maratabat* includes the connection to rank, deriving from the Arabic word *martaba* (ranks). Among some royalty, it is connected with a perception that high-ranking descent lines are sacred since they are derived from the Prophet Mohammad (Mednick 1965). Some

people refer to Qur'anic verses, stating that the Prophet and his family should be respected²⁴³ and so should their descendants in Mindanao. The Islamic resurgence movement brought more knowledge about Islam, and members of royalty emphasize that religious and worldly affairs are separated within the sultanate system. The concept of *maratabat*, nevertheless, remains and thus so do conflicts about status.

A person from a high-ranking clan shares to a certain degree the status of the clan. However, if he misbehaves, he may also become an outcast. If the status of a person is challenged, the status honor is soiled and has to be regained, which is the task of the kin group. Status and likewise *maratabat* are in large parts “reputationally earned,” wherein the observance, gossip, and pressure of the community are of major importance (Disoma 1999a: 82). A person with a high-ranking title who does not revenge a severe challenge to his title is said to have no status honor, no *maratabat*. He has to earn it back by taking the challenge (ibid.: 83).

Lineage is of importance in the construction of status for a person because of the possible rank it can provide and further because of the mutual support of descent line members. The kinship group usually feels obligated to support a member financially when he or she marries a higher-ranking person from another clan, claims a title or position, or wants to achieve anything that might be to the advantage of the descent line. Support by relatives turns into the application of *maratabat* in case “the socially accepted role or status” of a clan member “is offended, challenged, or questioned” and this affront becomes publicly known. Revenge or forgiveness must then also be displayed openly (ibid.: 81). If a poor man would like to marry a woman from a rich family but cannot afford the bride price, in case the community gossips about this person, the *maratabat* of this person and his relatives may dictate obtaining the money to be able to pay even though he later on will be deeply indebted.

Mednick (1965) states that a person ranked higher in the descent line naturally feels more obligated to it than a lower-ranking one. The former thus has to take care that the latter “shares” his or her *maratabat* (p. 190). Lower-ranking persons can, however, insist on the obligations that higher-ranking lineage members have towards them. Disoma (1999a) demonstrates in several case studies that the demands of a lower-ranking person might be made indirectly through the gossip of the community, thus placing social pressure on higher-ranking relatives. He further points out that *maratabat* is defined via status and not descent line alone. A person with high

²⁴³ For example, Sura 49:2 states: “O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds should be rendered fruitless while you perceive not.”

status then can be someone with a high rank within the descent line but it can also be a rich or prominent person without a high birth rank. Disoma gives the example of a beggar. It is said to be shameful for all relatives if a kin begs in the streets. When the gossip about one such person increased, a rich relative slapped him in public and told him to stop asking for money and instead to eat at the rich man's house. The moneyed man was said to have expressed his *maratabat* (1999a: 74).

Maratabat can be a motivation to strive for excellence in order to prove that one deserves a higher status.²⁴⁴ Bula (2000), however, notices that assistance for a poor family member in his or her studies through the financial help of the family, in order to raise their status, is not *maratabat* but *katetabanga* (collective mutual aid or services), which is expected among relatives: "This does not enhance *maratabat* but *daradat* (social prestige) or *bantogan* (fame)." (p. 18). The proud collection and presentation of "firsts" in social, religious, or professional achievements, which is displayed on a high number of streamers in Marawi City praising successful relatives, is an example. However, if a poor family member is denigrated by a well-educated person because of his lack of education and then, with the help of his relatives, spends all his effort to become well-educated and successful, *maratabat* is displayed, because it is against the custom to degrade an equal, and the person shows that he is equal by becoming as successful as the challenger (ibid.). Mednick (1965) points out that *maratabat* manifests itself mainly in people insisting on the fulfillment of the obligations the other party has towards them (p. 190). If a person is not treated according to his status, he might complain and maybe revenge himself on or try to become better than the other person; he would thus be exercising his *maratabat*. Since *maratabat* can be soiled easily, there are many secret or "back door" talks before official talks, as well as a ritualized language when one gives a speech or asks for marriage (see Alonto 1980: 73). The Islamic influence nevertheless discouraged back door talks with the argument that one should always say the truth (Disoma 1999).

According to a speech given in 2008 by Sultan sa Rogan, *maratabat* has three classifications which are all based on the *taritib* and *igma* of the respective places: *maratabat sa warisan*, *maratabat sa bangsa*, and *maratabat sa kadatu ago agama*:

Maratabat sa warisan is applicable when a man, not her lawful husband or guardian, has touched a woman's dignity. When this happens, the man must be

²⁴⁴ The implications of *maratabat* in the quest for excellence sometimes turn into vast spending of money and effort being involved in achieving a certain position or in giving a bigger and more expensive gift than one has received (Disoma 1999a: 96).

subjected to penalty. The man and his parents/relatives should be brought to the *torogan* or house of the lady, clothed in white cloth and must present money and valuable materials to the family of the woman, in respect to the *maratabat* of the lady's family. If the negotiation between the two families is done peacefully, the man may be allowed to marry the woman. In this event, witnesses must be present. (Speech given and partly written down in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

A *warisan* is a female member of a clan. Members of high-ranking descent lines would say that only commoners can accept monetary compensation as a *damm* (penalty) if the *maratabat* of the *warisan* has been violated. This implies that elites would rather revenge the woman's honor physically. Warriner reported in the 1960s that for Maranaos "even the mere touching of a woman's wrist or forehead, if intentional, is an act of defloration" and constitutes a blow to the *maratabat* of the family (Saber, Tamano, and Warriner 1985-86: 174). Young women during my research were supervised by their families but had certain liberties, especially in co-educated schools and universities with boarding houses. Revenge of the honor of a woman, however, still happens. Women are normally not left alone with a man they could possibly marry. They are also advised not to roam around and people may talk about them in case they do so. *Maratabat* in this context is a way to control moral behavior through the pressure or rewards of the community. More secular and modern young married women go around Marawi at night with some of their friends but the ideal behavior in the traditional context is different. A *bai a labi* stated that she could not go out with her friends anymore since she became a titleholder, which means that she has to be a role model for other women of her kin group.

In case the *maratabat* of a *warisan* is violated and a payment is accepted, the amount has to be agreed upon by the families involved. One example was given by Datu Alonto Lucman, of the first wife of the male culprit rejecting the second wife. When pure lust is seen as the cause of the transgression, the man can be punished by being required to pay the prescribed amount of penalty:

On March, 2008, A., who is married, was involved with a divorced woman who has six children. A.'s family rejected the proposal for marriage. The clan consulted Noor Lucman [and the following] compromise [settled the case]: A. was married for one day to appease the *maratabat* of the *warisan*'s clan and paid the prescribed *dowry* [bride price] of PHP 50,000 [about EUR 862]. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

This solution is thought preferable to violent revenge in cases of adultery. Certainly, it has to be questioned if this form of regulation does not raise the possibility of turning questions of justice and honor into a business.

There are also situations in which a woman soils the *maratabat* of a man, for example by saying that her husband has battered her even though he has not. When she is found guilty, wrongly or rightly, traditionally she is clothed in white as a sign of penitence and brought to the house of the victim. This only happens when the clan of the victim accepts the apology — and an apology is usually accepted as long as there is no death involved. A woman traditionally will not kill herself or others because of *maratabat* but her relatives will defend her honor. This might end up in a clan war or, in cases of prostitution or adultery, can include executing her or letting her be killed by the deceived husband. Thus, a woman can also be murdered by her own relatives because she has violated the *maratabat* of the kin group.

Maratabat sa bangsa is the second classification of *maratabat*:

Maratabat sa bangsa is applied when a person has belittled the lineage of another person, and this can be proven by the presentation of a witness; the person who has committed the act is penalized. In case of arguments, both parties may have their presentation, and whoever [is] found not following the *taritib* or laws and policies would be subjected to punishment/penalty, as may be prescribed by the existing *taritib* and *igma*. (Speech given and partly written down in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

Members of royalty say that offenders who are proven to have wrongly accused a person in public about his blood origins traditionally have to face any of the prescribed penalties according to *taritib* and *igma*: cutting of the tongue; shrouding of the offender in white cloth and parading him in public, followed by his relatives, on top of paying monetary compensation; or a hundred lashes; depending on the decision of the sultan, *datus*, and imams. These punishments are designed to prevent a clan war, and to discourage people from tampering with the *salsila* or interpreting it wrongly. Datu Alonto Lucman nevertheless comments that:

Today, cases of this nature would spark a violent clan war because the offenders would resort to Philippine laws to avoid prosecution by the traditional *taritib* and *igma*. The traditional leadership does not have the police authority to enforce such punishments and sentencing. For example, an offender would challenge the aggrieved party to file libel charges against him in court. More often than not, the aggrieved would not resort to Philippine justice because this will take a long process to prosecute. This is done because the offender would challenge the aggrieved to come and get him if he is man enough. Unfortunately, this situation ends in bloody clan wars. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

Claims to high descent can also lead to the defense of crimes. A person who is rightfully accused of fraud may still retaliate against the person who blamed him because he or she feels that his or her *maratabat sa bangsa* is spoiled by the allegation. The honor, which is defended, refers to the person's public appearance and status, not the action.

The Sultan sa Rogan explains the third category of *maratabat*:

Maratabat sa kandatu ago agama is applied when the lineage, such as a traditional title, is not respected, including the domain. Then the following should be observed:

Kadatu or power (traditional title): The person who has shown disrespect to the title or power would be subjected to disciplinary action including a penalty and plea forgiveness from the traditional leader, such as the sultan.

Agama or religion: The kind and degree of misconduct would be considered for its corresponding punishment, such as in the case of:

1. *kasebo/kapakasbo*, or adultery (applicable to a married man or woman)
2. *kapakasina/kasina*, or premarital adultery (applicable to an unmarried man or woman [According to the Islamic concept of *zina*, fornication]);
3. *kapmokalid/mimortad*, or one who leaves the Islamic religion for another religion;
4. *kapaka alampas sa di ta rk*, or robbery or stealing

(Speech given and partly written down in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

The traditional penalty for adultery involving a married person (the first case) is 300 lashes or stoning. This type of punishment results in death or lifetime disability. Maranao sultans and *datus* tend to compromise on this penalty when offending parties belong to dominant clans. It ends in marriage of both at the expense of the first wife. However, there are cases where clan wars have broken out because of such an incident.

Most cases of premarital adultery (the second case) end up in violence or elopement, with the couple simply moving to another place or leaving the country to get away from the reach of the clans. Marriage is also an option if the *datus* negotiate properly, to the satisfaction of both sides. The bride price, however, is lower than average because the bride is said to be already violated and depreciated.

Cases of conversion to other religions (the third case) are treated as the highest form of treachery and betrayal against Islam. It is said that clans are ashamed by this conversion. This results in death and physical injury to the offender, who may be accused of being paid by the Catholic Church. One case involved a Maranao man who had publicly converted to Christianity

and even volunteered to spread the Gospel to the Muslims. His clan, whose members are said to have been “very apologetic,” drove him out of Marawi City. He now lives in Iligan City, after years of hiding. Cases of robbery (the fourth case), when identified, usually end in double compensation. Datu Alonto Lucman explains:

For example, when a robber who belongs to another clan, steals a gun, say, an armalite M16, chances are the mediating *datus* or sultans and politicians would demand [from] the offending clan two armalite rifles as a form of compensation. This form of conflict resolution applies to a stolen livestock, which will be paid in double, or in kind. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

According to Saber and Tamano (1985-86), in the 1980s the following penalties were generally involved in case *maratabat* was soiled: monetary compensation, clothing in white and going to the house of the victim to ask forgiveness (*rila*), the death penalty (*qisas*), and marriage or divorce. Punishments like pillage (*rabai*), enslavement for women convicted of high crimes (*olol*), and stoning of convicts for adultery and incest (*radiam*) are not applied or applied only in rare cases (p. 118).

When an incident is not settled peacefully, a *rido* can erupt. According to Disoma (1999a), there are three types of incidents linked automatically to a violent response as the only appropriate way to regain the lost social status (pp. 79, 80). The kin group may intervene if someone has intentionally been bodily injured or killed, when a family member is publicly insulted, or when the honor of a woman is violated, thus in case she is raped, kissed, or “touched lasciviously” (ibid.: 79). Norodin Alonto Lucman described the following case of soiled *maratabat* leading to a possible *rido*:

Noor Lucman was persuaded by the Maranao community, Imams and provincial elders to handle a murder case involving a young man Jamali Maruhom and an engineer Macacna Racman, his cousin-in-law, whom [Jamali Maruhom] killed for insulting his person and thus his *maratabat*.

Noor Lucman went to Ramain and gathered the people of Buada Babai including the family of the accused to appeal for the murder suspect to be surrendered to him. The clan agreed. Noor Lucman took the accused to the provincial jail for safekeeping. This gesture is to appease the victim family’s *maratabat* and prevent escalation of the conflict through vendetta.

Noor held a series of investigations to validate the claim of the accused Jamali Maruhom on why he killed Macacna Racman. Maruhom claimed that the murder victim Macacna, a ranking member of the MILF, repeatedly threatened him with death, witnessed by Jamali’s wife, or that he will lose his wife, [the victim’s] first cousin, for not conforming to [the victim’s] wishes as one of the leaders of the Racman clan. Jamali Maruhom, believing that what he did is justified in the eyes of God, listed down his reasons for upholding his *maratabat*:

[The victim] spat on [the killer] while performing a prayer in a mosque. (There are witnesses.) He claimed that the victim is a fraud for soliciting money in the name of their mosque and congregation for his personal use. (True according to investigation.)

Another cousin-in-law Abdulgani Racman, brother of Macacna, physically assaulted [the killer]. (There are witnesses.)

The victim took [the killer's] wife to Malabang ostensibly to force a divorce between Jamali and his wife Sittie Noor. This created bad blood between Jamali and Macacna because Jamali had no quarrel with his wife when this incident happened. They were separated for three months.

Jamali took the initiative of killing him first because Macacna already swore to kill him, witnessed by people. The manner of the killing was indiscreet and in full view of mosque-goers.

Noor Lucman took statements from the wife of the victim who is an *alima*. Abdulgani Racman was also investigated whereupon it was established that Macacna [the victim] was a good family man and that he had no quarrel with the accused gunman. He is also a trusted lieutenant of one of the senior leaders of the MILF. They claimed that Jamali shot him without justification other than the reason that they do not like each other. Under Islamic Law, this is punishable by death . . . unless the accused has concrete evidence of threat to his life. The family of the victim asked Noor Lucman to personally execute Jamali Maruhom and their *maratabat* for revenge will be extinguished. This was not granted.

In the event, the religious leaders recommended *diat*, blood money, because there is sufficient ground for self-defense. We are still awaiting the decision of the victim's family on how much is the amount they might demand for compensation. Other members of the victim's family told Noor Lucman that Jamali Maruhom took Macacna's life and he should pay for it with his life.

Status: Noor Lucman and the elders are waiting for the victim's family to answer the appeal of the *datus* for the amount of the *diat*, blood money, to compensate the family of the victim. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

When a *rido* erupts, it might be that the person who did the first killing did not involve any clan elders or other authorities to settle the case but acted upon his own judgment. This can be the result of gossip pressuring the person to defend his *maratabat* (Bula 2000).

A settlement of a *rido* is finalized when the concerned parties swear on the Qur'an and pledge their brotherhood, thus creating kinship bonds, which might be enforced by a marriage of members of the two clans or families. When the feud cannot be settled, the murder will be revenged. The first choices of victims are persons from the same generation or above. The "legitimate" objects of revenge are thus the father, brother, uncles, and male first cousins of the offender as well as the offender himself. Among this group, in particular in case the offender cannot be found and the victim had a higher status than the killer, the offended will aim at acknowledged leaders, those with "power and wealth (*ge-es ago tamok*), or the elder-members and leaders (*manga pelokelokesan*) of the clan with influence over the members" (Atar 2007: 10).

A murder has to be revenged to regain the lost *maratabat* but also because it is believed that the murdered person, if not revenged, will end up becoming a *shaitan* (a devil or evil *djinn*) (Disoma 1999a).

Conflicts have a high potential to become endemic. This might either be in a rather friendly manner of competition to be the “first” in achieving something without violence involved or in the effort to regain soiled *maratabat*, which might include violence. Such a conflict may start with an insult (Bamgbose 2003), which may result in further insults, injuries, divorce, or even killings, which can provoke further killings. Or, a woman is accused of adultery and the husband kills her and the lover. If the family of the victim thinks that this is not justified, it may retaliate against the family of the husband or the husband himself. This can continue until a settlement can be found or the relatives concerned are all killed, since an offended family is “bound by customs and tradition to retaliate [in defense of] (*sa’op*) his family prestige (*maratabat*)” (Atar 2007: 10). According to Disoma (1999a), who based his data on quantitative research in two Maranao communities, *maratabat* is connected for the majority of the people questioned with violence, anger, and defensive traits. Those people who are said to have no *maratabat* were described as patient, religious, and just (1999a: 90). A person with honor or big *maratabat* is thus one who easily gets angry and is ready to kill, and who “is prepared to defend and fight for his extended self, his religion” (ibid.: 93). Sultans of the 16 Royal Houses complained that this was a false perception of *maratabat*, which should be based on *taritib* and *igma* of the *agamas* and not primarily be connected to (personal) anger.

In general men are the aggressors in an outbreak of a *rido*, even though it may have been the *maratabat* of a woman that was violated; men have to protect the *maratabat* of the female clan members. This does not mean that women are spared from being the victims of *ridos*, although this is considered as illegitimate. For instance, there is the case of a mayor who was involved in a *rido* and whose car was ambushed, and his sister and her driver were accidentally killed since they were the only passengers in the car with darkened windows. In some *ridos*, whole families, including the children, are the victims of an ambush. There are also incidents when women are consciously picked out and shot point blank — despite the fact that the initial brawl was between men (Bamgbose 2003: 93). Monalinda Doro (2007), a Maranao researcher, writes that the murder of women and children for revenge was a taboo subject in the past:

Any family who did so [killed a woman] was looked down upon by the community. Even old people, who were not perpetrators of *rido*, may not be targeted. However, these unwritten laws are no longer observed by all Meranao.

The death of women, children, and old folk in vendetta are simply dismissed as accidental nowadays. (p. 217)

It is difficult to judge whether in the past, before the arrival of the colonial forces, women, children, and old people were not victims of *ridos* or whether the past is idealized. In 2000, Gonzales argued that despite the cultural norm that women should not be harmed, there are cases where women have been raped as part of a clan conflict (2000: 92). A change in or general augmentation of *rido* victims may stem from a culture of violence being increasingly supported by the “no war, no peace” environment.

B. The Title System

1. Choosing a Titleholder

When a titleholder is chosen, his or her descent line status and personal qualities are taken into consideration. Members of only eleven clans can claim the title Sultan sa Butig; all stem from the *moriatao* (offspring) of Baracat Amer Hussein. The title should ideally rotate among the descendants of these clans. The chairmen of the clans recommend the chosen candidates to the Four *Datus*, who make the resolution and bring the matter to Lawmakers. The latter finally discuss the recommended candidate. The Sultan sa Butig explains:

When a new Sultan of Butig has to be selected, the person who will be allowed to have the title needs to comply with the following: (1) Only the eleven families, the descendants of Moriatao Baracat Amer Hussein, are the ones entitled to the Sultanate of Butig; (2) The best child in one family of the eleven families, provided that he possesses the qualities of a good leader, will be chosen as Sultan of Butig; (3) The eleven families should call for a meeting to discuss and decide the date when to enthrone the sultan, and they have to seek the permission of the incoming sultan. At the same time, they have to bring the matter to the Four *Datus* of East Unayan because they will recommend the sultan to the Four *Datus* who make the *taritib*, meaning the Sultan of Ragayan, the Sultan of Timbab, the Sultan of Dolangan, and the Sultan of Malalis, so they can discuss the proposed candidates of these families, because there are guidelines for becoming a leader.

There are 17 qualifications for a leader: You: (1) are a Muslim, (2) have reached the age of puberty, (3) are wise, (4) are a member of the royal family (who behaves in a decent manner), (5) are honest, (6) are trustworthy, (7) are patient, (8) are active, (9) are intelligent, (10) are well-behaved/disciplined, (11) are decent, (12) have a pleasing personality, (13) have faith in Allah, (14) are considerate, (15) have perseverance, (16) are brave in defending your people and community, (17) are knowledgeable.

As stated, our forefathers' bravery was measured and tested when they fought with the superpowers in the world such as the Spaniards, Americans, and Japanese, but they were not conquered by them. In the process, those concerned

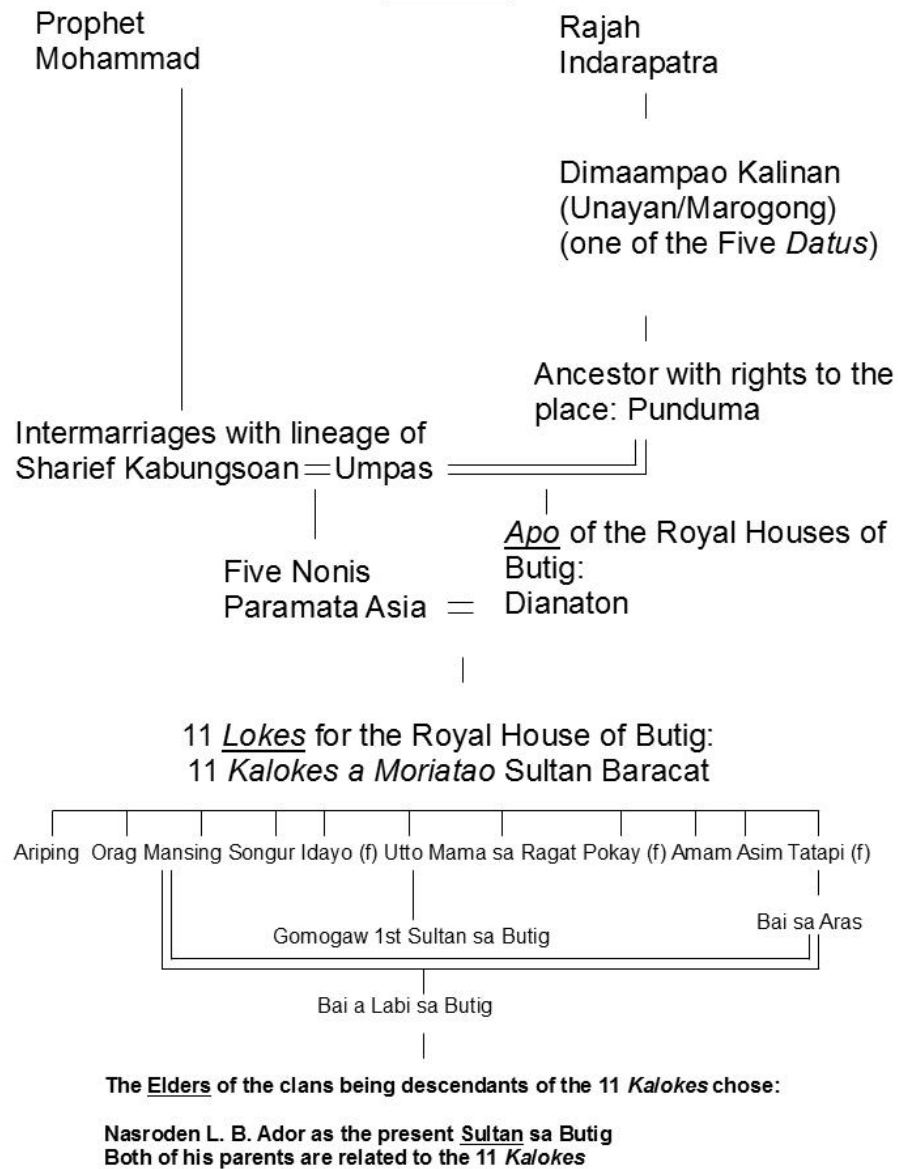
datus will see if he has the qualifications. Then it is forwarded to the Four *Datus* and they make the resolution. After which, it is elevated to the four sultans who are members of the 28. A meeting is called to discuss the recommendation of the eleven chairmen, the children of Sultan Baracat for the approval of being a Sultan of Butig. (Speech given in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

The recommendation of the *datus* is brought to the *panoroganan*, the Sultan sa Butig, and the Sultan sa Domalondong. “They will decide for East Unayan and decide for the date of enthronement. It will be held in Butig. The 16 *panoroganan*, 28 Lawmakers and the Four *Datus* of the four places will be invited.”

When [the] final confirmation date comes, all those sultans will witness [the enthronement] and the Sultan of Butig will be confirmed according to the *taritib*. As a general rule, the Sultan of Domalondong confirms the new Sultan of Butig; likewise the Sultan of Butig will be confirmed by the Sultan of Domalondong because they are brothers and they have the final say. After the confirmation, the 16 *panoroganan* will welcome the Sultan of Butig and they have the same powers. The 28 sultans frame the laws. (ibid.)

The qualities of a *bai a labi* are not said to be much different from those of a sultan. She should be Muslim; have the descent, a certain character, the means, social connections, and knowledge of *taritib and igma*; should participate in the concerns of the community; and should be recognized by the community and be confirmed by the 28 and the 16 or their representatives. Since there are many claimants for one title, it might be that the person is chosen according to the amount of high-ranking claims from different descent lines: for example a person who could become *bai a labi* in Masiu as well as in Ramain. It is of minor importance whether the claimant is connected via the male or the female line to the *lokes* of the title; the male line is given priority but it is preferable to be connected by both lines. The present Sultan sa Butig is an heir of one female and one male *lokes*. His parents are both heirs of the *lokes* and in large part his descent is traced back via female ancestors.

Apo, Lokes, Elders, Sultan: The Descent Line of the Sultan sa Butig



f = female

Not all generations are shown

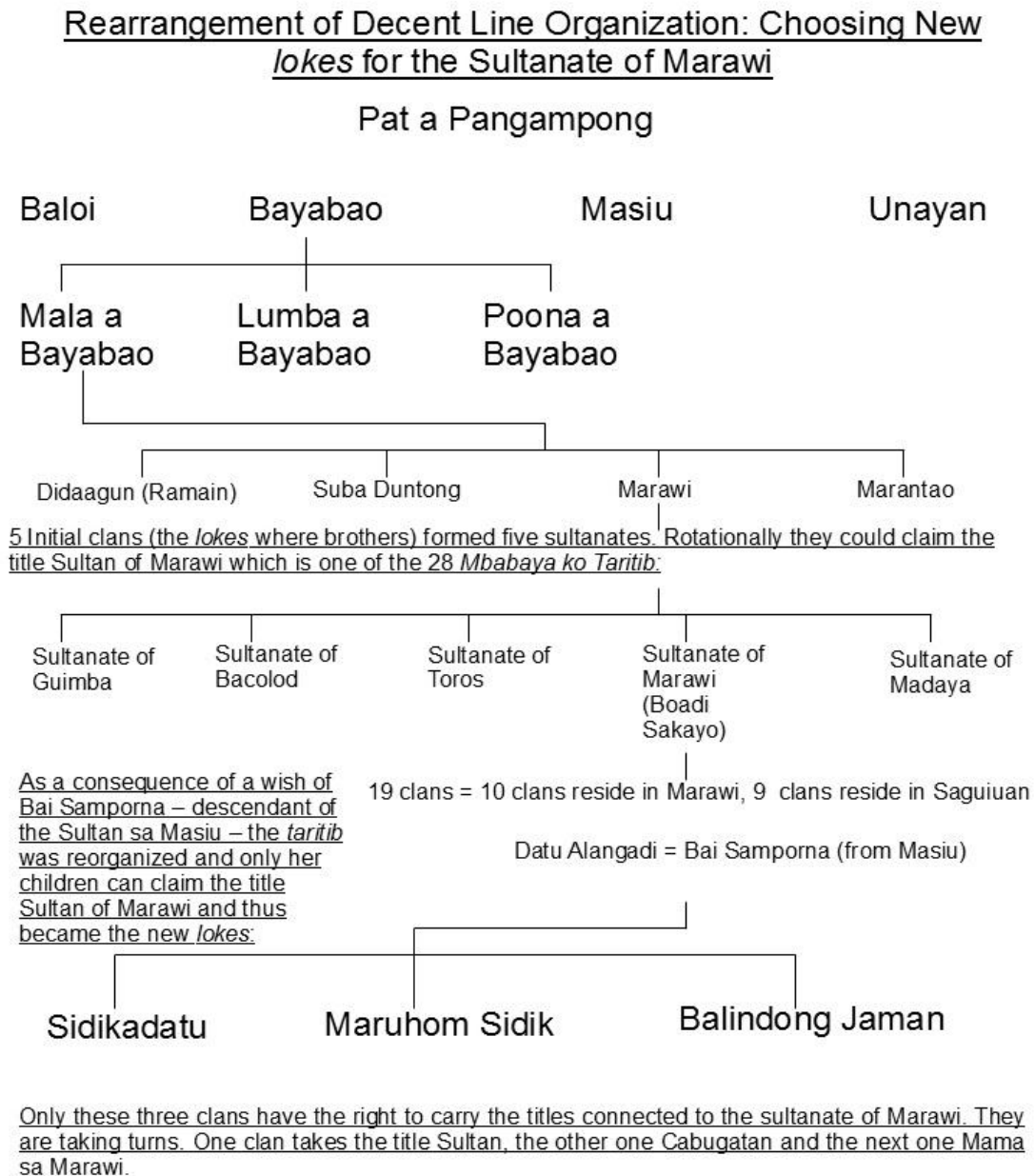
Graphic 13: Genealogical Connections of Nasroden Ador, Sultan sa Butig, 2008

2. Reorganization of Descent Line Claims

Descent lines are frequently reorganized, following the split of a clan which has become too numerous, or a split or fusion of places, but also the social importance of a titleholder. Important lineages are usually traced back to an ancestor who intermarried with a descendant of Sharief Kabungsoan. They can split or merge with others. Old titles may lose their meanings and

new titles gain importance. Sometimes the titleholder does not do anything with the title and thus, even though the title still exists, others will be of more significance in the area. The reclaiming of authority by an heir of a titleholder can be the source of another restructuration within the power structure. In other cases, the title is not claimed anymore and vanishes. Mednick (1965) points out that there is a reorganization of descent lines every three to five generations, since the further apart are the different lineages with the same claim to a title, the less kinship solidarity there is and the less will to support the other lineages. Thus, a reorganization of kinship lines will follow in which new titles are created or a title is claimed by a person who finds enough people from his or her own lineage to support the claim. In this process, those *lokes* who are not within the boundaries of effective kin to the titleholder and his close relatives, will be eliminated from the list of possible claims (1965: 138). Generally, communities and clans only nourish one or two descent lines. Major titles nevertheless will rarely lose their claimants but they might get restricted to certain *lokes*. One example of a reorganization of descent line claims can be given in connection to claimants of the title Sultan sa Marawi.²⁴⁵

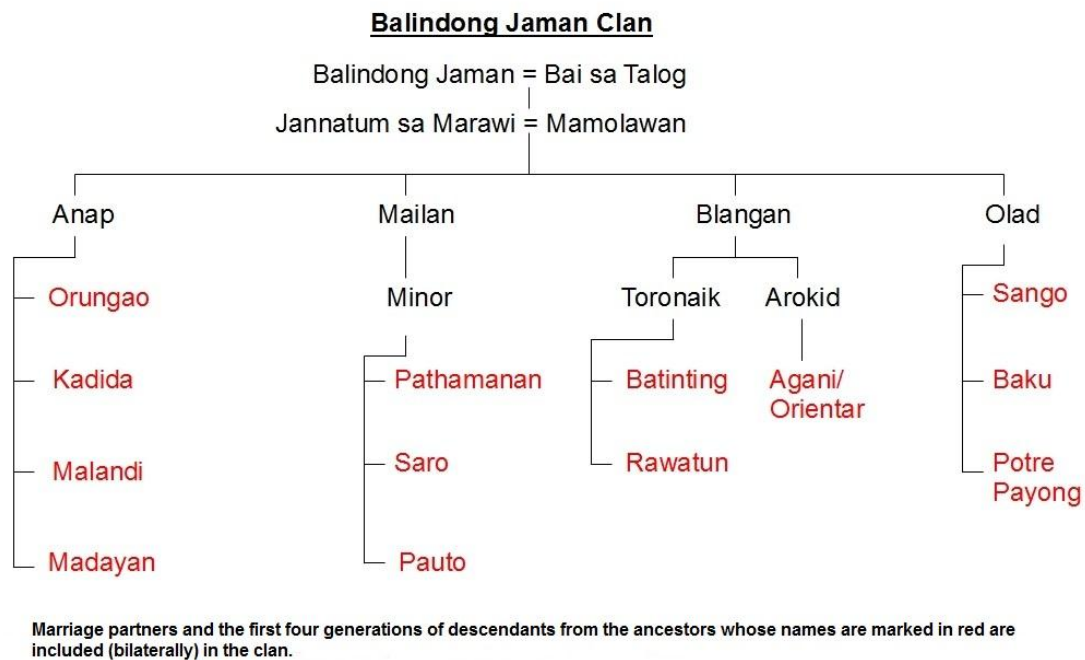
²⁴⁵ The present Sultan sa Marawi comes from the Balindong Jaman (sub-)clan (who are descendants of the Boadi Sakayo clan) and has held the title for over 20 years. He is also the only recognized chairman of the 28.



Graphic 14: Rearrangement of Descent lines: The Sultanate of Marawi

Information provided by Abdul Hamidullah Atar, 2008.

The *apo* of the title Sultan sa Marawi is Gomisa of Marawi: he had five children who constituted the five sultanates in Marawi City (Bacolod, Guimba, Madaya, Marawi, and Toros). Each of the siblings became the *lokes* of a clan and these clans again formed sub-clans with new arrangements. In the Boadi Sakayo clan, 19 sub-clans can potentially claim the title Sultan sa Marawi. However, it was arranged that only three of them would be the new *lokes* (Balindong Jaman, Maruhom Sidik, and Sidikadatu).



Graphic 15: Balindong Jaman Clan
Information provided by Abdul Hamidullah Atar

The following incident is recounted as an explanation for the reorganization: the first Sultan of Marawi was Datu Alangadi, from the Boadi Sakayo clan. He was married to Bai sa Samporna, daughter of Maruhom Rahmatollah of Taraka and heir of the title Sultan sa Masiu. They had four children: Balindong Jaman, Maruhom Sidik, Mayano (who left the area), and Sidikadatu. The couple decided to visit Marawi, the home of Datu Alangadi. As part of Maranao tradition, the wife of a sultan or *datu* can visit his place after one year of marriage and is welcomed with a celebration by the family and the clan of the husband (this ritual is called *lawiin*). Before they reached Marawi, Bai sa Samporna²⁴⁶ stopped the boat, forcing the *datus* and *bais* to approach them. She insisted that she would not come to the sultanate until every *bai* and *datu* swore on the Qur'an that only her descendants would have the right to claim the title Sultan sa Marawi. Her demand was granted because of the importance of *bangsa* (she is an heir of the 16), friendship (with the descendants of the *bai*), and respect (paramount respect to women is a requirement of *taritib and igma*) (Atar 2007: 33). Thus, the *taritib* changed through *igma*. They made a pledge on the Qur'an and every person who did not follow this new rule (*taritib*) would be cursed.

²⁴⁶ The Sultan sa Masiu was formerly the Sultan sa Samporna.

Since certain families of the Boadi Sakayo sub-clans still cannot wait their turn, there are presently five Bai a Labis sa Marawi (two from the Sidikadatu sub-clan, two from the Maruhom Sidik sub-clan, and one from the Sharief Muhammad sub-clan). This might not seem surprising in view of the fact that the number of the clan members of the three sub-clans alone is over 30,000, situated in twelve municipalities in Lanao. The candidates can find sufficient supporters to recognize them, even though they are not recognized by every sub-clan that has a claim on the title. In addition, some titleholders are already aged and have given up their responsibilities to the younger generation. Some of the *bai a labis* of the younger generations are, however, in competition with each other, claiming that they are the real *bai a labi* (according to *taritib* there should only be one *bai a labi* recognized by the elders); one has more money and thus public recognition, while the other involves herself more in community activities.

3. Responsibilities and Advantages of Titleholders

Among the four kinds of royal titles in the *Pat a Pangampong*, the *apos* of two are mentioned in *salsilas* which comprise the major sultanates of the four principalities: the 16 Royal Houses and the 28 Lawmakers. The others are religious titles, like *kali* or *imam*, and minor titles varying from sultanate to sultanate. The latter are usually not named after a place but after a function: for example, chief of police (*sultan a sangcopan*), guard (*pagaga adel*), being in charge of decoration (*bai a adel*) or finances (*bai a gaus*). Usually, except for the religious titles, a female title corresponds to a male one: *sultan/bai a labi*, *sultan a gaus/bai a gaus*, etc. As the sultan has his set of supporters, so has the *bai a labi*.

When titles are connected to a function, they can have their own legend of origin. The Masiricampo of Butig is one example. According to oral transmissions, Dianaton Naim, the lineage ancestor of the Royal House of Butig, was on a *hadj* and while he was gone, his men celebrated in his *torogan*. The celebration was so wild that his subjects even clothed the cats and dogs with yellow clothing to make fun of the sultanate. In doing this, they violated the tradition, which is, as was emphasized by the Masiricampo when relating this episode, also sanctioned by Islam. Thus, a bad spell descended upon Butig and the *torogan* was turned into a big stone. In consequence, people who took refuge in other areas surrounding the sultanate abandoned the place. Dianaton Naim had to be buried in Guimba, Dansalan, because he could not return to his domain. Because of this adverse situation, he created the position of Masiricampo as a caretaker. The task of the Masiricampo sa Butig is defined in the *taritib*. It is mainly to be a go-between in

case of a dispute either between the Royal Houses of Eastern Unayan or among the sultanates in Butig. The Masiricampo has blood relations to both of the Royal Houses in Unayan. Additionally, the ten sultans of the domain agreed that, whenever a conflict of interest among the sultans had to be resolved, the Masiricampo would have to step in and give a neutral opinion about how to resolve it. In Mala a Bayabao, on the other hand, it is said that the title originates from the Spanish colonial forces calling a *datu* “Maestro de Campo.” The Americans named him “Master of the Camp.” Maranaos would pronounce it “Masiricampo.” What is perceived as an indigenous name and connected to a myth of origin is strictly speaking the result of a fusion between local and foreign notions.

Special functions being connected to a title might be purely symbolic. In one interview with several *bai a labis* from the MSU Royalties,²⁴⁷ the general obligation of each female title was said to be the same: to serve the community, peacekeeping, and to support the *bai a labi* who backs up the sultan. The *bai a labi* is said to be responsible for the women in the gender-segregated community: she is the role model for the women. She also crowns those *bais* from her sultanate who rank below her. As important as these prerogatives are, a male representative of the 16 Royal Houses or the 28 should still be present during this coronation. The sultan normally makes main decisions, for example whether a mosque is to be built in a community. Women are ideally consulted and can contribute their ideas and suggestions, though this depends on the arrangements of the single sultanates.

Titleholders of both sexes are expected to share certain expenses (construction of a mosque, weddings, funerals, bride price, blood price, etc.). They tend to contribute according to their status. There are several events when titleholders can show their gratitude to their relatives. The sultan and the *bai a labi* might be expected to contribute to a feast for the community at Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) and Eid al-Fitr (the festival that marks the end of Ramadan) as well as at the birth and death day of the Prophet. Since giving celebrations on these dates is prestigious, other people of means will invite people to their place (Disoma 1999: 143). Disoma explains that social gatherings are frequently held in which personal qualities can be displayed, such as “oration, respect, hospitality, flattery, sharing, sensitivity, showiness, boastfulness, status consciousness, deception and many more”. The host of these gatherings spends a lot of money and might even incur debt. However, this is not taken seriously into consideration, as this will

²⁴⁷ The MSU Royalties is an organization of titleholders employed at MSU Marawi.

safeguard the person from shame (thus, there is a saying: *so tamok na linding o kapaka ito* — wealth is for safeguarding from “shame”) (p. 183).

Royalty are usually invited to weddings; they are entitled to get their *adat*²⁴⁸ if they are from the bride's group, and they have to contribute a share of the bride price when they are related to the groom.²⁴⁹ The share for titleholders is given out of respect for the tradition, out of fear of a curse, because of group pressure, or for the reason that the titleholder might be really influential in the community (Fianza 2004: 7). Titleholders carrying another title besides the sultan or the *bai a labi* of the place, as well as non-titleholders who have an influential position in the clan, will also receive (or give) *adat*, depending on their status (or the status they want to achieve) within the community. They might also be more or equally respected, in case they or their family contribute to the welfare of the community or can claim high status. When a titleholder is not seen as influential, he or she may not get *adat* or may get less than others.

Titleholders can be asked to give a speech at weddings. Normally the sultan is the public representative of the descent line, although politicians or other prestigious elders who are part of the family may be given priority. Members of royalty usually use the classical way of speaking Maranao (the way it was used in the *Darangen*) when negotiating or giving a speech in their language. For some titleholders in Marawi, this was one of the biggest challenges since the classical way of speaking is not used in ordinary life and the Maranao intelligentsia is more acquainted with English. Proper presentations are important because one can accidentally insult a descent line (for instance, by not mentioning it) and this can lead to a conflict. The only way to learn the classic Maranao is by listening to the elders. Whereas a generation ago, a person speaking the ancient Maranao was regarded as uneducated, today he or she is recognized as “wise” because of the knowledge of how to apply the traditional forms. Titleholders have also the ability to solve *ridos*, a function that is shared by NGOs, politicians, the military, the MILF and MNLF, *ulama*, and other traditional leaders. Titles are thus not definitely connected to functions that only titleholders can observe. They enjoy “the right of being addressed with [a] title of

²⁴⁸ *Adat* is given to strengthen relations to the receiver, who will help the couple in times of need.

²⁴⁹ The *adat*, for example of the bride price, can be from PHP 50 to 100. If the titleholder has to contribute to the bride price of a male relative, he or she has to pay more, perhaps PHP 1,000, than he or she would receive from the bride price of a female relative. Abducal Alonto writes that all women at the wedding will get a certain *adat* but that the group of *datus* will get the most (1980: 77). Traditionally, the *datus* got a certain part of a butchered carabao (water buffalo) — the head was normally reserved for the sultan as chief leader. In the Sultanate of Marawi, also known as the *triumvirate*, during a wedding the Datu sa Marawi got one *ganta* (a Philippine dry or liquid measure equivalent to about three quarts of water) of meat, the Masiricampo got the breast of the carabao, and the Sultan sa Marawi got the head. The people ate other parts of the body.

prestige, but [they hold] no well-defined control over the people or territory” (Madale 1997: 114).

The symbolic dimension as status symbol, however, is significant. A *bai a labi* explains:

[There is no financial gain in a title.] It is only the honor, the respect and the popularity. Because wherever you go, you carry the title. When you go to neighboring communities, they will always recognize you. “Ah, that is the *bai a labi*.” So you deserve to be entertained, to be honored, to be invited. [On] all the occasions the *bai a labi* and the sultan are always invited. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

Status is not automatically connected to a title and can be diminished, for example through the election of another person carrying the same title. A title and its associated status have to be earned up to a certain degree. Possible claimants can refuse a title, considering themselves too young for the responsibilities. Other reasons are that they are not married and thus have no children who could inherit the claim (even though there are titleholders who were enthroned before they were married, such as the Sultan sa Butig), and also because some do not believe in the sultanate system. In such families, the meaning of royal titles vanished and was replaced by political dynasties, education, economics, or religion; those families may define titles as meaningless.

4. Religious Titles

Traditionally the sultan is the worldly and religious head of the community. He has a special place to sit in the mosque and he is responsible for the maintenance of the building. When the end of Ramadan is celebrated, every person has to donate something and it is the sultan who provides for the poor so that they can also give. The sultan may also “influence the choice of the religious functionaries in the mosques” (Amposa 2001: 9). Apart from this, religious affairs are regulated by the *ulama* of the community, the *imam* (head of religious affairs), *qadi/kali* (judge) and *guro* (teacher). These titles can be inherited but a religious education is normally a prerequisite. In some communities the *kali*, *guro*, or *imam* can be more important than the sultan. In one *agama*, it was the *kali* who created the local title of *bai a labi* for his daughter.

In Masiu, there are two head *ulama*, Guro sa Masiu and Kali sa Masiu, who represent the *pangampong* in every *ulama* gathering in the province. The *ulama* of Mala a Bayabao are represented by the Kali sa Ramain, Kali sa Ditsaan, and Kali sa Marawi. An *alim* becomes the head of the *ulama* in a certain division (*suku*) or *pangampong* with the consensus of the other *ulama* in that place. In some occasions, *ulama* of the *Pat a Pangampong* meet at a national *ulama* summit. They also meet in case of a disagreement on the common law, the *taritib*, or the *igma*;

the concerned area then initiates a gathering of all co-equals to help in mediating and reconciling the dispute. A person from Tokaya (in Madalam) proclaimed himself as Guro sa Masiu but did not come from Taraka, which is, according to *taritib* and *igma*, the only place where the title can be assumed. A family from Taraka also claimed the title and called a meeting of all the *ulama* and *datus* of Lanao, asking the assembly to prevent the person from Tokaya from taking the title. The assembly agreed in order to avoid further divisions.

The most well-known *alim* in the *Pat a Pangampong* was Dr. Mahid Mutilan, who carried the title Guro sa Masiu. In the 1980s, *ulama* from the Maguindanao area and from Lanao del Sur “align[ed] with those ethnic elites who were interested in changing the political status quo” (McKenna 1990: 559). As part of this larger movement of Filipino *ulama* vying for political office in the 1980s,²⁵⁰ the religious OMPPIA Party was founded after a meeting of a coalition of *ulama* organizations, held at Maharlika Village in Taguig, Rizal in 1986. The meeting was mostly composed of Middle Eastern graduates and led by Mutilan, Majid Ansano, and Ustadz Abu Mohammad Sarangani, the head of the Kuwait-backed Ummah Party. In the same year, Mutilan ran for a seat in Congress but lost. He then successfully stood for Marawi City mayor in 1988. From 1992 to 2001, he was Lanao del Sur governor. There was a schism between the OMPPIA and Ummah Parties in the 1990 local elections. Sarangani challenged Mutilan for governor, in vain. Thereafter, the disunity within the *ulama* group began to erode popular support as the rivals verbally attacked each other on the radio and local cable TV. Eventually, a shoot-out broke out between the two parties in 1996, resulting in serious injuries. Mutilan nevertheless won a third term as governor and after that, in 2001, ran for ARMM vice-governor and won. In 2005, he lost against Ansaruddin-Abdulmalik “Hooky” Alonto Adiong. He later died in a car accident in 2007. Alima Khadijah Mutilan, his first wife, who was very active in organizing the women of the OMPPIA movement, was also granted a royal title during his governorship: Bai a Labi ko Pat a Pangampong ko Ranaw, “in recognition of her efforts to help her people” (Gutoc 2008a).

²⁵⁰ In 1987, at a meeting of *ulama* of Cotabato called by Zacaria Candao, the Islamic Party of the Philippines (IPP) was founded, a “regional party without connection to the national party apparatus” (McKenna 1990: 503). The main points of the party program were to establish a meaningful autonomy of the Bangsamoro homeland and the equal distribution of wealth. In the 1988 provincial elections, the local *datus* united to defeat the IPP, which had become a strong competitor, placing second in the district including Cotabato City in the congressional elections in 1987. The IPP shifted from puritanism to populism “as the result of steady resistance by ordinary Muslims to the *ulama*'s program for Islamic renewal” (ibid.: 573). This election was the “first ever provincial campaign in which Islamic discourse figured prominently in political appeals” but also the “most genuinely democratic election ever held in Muslim Cotabato . . . because of the new national political atmosphere and the control of the province by non-*datus*” (ibid.: 506).

That Mutilan was the Guro sa Marawi does not mean that his role in the sultanate was a reason why he won elections. As in every position of influence, it is helpful to have connections to each potential source of authority in order to be recognized and supported by as many persons as possible. For a titleholder, the chance that traditionalists will support him or her politically is higher. Some politicians also see the possibility of legitimizing their political power through traditional means when they have achieved a position and thus of improving their descent line status. Partly titles are also granted in the expectation that the receiver will feel obligated towards the sultanate or as a reward for the efforts of the politician for the community. Mutilan was popular for supporting the development of *madari* schools in the region. In case the politician fails to maintain his supporters, they might look for another patron.

Apart from religious titles, which belong to the sultanate, *ulama* and *alimat* are outside of the sultanate system, in that they do not claim a title, and are often even opposed to titles, partly considering them un-Islamic. An *alima*, being educated at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, and a former member of the MNLF, now leading a *toril* school²⁵¹, stated that:

we have a lot of problems with the *bai a labis*, because sometimes we have a relative who is . . . it is a big problem in the family [referring to a conflict among two women aspiring to become the *bai a labi* of the place, which led to a *rido*]. This happens only because they really do not know what Islam is. And that is why they fight even for small titles and that creates so much trouble for the family; we know that because many of our relatives are not on speaking terms because of the *bai a labi* . . . So it is not good. Those who believe in Islam should not participate in *bai a labis*. As long as they believe in Islam, they know their role in the society, they know what should be done, that is good enough, because the *bai a labi*, the title *bai a labi* is for culture and social affliction only, it has nothing to do with Islam. (Interview translated from Maranao by Norodin Alonto Lucman, Marawi City, 2008, translation modified)

Similar statements were made by another *alima*, also educated in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. She preferred to stay isolated from the community since she feared getting involved in things that might violate her beliefs. A visiting scholar from Saudi Arabia who sponsored a *madari* for orphans in Marawi City argued similarly, saying that it will be a long time before Maranaos are religiously enlightened. McKenna (2002) described the potential conflict between religious functionaries and traditional Moros from the viewpoint of traditionalists for the Maguindanao ethnic group. In Lanao, however, open critiques of traditionalists against religious functionaries, and in particular Islam itself, are rare. A sultan emphasized that the religious sphere is separated

²⁵¹ A *toril* school is a residential school where children from age three and above would be confined in one place and taught Islamic religion and the Qur'an.

from the sultanate and female titleholders would rather humbly state that they are not religious enough. One *bai a labi* added that with time all traditions that do not correspond to Islam will be phased out:

Birte Brecht: What change during the years took place in relation to religion?

Bai a Labi: Our concept of Islam was changed. Traditional Islam is now different from the Islam the way we understand it now. Because before we read the Qur'an and we did not know the meaning. But now we read the Qur'an and we understand, because it was translated in our language and in English. Before it is more influenced by culture and some parts of our culture are against Islam. So this time we are reconciling culture with Islam. That any part of our culture that is un-Islamic we try to phase them out. And we only preserve those that are Islamic. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

Apart from the acceptance of a new concept of Islam and its importance, the sultanate system itself and its functions were not questioned but seen as corresponding with Islam.

5. Numerous Titles

Tawagon (1987), who described the *Pat a Pangampong* as the place of the 1001 sultanates, explains that the number of titles has always been numerous. The sultanate system was superimposed on a *datuship* system. Thus, each community (*agama*) having a mosque and being headed by elders could become an autonomous sultanate. The growth of the population, which provoked a split of descent lines and *agamas*, went along with the creation of further sultanates. The colonization of Piagapo by clans of Mala Bayabao, for example, led to it becoming an extension of the Sultanate of Ragain. Royal titles of Ragain were set aside to signify the attachment of Piagapo to Ragain, with the title *Mama sa Ragain* being exclusive to the clan members of the new settlement. Additionally, the bilateral system of title inheritance led to a vast number of possible titleholders, and the lack of fixed regulations concerning which of the manifold claimants would inherit the title resulted in a further augmentation of titles (Mednick 1965). The influence of a titleholder consequently does not go beyond his or her group of supporters.

Rivalries between clans who have a claim on the same royal title in one *agama* can lead to the founding of a new village (*agama*) with their own sultan, *bai a labi*, and other titles. The creation of new titles is thus one measure to prevent and resolve conflicts among relatives. In comparison to conflicts about political posts, those about royal titles are not as violent. This can possibly be traced back to the fewer advantages and lesser authority a titleholder receives and

also to the possibility of creating new titles if needed. In this situation, the rank of the new sultanate will be equal to the former one. Sultan sa Dayawan and his daughter explain:

Bai: You have to go back to the culture. It is more like the policy of accommodation. Among the Maranaos, everybody would like to be somebody entitled. To be able to give everybody a title, you accommodate everybody. But you need a structure to accommodate everyone.

Sultan: For example the Sultan of A he has two sons, both of them want to become the sultan. Now, my children, you become the Sultan of B, this is yours, Sultan of C, this is yours. No quarrel. But you still have the Sultan of A. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

Also for women, new titles can be invented. In one case, a potential *bai a labi* was asked to carry the title of the *bai a labi* of a certain place. When she learned that there already was a *bai a labi* of this place, she demanded to be granted a different title (*Bai A Labi Sa Noni*) which did not exist before in order to avoid conflict. That a new sultanate is created for a woman as conflict prevention is, however, rare. The sultan is the head of the sultanate. The *bai a labi* is his symbolic counterpart; she cannot become a sultana, as is for example reported from Aceh (Mernissi 1991; Kahn 2010) and from the Sulu area, where there were sultanas.²⁵²

The creation of a new municipality with its own titles in order to pacify a conflict about political influence between men is reported in a case from the 1960s. One *datu* recounts:

One example is a *rido* in Balabagan. That was the *rido* between the Sultan of Maguindanao, Pangadapun Benito, mayor of Balabagan, against the natives of Balabagan. In the old days the coastal areas were part of the Sultanate of Maguindanao (part of the Iranon region). Benito is not actually from Balabagan, he is from the upper area, Unayan region, but the former Senator “Domocao” Alonto put him there as mayor of Balabagan because it’s a newly created municipality. To pacify [reconcile] him with Mayor Amir Balindong (Sultan of Picong), because he was the rival of Amir Balindong in Malabang. They are both Maranaos. The first *rido* took place when he became mayor of Balabagan and many people were killed. The mayor of Malabang, Amir Balindung, defeated Pangadapun. They were political rivals. During that time when Malabang was still one municipality, that includes Balabagan and Sultan Gumandar (now Picong). And the cause of it was political rivalry. This was only resolved when Malabang was divided into two municipalities. So Pangadapun became mayor of Balabagan

²⁵² During the entire existence of the sultanates in the southern Philippines, since the fifteenth century, there was just one sultana, probably in the seventeenth century, in Sulu (Majul 1999:17). She does not appear in every available document, which according to Majul can be explained “by the simple fact that she was a woman and that therefore the absence of her name was based on negative opinions regarding the qualifications of a woman to hold office — opinions which might have been adopted later” (ibid.: 8). He adds that in addition she married an Iranun *datu* and that it “might have been politically expedient to neglect this fact to prevent the Iranun from having a hand in the Sulu royal succession” (ibid.). Vivienne Angeles refers to Inchi Jamila as “The Sultana” who was named as such because she was the wife of the sultan and “not an invisible power.” She served as one of two regents in the absence of the sultan, and she was seen as a person wielding “real power behind the throne” (1998: 211).

and Sultan Amir Balindong remained as mayor of Malabang.²⁵³ Amir Balindung is the Sultan of Picong, while Pangadapun is the Sultan of Maguindanao.

Pangadapun became the Sultan of Maguindanao [because] it was a privilege that was given to him by the Maranao *datus* to pacify him. Because there were so many people killed already. Apparently, there was no resistance from the heirs of the Sultanate of Maguindanao; they did not object to it because they were also persuaded by the *datus* of Lanao led by Senator “Domocao” Alonto not to interfere or not to object because they are pacifying a family war between Balindong and the Benitos. (Interview, Manila, 2008)

In relation to the highest royal titles and sultanates, the 16 Royal Houses or the 28 Lawmakers, it is rather difficult to split their authority. To create an additional Lawmaker or Royal House, all former members have to agree to the division. The consequence is that several sultans or *bais* have the same title, and each one is recognized by his or her own kin group.²⁵⁴ There are four Sultans of Masiu, for example. This is said to be a recent phenomenon, which began after the death of the influential politician Sultan sa Masiu Mohamad Ali Dimaporo. The Sultans of Masiu are recognized by their supporters and they are active in different areas. The various sultans or *bai a labis* have a rightful claim on the title but cannot wait for their turn, or a person will “bribe” the responsible sultans and *ulama* who may appreciate a person having the means, even though the genealogical connection is weak. An additional reason for multiple titleholders is that sometimes one family, seeing it as a matter of *maratabat*, does not recognize the authority of another family. Instead, it proclaims its own sultan or *bai a labi*. The more distant the kinship relations are, the lesser will be the support and the bigger will be the chance that the kin group splits and forms its own sultanate. Sometimes, this happens in agreement with the mother sultanate, or titles are enforced for personal reasons.

Usually, the elders would decide whom to grant a title, even if the title had already been given to someone. Alauya Adiong Alonto²⁵⁵ at the beginning of the twentieth century married into

²⁵³ The Balindongs are one of the major ruling dynasties in Lanao del Sur, having occupied the post of the mayor of Malabang for several years. In the 2010 elections, the Balindong candidate for mayor in Malabang ran unopposed; they also won five other posts, among them a congressional seat for the 2nd District of Lanao del Sur.

²⁵⁴ The fact that two people can carry the same title is not a new development. As Labay explains, this already happened during the so-called “peace time” (1946-1955) (1980: 124) as well as at the end of the 1970s, when the title Sultan sa Marantao was given to two people. Both claimed to be the rightful heirs and each filed a case against the other, which cases could not be solved.

²⁵⁵ Alauya Adiong Alonto had been a leader in the Philippine movement for independence. After his group in Ramin was “pacified” by American Forces in 1907, he surrendered and became an *amigo* (Saber 1979: 119). He among others asked for the establishment of schools, which were soon attended by the largest number of Muslim children in the Lanao area at this time. All his children attended Western schools. In addition, his daughter, Tarhata, was sent to school in spite of family resistance to the education of women (Madale 1997: 145). She had to stop after one year of high school because of the outbreak of World War II. At the end of the conflict, she was already considered too old to go back to school. Before World War II — Mednick writes that during American times the strongest titleholders were

the family of the Alangadis, which had a claim to the title Sultan sa Ramin. His wife, Bariga Alangadi, was also said to have been the cousin to the Sultan of Maguindanao and the Sultan of Sulu. Alangadi, Bariga's father, was a clan elder at this time, married to a descendant of the first Sultan sa Ramin, Maruhom Baraguir. Alauya Adiong Alonto was a descendant of Sharief Kabungsoan and traditional rulers in Ramin. The leader of the Alangadi clan granted him the title Sultan sa Ramin. Actually, this title was already given to a child of Aloz, the uncle of Alauya Adiong Alonto who had also married into the Alangadi family. Later, the title was given to Aloz's grandchild, Rakiin Macarampat, who was mayor of Ramin for several terms, to appease the family. There can be many reasons for the transfer of a title, but certainly, it underlines the influence of clan elders as well as the fact that a title alone does not make a leader though a leader may get offered a title. Titles alone do not grant authority but they are also not merely honorary since they can boost the ranking of a descent line and social prestige and status (*maratabat*).

Royal titles can also become part of a divide-and-rule policy when supported from outside. The title Sultan sa Ranao/Lanao is said to have been claimed by a competitor of Lieutenant Governor Alauya Adiong Alonto Sultan sa Ramin (he was crowned in 1912). The Sultan sa Ranao, Datu Ibra Gondarangin of Marawi, had an actual claim on the Sultanate of Marawi, but there already was a Sultan sa Marawi. When Governor Leonard Wood proclaimed him Sultan sa Ranao, traditional *datus* and especially the Alontos refused to recognize him, arguing that he could only claim his title with the help of the Americans. Alauya Adiong Alonto called Wood a *maputia amo* (white monkey) and joked that the Sultan sa Ranao might keep the title and be the Sultan of the fishes (*ranao* = lake) and that no *maratabat* was connected to the title. The Sultan sa Ranao nevertheless gained influence because of his government office. He first was an elected municipal councilor. Under the Japanese occupation, he was appointed municipal mayor and later he represented Lanao as an assemblyman. After World War II, he was appointed mayor of Dansalan by the President of the Philippines.

appointed to government offices (1965: 85) — Alauya Adiong Alonto was elected one of the 24 senators and continued his term after 1945.



Picture 12: The Current Bai a Labi sa Ramain is Declared as Such on a Streamer

Sultan sa Ramain Rakiin Aloz Macarampat proclaimed Jasmine Tomindug Alip Imam as Bai a Labi sa Ramain. Photo taken by the author on the MSU campus, 2007.

The profusion of titles can also be explained by the importance of financial contributions, which are expected from new titleholders in the community. Dayang Ali, Bai a Labi sa Didagun, explains:

So, it is a form of community development. Because whenever there are new titles for the sultans and *bai a labis*, they have to make contributions. For the building of mosques, for the building of community projects, like a social hall. They try to make decorations along the way, beautification. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

The title, however, can also be granted in return for financial assistance. In the Sultanate of Toros, there were initially three titles for the sultan. When a mosque was built, two new titles were created as a reward for contributions to the building.

Another reason is that those who have the formal authority in a sultanate sometimes do not dare (or think it worthwhile) to recognize a certain person as a *bai a labi* or sultan among many candidates. In case of recognition, a clan conflict might erupt. In Bayang, seven *datus*, seven *imams*, and one *kali* had to choose one Sultan sa Bayang. However, since there were three candidates, they preferred not to choose one in order to avoid a *rido*. Thus, all three sultans were enthroned with the support of their respective clans. This, however, is considered as being against the *taritib* of the place. During my research I found that few sultans of the 16 were recognized by the entire domain and I could find at least one double for each. One way of remaining the only titleholder of a certain title is by being willing to defend it aggressively. A close relative can also

do this. A *bai a labi* from a minor place reported that a relative threatened to kill those who challenged her position, which helped her to remain the only *bai a labi* of the community where she was granted her title.

Giving away honorary titles to non-Muslims, which happens frequently, is one way to show appreciation for the (actual or possible) support of a beneficiary. Honorary titles are normally those of *bai* or *datu*, not *bai a labi* or sultan, which are both kept reserved for Muslims. Additionally, in case a *bai a labi* or sultan is connected to the name of a place, the titleholder has rights to the place and this can only be inherited; thus these titles are reserved for Maranaos. The honorary titleholder may, nevertheless, form his or her own realm. The non-Maranao Bai sa Pagabagatan (Queen of the South), who was granted several honorary titles (by Maranaos and some indigenous groups as well as German titles of nobility through her German husband), is one example of this. She bought land close to Iligan City and invited some indigenous people to stay there, becoming part of her newly-founded religious group. They worked the land, took part in the religious ceremonies and were provided with food and accommodation. As royal etiquette, they had to bow in front of her majesty and to chase away the flies around her.

In brief, the high number of titles in Lanao has manifold explanations. The first is that many *agamas/barangays* form their own sultanate with various titles. Since Lanao del Sur has more than a thousand *barangays*, this already explains the largest number of the titles. Furthermore, there are male and corresponding female titles and titles can be created for various reasons without any sanction. This is also possible since no fixed obligations, advantages, and authority are connected to royal titles, being first and foremost a status symbol. Along with the high number of titles goes a high number of claimants because of bilateral and rotational inheritance, including not only one family but several descent lines, and an absence of fixed marriage rules, leading to all Maranaos being able to define themselves as royal. Another reason for the vast number of royal titles — what can be considered a resurgence of the sultanates — is the recognition by the government and NGOs of royal titles, underlining their functions as peacekeepers. Possible claimants became interested in the traditional system again since it may be connected to financial support and recognition by the government, as the following section will show.

III. Decline and Resurgence of the Sultanate System

A. A Countermovement to the Rebellion

Saber (1979) writes that during the time of the introduction of the new political and administrative divisions, authority among Maranaos remained mainly with the elders of the clan. If a traditional leader from the supported (*pagawidan*) became a *barrio* captain, the community accepted him. If the person came from the supporters, he would be challenged. The author states:

At the time of its introduction, *Barrio* government was relatively weak so that in general leadership rivalries, the “elders” maintained stronger influence than the *barrio* council. In fact, many communities do not take much interest in organizing their *barrio* governments. Others hold “ghost” elections on paper for the record, hence a *barrio* government is rarely a functional organization in the Maranao area. (p. 72)

The new form of government, which was initially enforced by the military, could not be entirely prevented or ignored and most sultans who occupied a government office via appointment or elections — who were labeled *amigos* by other Muslims, while the government was labeled *gobierno a sarawang a tao* (government of a foreign people) by those who remained with the old system — tried to perform well. In exchange, an officeholder “receive[s] salary and other privileges for his collaborative service in the government” (ibid.: 80). A conflict between the traditional and the modern state systems is attested to by many authors. Among them, Warriner (1975a) explains mismanagement in Lanao during the 1970s in terms of superimposed administrative structures, which ignored the traditional lineage and *agama* system. The superimposition led to people being in office who had no authority in the community, since they were not related to community members. In the years of the Commonwealth and after, the national government under President Manuel Quezon, who claimed that titleholders would not be granted any more rights than every Filipino, officially discouraged the traditional title system. This encouraged counter-elites (see Kreuzer 2003) to find their way into politics, joining the traditional elites.

In 1954, three political leaders in Marawi City, one of them the Datu of Marawi, invited the 28 to a meeting at the *torogan* of the Sultan sa Marawi: “The purpose was to survey the possibility of reorganizing the ranking sultans and *datus* into an active group in order to revitalize their social power which was seen to be weakening” (Saber and Tamano 1986-87: 122). They organized the All-Sultans Association of Marawi. However, the group did not last since the *datus* feared that it would be used for politically motivated purposes, some leaders being from the

political opposition. Other organizations in Lanao developed to revive the traditional system. The Marawi Sultanate League, founded in 1950 before the outbreak of the rebellion, had the goal of preserving the traditional sultanate system. As the son of the first chairman of the Sultanate League reports, the arguments of the founders were that “without the sultanate we cannot call ourselves Maranaos. That is our identity. In order to preserve it we have to organize it, to make it strong” (Interview, Marawi City, 2008). This task was achieved, according to the son, and had as a consequence the renaming of Dansalan as Marawi, which was done on 16 June 1956 by Senator “Domocao” Alonto in honor of the Marawi Sultanate Confederation.

In the 1970s, several Moro movements for self-determination sprouted, like the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM), the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Whereas the MNLF started an open rebellion, members of the traditional elites of the BMLO sought to revive the sultanate system. The chairman of the Bangsa Moro Army (the military wing of the BMLO), Rashid Lucman, was enthroned Paramount Sultan and received the support of the 19 Royal Houses of Mindanao and Sulu. President Marcos confirmed the confederation headed by Lucman on 8 May 1974. The sultanates voted to support the leadership of the president but demanded autonomy as a first step towards self-rule for the Bangsamoro people in Mindanao in lieu of independence as espoused by the MNLF (Yegar 2002: 280). Marcos recognized the Paramount Sultan, “in an attempt to promote further divisions within the Moro leadership” (Che Man 1990: 79). The resurgence of the sultanate system as an alternative to the rebellion worked especially in Lanao where the traditional *datu*-ship was very strong²⁵⁶ and where the rebellion alienated some Muslims by rejecting the traditional system. McKenna comments that consequently among the rebel groups, the “existence of traditional, autocratic leadership was retained, at least implicitly, as an intrinsic component of Moro political culture” (1990: 286).

²⁵⁶ Saber writes in the 1970s that in many cases political offices were refused by traditional elites and that those posts that had been occupied by a member of the *pagawid* were rarely functional (1979: 72).



Picture 13: On 8 May 1974, President Marcos Confirmed the Royal Confederation in Malacañang

From left to right: President Marcos, Imelda Marcos, Tarhata Alonto Lucman, and Sultan Rashid Lucman. Photo kindly provided by Norodin Alonto Lucman.

The divide-and-rule tactic, however, did not work out entirely. Rashid Lucman, once in power, organized a government-financed conference at MSU Marawi (June 4-6, 1974), which resulted in a resolution for autonomy, signed by 20,000 Moros. Marcos, who did not give in to these demands, declared Lucman as his opponent, whereupon he left the country in September 1974. Instead, Ali Dimaporo — Marcos’s closest Muslim ally who also became Lanao del Sur governor and MSU President during the period of martial law — was proclaimed sultan²⁵⁷ in 1982 and this validated his political role traditionally. McKenna argues that his claims on a traditional title were only “equivocal at best”²⁵⁸ (1990: 455), and one *datu* recounts that Dimaporo’s strategy for becoming a sultan was to appoint mayors who would recognize him as sultan:

²⁵⁷ According to Madale (1996), some Maranaos named Dimaporo Paramount Sultan of Lanao (p. 94).

²⁵⁸ Mohammad Ali is the eldest of eight children of Datu Marahom Dimaporo and Potri-Maamor Borngao. His father was Sultan of Binidayan, one of the 28 in West Unayan.

That legendary old man, Dimaporo, he has the power during the time of Marcos. He had the power to appoint mayors. He asks the people, you subscribe to me as a sultan I will appoint you as a mayor. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

Royalists appreciated his proclamation since this also elevated their own position: through the acquisition of royal titles by politicians, they “acquire some legitimacy, moral or otherwise . . . in which approval of the community leaders is obtained” (Madale 1996: 141). Additionally, as sultan, Dimaporo supported the sultanate system through money he could acquire due to his governmental position. In one case, through his representation the national government gave PHP 1.6 million to rebuild the Dayawan *torogan* (ibid: 89). Thus, Dimaporo was respected among royalty and invited to enthrone lower-ranking sultans, even after the Marcos regime.

Ali Dimaporo’s proclamation followed others, and during the martial law period, the “frequency of proclamations of traditional titles” increased steadily, including in Maguindanao (McKenna 1990: 289). Even Christian military commanders were given honorary titles by collaborating *datus*. Old titles were resurrected and new organizations of royal descendants were created between 1982 and 1986 (ibid.: 456). According to Madale (1996), the adoption of the title system by high-ranking politicians led to a revival of the whole system:

The new development whereby Maranaw elective officials try to acquire native titles or ranks has brought about a resurgence and a revival of the traditional government. Almost every week in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City, a ranking government official, whether elective or appointive, is given a traditional title or rank. Successful businessmen have also opted to acquire traditional titles or ranks to legitimize the new important roles and positions they now play in their own communities. Royal houses or sultanates, which hibernated, are now being revived through the coronation of new sets of titled *datus* and *baes* who appear more aggressive and responsive to the needs and problems of the community. (p. 142)

After the death of Ali Dimaporo, his successor in the *pangampong* of Masiu, the mayor of Tamparan (since 1992; previously, his father had held this position for more than 30 years) and Sultan sa Masiu Topaan “Toni” Disomimba re-established political connections between the Royal Houses and Manila. Former Vice-Governor Palawan Disomimba was the Datu a Cabugatan sa Masiu and the father of “Toni” Disomimba. Palawan accepted the title Datu a Cabugatan and allowed Governor Ali Dimaporo to take the title Sultan sa Masiu, even though it was the Disomimba family’s turn. Palawan Disomimba agreed because of political expediency. His son Topaan²⁵⁹ accepted the title *Cabugatan* after his father’s death and later on assumed the

²⁵⁹ Topaan was married to Ali Dimaporo’s daughter, Okura, who passed away in the 1980s. They have one son, Johari.

title Sultan sa Masiu. Stepping in the footsteps of his relative Ali Dimaporo, “Toni” Disomimba, as chairman of 16 Royal Houses, recently received an advisory status by the government. A *bai* recounts:

Actually, Ali Dimaporo was a very close ally of President Marcos. At the time when Dimaporo was enthroned as the Sultan of Masiu, he was the governor of Lanao; he was also the acting President of MSU, appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines and he was the number one closest friend and ally of the former President Marcos. He is the little Marcos²⁶⁰ of the Philippines. Because of this personal relationship, recognition was given to him.²⁶¹ Due recognition and respect for the title he was also holding. And that is why there may not be any role given to him as a sultan but he was using his title and his title was recognized. And it was after his death that Topaan also became the Sultan of Masiu. And Topaan, his father was the vice-governor of Ali Dimaporo and the Cabugatan of Masiu. As a young man, he already saw the progress his father and the governor were making during that time. So when he became the Sultan of Masiu he continued that. And he also explored new possibilities by which the traditional leadership can work with the government. That is why he got so close to Arroyo, even before Arroyo, all the Presidents, with Ramos, with Cory Aquino. There were always meetings. He was always bringing his title of sultan, and his being mayor second. So when there are gatherings he will be more recognized as sultan rather than the mayor of Tamparan. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

On 14 August 1999, President Arroyo was crowned Bai a Labi Dimasangkay sa Pilipinas by Topaan “Toni” Disomimba. Arroyo, even though a non-Muslim, could become a *bai a labi* since her ancestors are from the Iligan region, being a seventh-generation descendant of Sharief Alawi of the Sultanate of Tagoloan. Her father, the former President Macapagal, was already enthroned as Sultan Dimasangkay sa Pilipinas in the 1960s.²⁶² Arroyo was crowned when she was Vice-President of the Philippines. Her coronation led Asgar Sani, Sultan sa Marawi, to remark that “the estimated 1,000 sultanates all over the Philippines will defend the President no matter what,” since she had royal blood. Certainly, this would not stop members of other clans from voting or acting against her nor from supporting another candidate for president if it would serve their own interests and those of their families.

²⁶⁰ On Mohamad Ali Dimaporo and his role in the Marcos government, see Bentley (1998: 243ff.); McKenna (1990: 454ff.).

²⁶¹ McKenna commented that Ali Dimaporo was the “single gatekeeper between the Marcos regime and Mindanao Muslims” and “the only Muslim whom Marcos really trusted” (1990: 455).

²⁶² Dimasangkay means “who has no peers/equals.” Dimasangkay Adil was also a title that was given to a descendant of Sharief Kabungsoan who married into the *Pat a Pangampong*. Arroyo thus got a title, which was highly appreciated since it was Dimasangkay Adil who was the most known genealogical link between Sharief Kabungsoan and the *Pat a Pangampong*. The title is more than honorary since Arroyo, even though she is Christian, was granted a title which is normally reserved for Muslims (*bai a labi*) and which confers rights to a place (sa), the Philippines.



Picture 14: Sultan sa Masiu and President Arroyo

Sultan "Toni" Disomimba (second seated from the left) and male and female members of the 16 Royal Houses with President Arroyo. Photo kindly provided by the sultan.



Picture 15: Topaan "Toni" Disomimba, Sultan sa Marawi

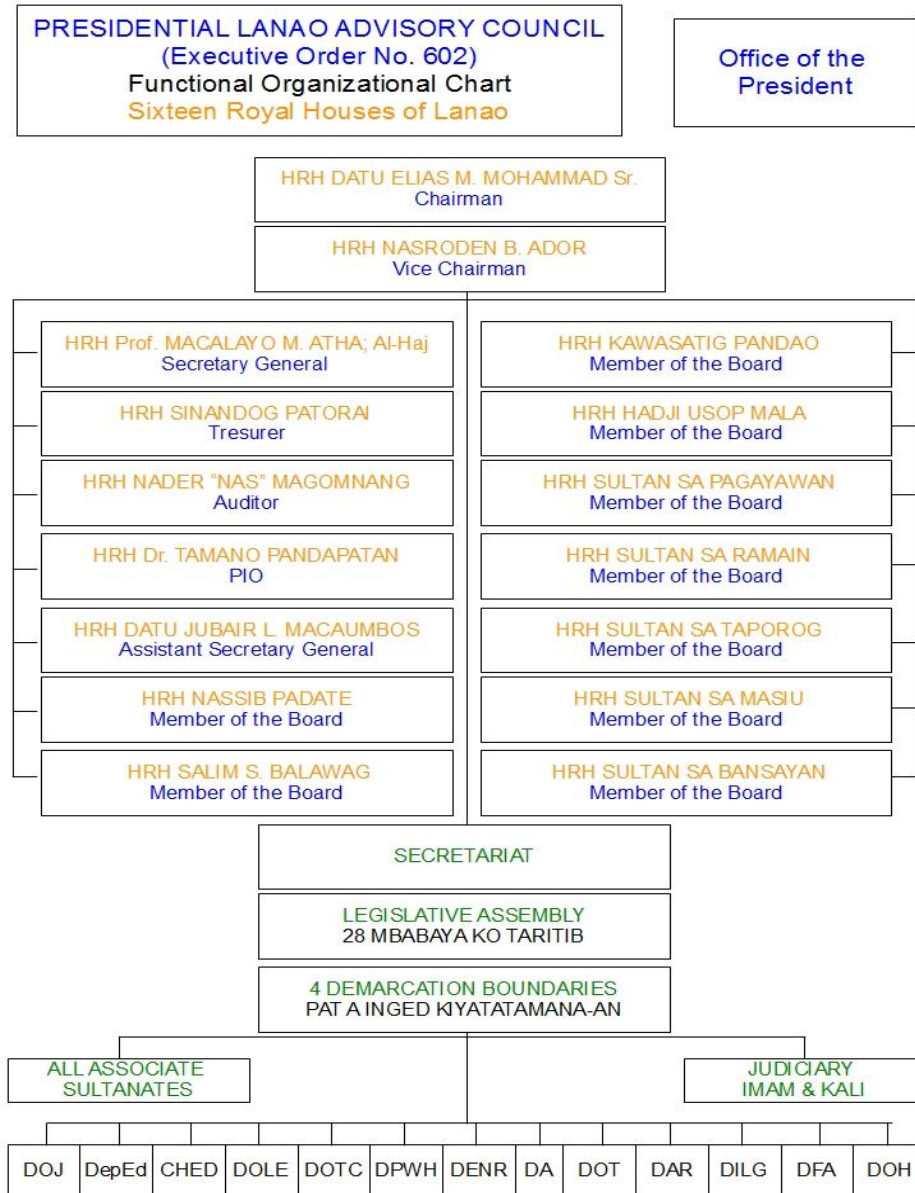
Photo kindly provided by the sultan, 2008.

On August 27-28, 2003, the first Royal Sultanates Conference on Unified and Effective Governance at the Centennial Hall of the Manila Hotel took place; President Arroyo and “Toni” Disomimba took part.²⁶³ It was the first time that Moro royalty officially gathered with governmental functionaries to talk about governance. The intention of the conference was to “tackle important issues that could help secure an immediate, just and permanent peace in Mindanao.” The debate was important since, according to “Toni” Disomimba, “the empowerment and institutionalization of the sultanates as active participants in peace and development in Mindanao could be the key to the final solution of the complex Mindanao problem” (*Manila Bulletin*, July 12, 2003). The role of the *bai a labi* and the participation of women participation in this process, as far as I was informed, was not part of the program. On the initiative of “Toni” Disomimba, representatives of the 16 Royal Houses applied for a partnership with the National Government. After the initial meeting, which took place on January 13, 2007, a schism occurred among the 16 Royal Houses and a second set of the 16 Royal Houses developed under the Cabugatan sa Masiu.

On 9 February 2007, President Arroyo issued E.O. No. 602, creating the Lanao Advisory Council, represented by the 16 Royal Houses of Lanao.²⁶⁴ The task of the council is to advise the President about issues and problems in the area, to facilitate the settlement of conflicts, to assist in the implementation of government programs, and finally to submit a quarterly report. Each of the 16 royal sultanates is equally entitled to represent the council. The government provides an annual funding of one million pesos for its administrative and operational expenses. Women are not officially included in this arrangement; *bai a labis* are just not mentioned. Thus, the chance to strengthen the already existing role of women in the sultanate was not taken into consideration. They remain in the background as supporters of the male representatives.

²⁶³ Present among others were President Arroyo, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone Junior, Jamalul Kiram (Sultan of Sulu), Topaan “Toni” Disomimba as chairman of the Royal Houses in Lanao and president of the Philippine League of Municipalities, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, ARMM Governor Parouk Hussin, and Presidential Advisor Jesus Dureza. Jamalul Kiram’s claim to the Sultanate of Sulu is not recognized by Sultan Fuad of Sulu and Sabah, who declared that Jamalul, Ismail, Aghbimuddin, Rodinood and Kudar Julaspi, were usurpers and fake sultans and that the only true and legitimate sultan is Sultan Muhammad Fuad Abdulla Kiram I. Sultan Fuad was proclaimed sultan on June 3, 2006 and Jamalul Kiram was proclaimed Sultan of Sulu in June 1986. Both sultans claim Sabah as part of their domain.

²⁶⁴ Jesus Dureza, who inducted into office the 16 Royal Sultanates as officers and members of the Lanao Advisory Council, was conferred the traditional title Ayonen Datu sa Filipinas in August 2007 by Disomimba.



Graphic 16: Advisory Council under Chairman HRH (His Royal Highness) Datu Elias Mohammad, Datu a Cabugatan sa Masiu

The acronyms stand for governmental offices: Department of Justice, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Transportation and Communications, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Department of Tourism, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Foreign Affairs, and Department of Health. Information provided by the Council, 2008.

Around the time of the Manila Hotel conference in 2003, the Federated Royal Sultanate League of the Philippines (ROSULPHIL), under the guidance of Al-Sultan Alim Ibrahim Camama, Sultan of Iligan, was created. It came into existence on September 7 with the mass enthronement of 44 sultanates in Iligan City (one sultan and *bai a labi* for every *barangay*). While Baloi claims Iligan to be a part of its *pangampong*, the Iligan royalties trace themselves

back to the Sultanate of Tagoloan (and Sharief Alawi), which is seen as one of seven *aklim* (sovereign states)²⁶⁵ in the area. Other titleholders of the Iligan sultanate point out that their entity is a new one that does not need any genealogical justification or mother sultanate. For them, the only qualifications to become a sultan are that one has to reside in Iligan and be a Muslim. The group is thus more heterogeneous than sultanates of the *Pat a Pangampong*, including also non-Maranaos, like Tausugs. One of the goals of ROSULPHIL is to spread the sultanate system as far as possible in order to bring peace and order to the Muslim communities. The organization is seen as a nationwide federation since its ancestors were rulers all over the country. Thus, it refers to Raja Matanda, Raja Sulaiman, and Raja Lakandula, who ruled the area of today's Manila before the arrival of the Spanish. In the Visayas, rulers like Raja Humabon and Datu Lapu-Lapu, known to have killed the explorer Ferdinand Magellan, are referred to as ancestors. In Jolo, Sultan Makhdum is mentioned. In Mindanao, Sultan Qudarat, Sharief Kabungsoan, and Sharief Alawi are seen as forefathers. Contacts with Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña²⁶⁶ and other non-Maranao politicians were established to strengthen the umbrella functions of the organization. ROSULPHIL claims that all sultanates in the Philippines are automatically members of their organization; this was, however, not confirmed by members of the *Pat a Pangampong*. Additionally, honorary titles are given to non-Muslims like Datu a Adil, given to the mayor of Iligan City, Lawrence Lluch Cruz, or to Europeans who are willing to support the foundation, like the German husband of the Bai sa Pagabagatan, Queen of the South, who became a *datu* in the sultanate. A *torogan* is planned that would contain a royal academy, a library, a royal hall, a mosque, and a royal center for research and scientific studies. ROSULPHIL is primarily concerned with peace advocacy in support of the government, in particular regarding the unity of the three peoples of Mindanao (Bangsamoro Muslims, Lumads, and Christians). The aim of some group members is to become sovereign rulers like the Sultan of Brunei or the Sultan Yang Dipertuan Agung of Malaysia. Women are included as counterparts to men. At the regular meetings, both genders are present, seated separately but in hearing range of each other. In addition, members of indigenous groups and Christians take part in the meetings. Public representatives of the group are usually male.

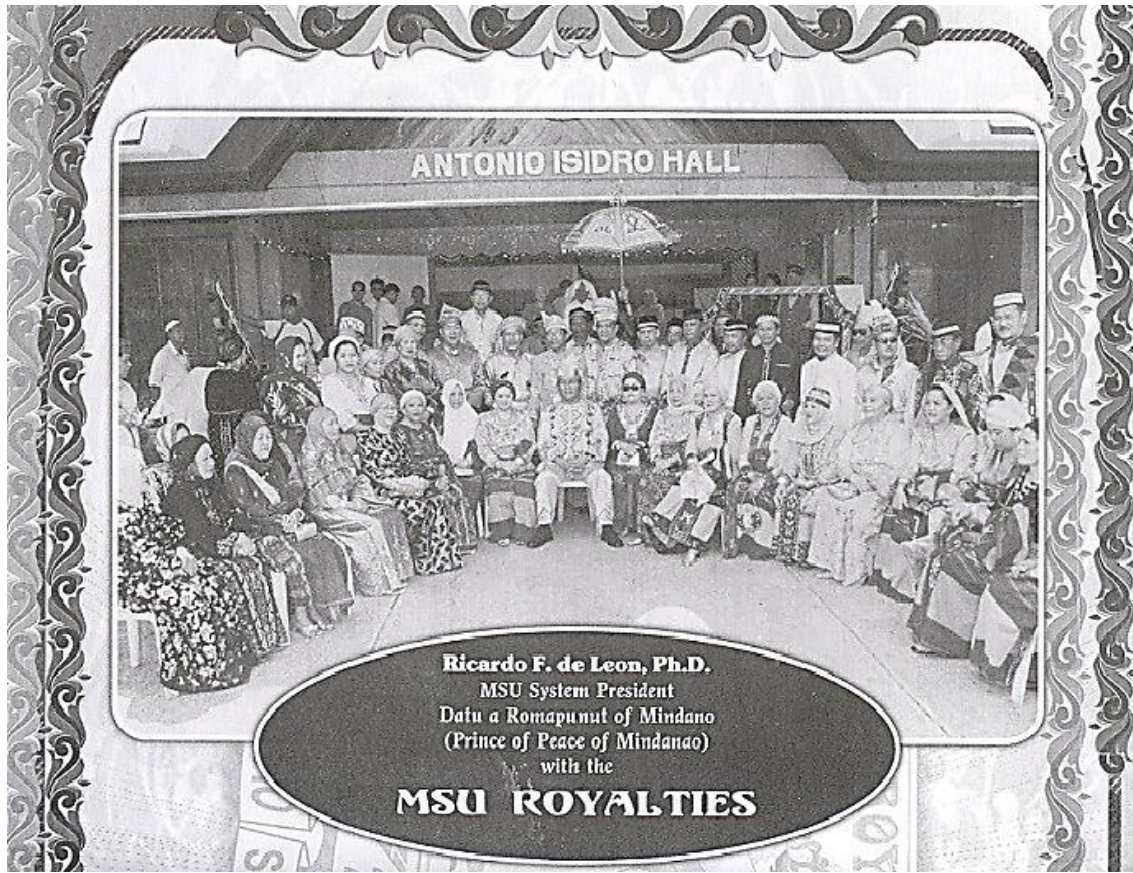
The MSU Royalties are another example of Maranao royalty forming an organization in an attempt at peacekeeping and preservation of traditional leadership in the 2000s. The former

²⁶⁵ The seven *aklim* are: Brunei, Maguindanao, Maladaw, Maluko, Ranao, Sulug, and Tagoloan.

²⁶⁶ Tomas Osmeña is a Balik Islam (a convert to Islam) who was also granted a sultanate title by the Maranao community in Cebu.

interim President of MSU Marawi, Ricardo de Leon, supported the alliance. It consists of a group of *bais* and sultans working at MSU Marawi. In 2006, a month-long celebration of Cultural Heritage under the guidance of de Leon²⁶⁷ took place. During this event, royalty employed at the university were recognized by the president as promoting the integration of cultural communities into the mainstream of national politics. This was seen as being part of the goal of the MSU Vision 2020: to gain recognition as a “peace university” in the Philippines (MSU Royalties 2007). Encouraged by this message, Bai a Labi a Noni sa Boribid, Amina Domato-Sarip, founded with the support of the Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao an association of *bais* at the university. One week later, the Vice-Chancellor for Research and Extension, Eilen Capal Guro, initiated the organization MSU Royalties, of which the Sultan sa Pualas and husband of Amina Domato-Sarip, Taha Sarip, became the founding president. The group includes women and men who usually act separately but communicate among each other. There are thus the male Founding Officers and the female Kalipha Bai (female Caliph), each with a president (in 2007 they were Sultan Taha Sarip and his wife Bai a Labi Amina Domato-Sarip). In addition, the Board of Directors is divided into male and female sub-boards, each with a chair and vice-chair. During my stay, the female MSU Royalties accommodated me. In answer to my frequent questions about the role of women in the sultanate, a conference at MSU was organized and three male representatives of the 16 Royal Houses and the 28 Lawmakers (not belonging to the MSU Royalties) were invited to speak about this issue. The sultans stated that they only accepted the invitation since their female relatives (members of the MSU Royalties) asked them to come. The conference participants were mainly women. In general, the women’s group seemed to be more active than the male group. The new Maranao university president (since January 2008), Macapado A. Muslim, although he was asked to become keynote speaker, did not join the conference. He follows a different policy than the previous President Ricardo de Leon, being more focused on the modernization of the educational system, whereas de Leon as interim President supported traditional Maranao structures as important contributions to peace and order in the area. Muslim thus does not support the MSU Royalties to an equal extent and the group’s activities remain rather limited today.

²⁶⁷ The MSU Royalties granted him the honorary title Datu a Romapunut of Mindanao, “Prince of Peace of Mindanao.”



Picture 16: MSU Royalties

Photo kindly provided by the organization. Program of the 1st Founding Anniversary, 27 July 2007, Marawi City.

The sultanate system experienced a revival in the 1980s, supported by a government divide-and-rule policy; thus, President Marcos supported Maranao royalty in opposition to the MNLF rebels. This policy was further strengthened at the beginning of the twenty-first century under President Arroyo when the traditional system was perceived as a key factor in bringing peace to the Mindanao region and its representatives financed as presidential advisers. The recognition of traditional forms of conflict-solving was, however, also a grassroots policy as the following section will show.

B. Support on the Grassroots Level: Conflict Settlement beyond the State

Georg Klute (2004) notes that after the end of the Cold War (1947-1991), small-scale clashes moved into the focus of public attention. In particular, in development co-operations, an important issue was to find out how to contribute to the settlement of disputes not between but within states. After being criticized for ethnocentrism for not including traditional mechanisms of conflict settlement “beyond the state,” development agencies changed their strategy and began a

search for traditional mechanisms (p. 299). This was followed by a debate on whether such traditions might be undemocratic, and raised the question of their usefulness since they could not prevent local escalations of conflicts (ibid., referring to the critiques of Mehler and Ribaux 2000). Searching for traditional structures that might help to solve local conflicts, Klute highlights two further problems as a consequence of developmental strategies. The first is that strategies to support traditional settlement mechanisms are induced from outside; the second, that these measures provide the possibility for an accumulation of power. Thus, traditional troubleshooters supported by foreign development agencies might undermine the legitimacy of the state. This poses a problem since Klute supposes that governance today is dependent on the idea of “generalized statehood” (“generalisierter Staatlichkeit”), which is dependent on sovereignty over a certain domain, an aspiration to a monopoly of violence, and the establishment and implementation of norms (“Gebietsherrschaft, Streben nach dem Gewaltmonopol, Normsetzung und Normdurchsetzung”). Since even governance beyond the state, like sultanates, orients itself in terms of these characteristics of modern statehood, traditional measures to settle conflicts can only be seen as a secondary option, including by those implementing them (ibid. 300). Klute (2007) later developed this idea in a theory of heterarchy, which considers state structures as only one element of a complex power structure containing several elements, among them traditional systems, which permanently try to attain wider influence or legitimization. Generalized statehood in this context becomes a construction that can be questioned and leaves room for alternative state concepts and alternative conflict settlements as a possible first option.

Klute’s writings, among others, open the door for a broader analysis in which the resurgence of the sultanate system must be judged not only as a countermovement to the rebellion that was fostered by the government, but also as an authority system that strives for more influence on its own initiative. The basic question remains whether this authority can be recognized besides or only within the state system and what role it can occupy when taken as the first option. Thus, concerning the revival of the sultanate system, not only are outer influences of importance but so are internal developments. This means, for example, that royalty search for more influence or the possibility to apply their abilities as peacekeepers in lieu of politicians, who are well-paid but do not necessarily have the qualities to solve local conflicts. One solution is to look for financial sources from outside.

The NGO RIDO was founded in 2006 to solve *ridos* by using the traditional system.²⁶⁸ For this purpose, clans claiming titles within the Sultanate of Marawi were reorganized. RIDO is led by an aspirant to a sultanate title in one of the Alliance of Marawi sultanates. Under his initiative (being encouraged by a female elder of the clan), the genealogy of several clans was collected and the sultanate reorganized by writing down its *taritib*. Based on this reorganization, RIDO aims to solve conflicts with the financial help of foreign donors. Before, clans within the sultanate were only loosely organized; active relationships were rather based on the family and close relatives. At the same time, traditional knowledge about clan membership was not widespread and was mainly of importance when needed, for example in case a neutral family had to be found to serve as mediators in a *rido*. Knowledge about clan structures and the *salsila* was usually kept by elders and specialists, and was not necessarily well-organized. Bamgbose writes that in some communities the people “could hardly distinguish the clans as there have been so many cross-clan marriages,” which were made “to strengthen community and familial ties, and prevent discord” (2003: 68). Madale (1996) relates that in the Sultanate of Dayawan there was no Council of Elders, and a new set of younger and more educated *bais* and *datus* (the last set was chosen about 60 years earlier) had first to be chosen²⁶⁹ in several meetings by the heirs of the title (p. 94).

RIDO gathered the *salsila* around 2007 and, in consensus with the female and male elders, wrote down and thereby rearranged the *taritib* in accordance with the *sharia* law to ensure the “promotion and recognition of traditional honorable titles by the government and other institutions” (Atar 2007: 24). The clans take turns: one sub-clan carries the title Sultan, another

²⁶⁸ RIDO resolved a number of *ridos*. The major cases had the following causes: “reckless imprudence resulting to homicide; land disputes resulting to murder; sarcastic words and insults resulting to murder; political rivalry and vote buying resulting to frustrated murder; reckless imprudence and miscommunication resulting to serious injuries and grave threat; pornography resulting to public scandal; collision of two vehicles resulting to two consecutive riots and grave threats; political rivalry resulting to multiple murders; injuries and accidental shooting resulting to multiple injuries.”. Minor cases had been the consequence of “miscommunication resulting to grave threat; extortion and physical injuries; threat for the implementation of project at Poona Piagapo; elopement; forced marriage; reckless imprudence resulting to homicide; collision of two vehicles resulting to injuries; reckless imprudence resulting to serious injuries and shotgun marriage resulting to grave threat” (Atar 2007: 32). In both minor and major conflicts, 20 people were killed and 28 injured. Before receiving the help of foreign sponsors, the Council of Elders had resolved other cases, such as kidnapping for ransom, murder, and fraternal conflict. The organization further enthroned the former Lanao del Sur governor (1988-1992), Saidamen Pangarungan, as Sultan sa Madaya, one of the five sultanates in Marawi City. The title had not been granted for about ten years since there had been a conflict about its distribution among the descendants who could claim the title. The enthronement of Pangarungan resolved a *rido* about the traditional title.

²⁶⁹ The re-organization was initiated by Abdhulla Madale, who succeeded in attracting the royal heirs to rebuild their *torogan* with the financial help of the National Commission on Culture and Arts, community enterprises, and individual supporters like Ali Dimaporo.

one Cabugatan and a third Mama sa Marawi. Whereas before the titles had been held for life terms, they are now²⁷⁰ restricted to eight years. This arrangement serves two purposes: to be able to control the distribution of titles but also to give sub-clans and families the chance to gain the title through limited terms. An election takes place after each term, which lets the other sub-clans have their turn in case they have an appropriate candidate. Another arrangement of the NGO was to change the understanding of who belongs to the Council of Elders. Before it was composed of the parent's generation, who could claim the title of and represent the descent line; the new arrangement states that elders represent the three sub-clans and are higher than average in status. As of 2008, there were about 80 male and female members of the Council of Elders. Also, the role of women in the sultanate was a point of discussion, and for each female title the elders of the clan defined special functions, which were written down.²⁷¹ The functions differ from title to title but also from clan to clan. While in one clan the *bai a labi* is a leader and decision-maker, in another her main focus is, besides religious obligations, which she has in every clan, to give support in conflict-solving. Finally, RIDO campaigns to maintain the curse against those who disregard the *taritib*, since its use may eventually prevent conflicts about titles or double enthronements. No person can enforce any punishment against someone who has been enthroned. However, among those who remember the curse, which was first pronounced by the ancestors of the *Pat a Pangamong*, Pascan of Unayan, Amiyalongan Simban of Masiu, and Popawan of Bayabao, and the rule that one can only take a title when properly chosen, there are few attempts to occupy a title without the blessing of the community.

The *salsila* before never comprised every member of a clan and the choice of the next titleholder was made informally by clan elders. The new *salsila* written down by RIDO made the process of choosing someone for a title more transparent. Clan members nevertheless spoke of the danger of forgetting someone in the *salsila*. Another problem appeared: the *salsila* made it

²⁷⁰ According to Labay (1980), the movement to restrict terms started at the end of the 1970s (p. 119).

²⁷¹ The functions of the female titleholders are different in each clan. Among the Sidikadatu clan, the Bai a Labi sa Marawi, the Bai a Labi a Gaus and the Bai a Diamba sa Marawi have the following tasks: to be a role model (*rawaten*), leader, decision-maker, and financier; to lay the carpet at weddings; to collect *pagayanan*; to celebrate traditional religious festivities such as Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr, and Morod (the celebration of the birth of Prophet Mohammad). She celebrates Rabi ul Awwal (Morod a Datu), Rabu ul Akhir (Morod a Bae), Jamad ul Ula (Morod for Travellers), and Jamad ul Akhir (Morod for the poor, *miskin*). In the Maruhom Sidik clan, the Poona Bai a Labi sa Marawi and the Bai a Labi sa Marawi have to practice Islamic tenets like Eid al-Fitre and Eid al-Adha. They have to give intelligent and full support to resolving problems in the community, including *ridos* and development problems, and they have to practice Maranao traditions and support those who marry. Among the Balindong Jaman clan, the main task of the Bai sa Marawi, Potre Maamor sa Marawi, Pangianamapay sa Marawi, and the Bai a Waris sa Marawi is to support the sultan (Atar 2007).

obvious that the land of the sultan had not been justly distributed and RIDO in order to avoid conflicts tried to compensate financially those members of the royal family who had a claim on land that was occupied by other families. The organization of the clan by writing down a common *taritib* and *salsila* of the last five generations thus brought more transparency concerning rights and duties one can claim or has to fulfill, but also concerning lapses that had occurred in the past. On the one hand, the transparency diminishes the influence of elders. On the other hand, the whole Sultanate of Marawi is more structured and stronger not only in solving *ridos* but especially in preventing conflicts about titles. Also, women in the sultanate are better organized and a discussion about their roles and functions is part of the restructuring. However, whereas the sultanates are seen, and thus supported, by the government and international organizations as a countermovement to the rebellion, it has to be considered that they follow their own agenda. Traditionalists are eager to strengthen their influence, not necessarily in the framework of governmental positions. Moreover, their appeals for more autonomy and means in the process of political decision-making are not hidden. The re-traditionalization can thus possibly appear as facilitating the “no war, no peace” environment, as a countermovement to the rebellion but also in the aspiration to establish an alternative form of governance. In Jolo, this manifested itself in an independence declaration of the Sulu sultanate on November 17, 2010.²⁷² In February 2011, a businessman from Sabah (with a Filipino background) was proclaimed Sultan of Sulu. The declaration led to a debate in the Malaysian media about his rightful claim but also about the possible problems that might ensue, like the dual loyalty of former Filipino

²⁷² The Declaration of Assertion of Independence reads partly as follows:

“We, the United Tausug people hereby declare the Sultanate of Sulu Darul Islam’s assertion of her independence and sovereignty, as she has since 1405, from now exercise and will continuously exercise her very own sovereignty in running the de jure government within her legal territory as an independent and sovereign State.

We are therefore, demanding the withdrawal of the Filipino neo-colonial and de facto government of the Republic of the Philippines from our beloved country — the State of Sulu sultanate Darul Islam, with due respect and humility.

We welcome the international community’s recognition and support, both legal and/or political and humanitarian. We invite and welcome international peacekeeping and civilian presences to supervise our beloved country’s peace, security and development.

We also request the governments of the world due respect and protection of our Tausug citizens sojourning within their respective territories.

Let the copy of this Declaration be specifically furnished the United States of America, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, People’s Republic of China, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia.

Further, let the copy of this Declaration also be immediately furnished to the Republic of the Philippines, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the Local Government of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Zamboanga Peninsula and Palawan.

Lastly, let the copy also of this Declaration be furnished to the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Unanimously signed by the United Tausug on the scheduled ‘Assertion of Independence Day’ on the 11th day of Julgadji 1431 A.H., corresponding to 17 November 2010 C.E., which is also the 605th Centenary Commemoration of the State of Sulu sultanate Darul Islam, held at Plaza Tulay, Jolo, Sultanate of Sulu Darul Islam.” (Julkarnain 2010).

citizens who have settled in Malaysia to the king of Malaysia and the Malaysian constitution on the one hand and the newly declared Sultan of Sulu on the other. Further, as the researcher Farish Noor comments, “this new development has . . . raised the political temperature in Sabah where opposition leaders and parties have tried in recent months to rekindle feelings of Sabahan solidarity and opposition to the Federal government of West Malaysia.” He continues to pose the question how the Philippine government might react to the declaration of the sultan that the Sultanate of Sulu is not part of the Philippines and that it is a government in exile, hoping to bring the issue to the International Court of Justice and the United Nations (Noor 2011).

C. A Local Alternative

Politics in Lanao is dominated by political clans, which mainly descend from the *datu* class, but not every sultan or *bai a labi* goes into politics and most politicians do not have a royal title. The new generation of Alontos and Adionsgs does not carry royal titles because they do not feel the need to do so. They are “good people” descended from local rulers. Besides “the three Gs” (guns, goons and gold)²⁷³ that are needed to stay in politics, they also have the fourth, genealogy. Many politicians see titles as meaningless, except for “showing off.” The sultanate system, however, remained functioning on the community level in its connection to community services, appreciation of royal titles, solving conflicts, and in particular giving importance to descent lines and status. Thus, two parallel systems developed: a political system that is dominated by guns, goons, and gold, and to a lesser degree genealogy, and a second system that is based on community services and responsibilities, which are paid back by appreciation and status. There are those combining the two, such as “Toni” Disomimba, but traditionalists having no intentions to go into politics tend to define the national political system as a threat to their authority and to the social order. Thus, they glorify the time before colonization. The Sultan sa Butig emphasizes that the traditional authority of the *panoroganan* equals the authority of the president of the Philippines in his respective realm. The new political system, however, has destructive effects on the Maranao system and society:

That is why when I became the Sultan of Butig, I did not allow anybody to represent me, not even my father because he does not possess this title, it is owned by the people. There was one time when somebody asked me to give him authority

²⁷³ The “three Gs” are mentioned frequently in the Philippines, referring to the general method of winning elections, signifying corruption, vote buying, violence to the point that the oppositional candidate will be killed, and the threat of violence to pressure people into writing their names on a ballot or avoid going to the polls to cast their votes (Madale 1996: 138).

to represent me, being the Sultan of Butig. I answered him that cannot be done because of the power of the sultans of the 16 *panoroganan*, and the 28 and the four places, especially the 16 *panoroganan* because their word is the law in his jurisdiction. His power is parallel to that of the President of the Philippines. Not the mayor or the governor, who has to seek the approval of the regional governor and other higher officials. The Sultan of Butig does not need to ask the consent of any ruler in the eastern part of Unayan. Another *taritib* is when a sultan (*panoroganan*) is going to make his speech, he does not need to seek permission from other people who are present in the gathering; that is the practice of our ancestors . . .

To be frank, the concept of democracy has ruined our traditional system of leadership in the principalities of Lanao. The brothers, who were not fighting one another, are now fighting each other. Married couples were separated when their parents had different political affiliations during elections. If we can return the traditional power of our ancestors, the way they exercised their power, we can return to their saying that their community was likened to water that is cool, undisturbed, and peaceful. (Speech given in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

The glorification of a past in which the sultan was the sole functional and respected leader in a unified community can also be found among other royalists. They are trying to revive the traditional system since they believe it to be more efficient and since they increase their own influence by doing so. The national political system is judged as corrupt and without moral legitimacy and thus politicians are not chosen by the people, unlike the traditional *datus* and *bais*, who gain their positions without corruption. “Because of this lack the elected leaders must continue to use money, force, and goons to carry out whatever programs they wish to purpose.” (Madale 1996: 141).

Bai a Labi ko Shakba likewise connects negative attributes with the national political system and sees a way out of it by reviving the traditional system. According to her, politicians buy their positions whereas traditional titleholders are chosen by their community because of their deeds, their character, and blood line. While political power is based on connections grounded in corruption and the threat of violence, traditional power is built on connections derived from community services. Further, the *bai a labi* favors the traditional system because of its democratic elements, adding that the people accept this form of governance — as opposed to the national political system — since they are accustomed to it. She, however, does not mention that the sultanate system only includes Maranaos since it is based on descent lines. Non-Maranaos are excluded from the start, leading to a strengthening of their ethnic group through the exclusion of outsiders, an approach that goes along well with the “no war, no peace” environment in which conflicts are institutionalized by cohesive groups. Bai a Labi ko Shakba explains:

[Because] traditionally they [royalty] function well, but with the coming in of the current political system it becomes just a titular . . . They are just there to wave, they acknowledge, but it is really the political government that runs the show . . . It is frustrating, because there could be a lot of things that they could probably do in partnership with the local government units. And it is what we will be trying to manage now . . .

I like to personally believe that it is still the traditional political system that will work. It should be helped actually. The government should find a way to empower these traditional leaders rather than to suppress them. Because all the more that you suppress it [the traditional system] all the more the people become confused. And any system that is not, we call it *tagalog yan*, which is not accustomed to them, will really really find a way to counteract the prevailing system. (Interview, Iligan City, 2008)

In order to strengthen the revival of the sultanate system the past is idealized, as can be seen in the following excerpt from an interview with another *bai a labi*:

The Muslims survived even before the coming of the Spaniards, with the sultanates and it was very efficient. No troubles at this time; people are very well disciplined. And there is no mass poverty during this time because the sultan helped the poor. Not like at this time, the poor become poorer and the rich become richer. Because some of our government officials enrich themselves, they do not share with the people. But during the sultanate government, no problem, because the sultan is committed to look after the welfare of the masses . . .

According to the old folk, during the time of the sultanate when there was no government, the people had been very cooperative. They helped one another; you cannot find somebody that is begging, because it is the responsibility of the *datu* and the *bai* to help. Especially when you suffer from a misfortune, there are a number of [titleholders] in the family so they contribute; the whole community contributes food, money . . . No corruption because people are willing to give. They believe that it is more blessing to give than to receive. So it is the opposite of what it is now. Everybody wants to make money for himself without considering the welfare of the community.

That is why those belonging to the old are suggesting that we just return to the old system. Especially the ethic of the elections in our Muslim communities is very bad. It comes down to killing close relatives. *Barangay* elections, which was recently conducted, how many people died. Brother versus brother! There are even father and a son fighting for *barangay* captain. Cousins and they killed one another. This is actually here in Marawi City. And in the family, there are around seven people died during these elections, fighting for this really low position. So the spirit of loyalty and helpfulness was erased, in the minds of the people because they have developed this materialistic attitude. That is something that [happens] not only in this province but worldwide. Now leaders become corrupt. And they consider their own personal interest.

Whereas in the sultanate it is more on service to humanity, the *datu*s, sultans and *bai a labis* are happy to help. They are happy to do something for somebody. They are not after getting. That is the difference. That is the nature of it, more on giving than receiving. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

The *bai a labi* is in opposition to the current political system and at the same time idealizes her own position in order to justify it. Criticized are the materialism and egocentrism of politicians as well as the democratic system, which is regarded as destroying family bonds by making descent lines and thus the support of the weak unimportant.

Others claim that traditional leaders are the ones who are of real influence in the community and that politicians can only lead because they have the power of guns and money. They, however, cannot easily replace a sultan. A *datu* explains:

Why not revert back to the situation that the sultanate has to lead the *barangay*? Because, initially, they were the ones [who were] influential. Because people leading the community by force of guns and money this is not really . . . That is something that has caused problem to the community. So if the leadership in the *barangay* will revert back to the sultan meaning that the sultan will lead the *barangay* . . . become a leader in the *barangay* . . . aside of his [the politicians'] money he has many things to cope [with]. He is becoming rich; he has to kill somebody. He has to [shoot many folks] because he does not really have . . . he lacks many things that he has to cope [with] to be able to be [to replace the] sultan. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

The role of the traditional leaders in conflict-solving is highlighted as an argument for the recognition of the importance of the sultanate system. An NGO worker explains:

Some traditional structures are still active. For example in settling conflicts. The responsibilities of those *bai a labis* [and sultans] had been corrupted by the government. [A] very simple example is the *barangay* structure. There is the *barangay* chairman; he appoints a body composed of individuals that is responsible to solve conflicts. But those that are appointed are usually [his] relatives who do not have any background in conflict resolution. So the people call the attention of the sultan when there is a conflict . . . (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

Traditionalists are convinced that political positions can be more effective in a community when a sultan takes them, because it is also part of the *maratabat* of a titleholder to find an agreement between conflicting relatives. It is said that majority of the *ridos* are settled by local leaders. However, since authority oftentimes does not go beyond one's own kin group, members of a higher-ranking descent line, sultan or not, still have to consult the elders, *datu*s, *bais*, or sultans from a certain place. Thus, the argument that local conflicts are solved more efficiently when the national government or NGOs provide funding to sultanates is tenuous. In specific when one takes into consideration that there are more than thousand sultanates in Lanao del Sur alone. Hence, an alternative is to integrate the sultanate system into the governmental system, which was already partly done by creating the Advisory Council. Governmental funding can help to

solve certain *ridos*, especially those of the relatives of the titleholders receiving it. It, however, also led to the development of a second set of 16 Royal Houses and thus a split in authority and unity among Maranao sultanates. In addition, the 16 do not have access to each community and, in consequence, they still have to ask local leaders for their support. Madale (1997) explains:

In Lanao where there are 15 sultanates, a minor sultan might exercise a more effective power or control over his local jurisdiction than a supposedly higher sultan having only a theoretical sovereignty over a larger territory. (1997: 115)

The financial support of some sultanates and the neglect of others can increase local conflicts and stabilize a hierarchy that before existed only symbolically. One *bai a labi*, realizing that the government had recognized the 16 Royal Houses as an Advisory Council,²⁷⁴ stated her fears that the money they received would stay with the 16 and only serve their communities:

Maybe in your study, you can have a note there, regarding a leader thinking of helping this Maranao sultanates, it should involve all the sultanates of the area. So that his move to help the people will reach the people. If he will give only to the *Panoroganans* sa Maranao, this *panoroganans* will not care for everybody. So even if he will give millions, he will not care for everybody. If those millions will be divided into pesos, maybe everybody will be taken cared off. Going to Marawi City, having it sorted, who are those *bai a labis* and sultans of Marawi City and Mala a Bayabao?

So, maybe he will be serving most of the people, not only one person of Mala a Bayabao. Mala a Bayabao covers Ragain Ditsaan, Marawi City, Marantao, Saguierang, Bubung, Tapai. And under one *Pagawidan* sa Ranao. So why only Ragain [the Sultan sa Ragain is one of the 16], that is only one municipality! (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

The interview shows that there is jealousy among the sultanates and that the single sultanates are divided regarding material prospects. Financial support of local sultanates, however, is not sufficient in solving *ridos*, in particular in a “no war, no peace” environment where *ridos* are triggered by elections and the proliferation of arms. Leaving these concerns aside, the traditional system is useful in solving *ridos*, the more so when the leaders have sufficient financial support in doing so. A one-sided distribution of financial resources, however, can lead to an increase of conflicts and the stabilization of a hierarchical and patriarchal structure that was previously largely symbolic. Regarding the Advisory Council in particular, only the leading sultans of the 16 Royal Houses are financially and by position supported; women and minor sultanates are not included in the council. Further, it has to be considered that the approaches of governmental functionaries and members of the sultanates may be different. Royalty have the tendency to

²⁷⁴ Generally, the 16 did not spread this knowledge and my interview partners were rather surprised by it.

revive what they imagine to have been their system before colonization, in order to solve local conflicts and disharmony and to find a way out of the “no war, no peace” environment. This includes the strengthening of a cohesive ethnic group with no entry for foreigners into the leadership hierarchy except through intermarriage, a tendency that carries the potential to exacerbate the national conflict when not properly included in national state structures. The governmental approach is rather a divide-and- rule policy by strengthening those groups that are willing to cooperate in lieu of the groups demanding increased autonomy or independence in order to solve the national conflict. This policy may also lead to the strengthening of a new oppositional group.

Conclusion

Although the 16 Royal Houses refer to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei as examples of how the government of the Philippines should support the sultanates, the developments in these neighboring countries cannot serve as a blueprint for the revival in Lanao. Rather, these movements have to be judged within their own context. In Indonesia, for example,²⁷⁵ the revival of the sultanates was described as a development of decentralization after the Suharto regime, as part of the political opposition (Klinken 2007), and as a form of reconciliation after the civil war between Christians and Muslims (Bräuchler 2007). In Lanao, it should be predominantly defined as a consequence of a governmental attempt to integrate local structures in order to enforce central authority in lieu of undermining demands for stronger autonomy or independence. However, it has also other causes.

The sultanate system has experienced a revival since the 1980s as a consequence of several developments, mainly connected to the rebellion. The growth of the national Bangsamoro movement, especially in Lanao, is connected to the perception that the sultanate system is an expression of local Muslim identity. The revival can also be seen as part of an international movement since the 1990s supporting traditional structures in order to solve small-scale conflicts, especially on the grassroots level (Henley and Davidson 2007; Klute 2004). That the traditional system is useful in settling conflicts can be shown through the help of the *datu* system and the interventions of other intermediaries (RIDO). The interference of foreign donors or governmental

²⁷⁵ Indonesia is taken as an example because it has been host to an elaborate debate on the recent phenomena of re-traditionalization.

agents, however, can create jealousy among sultanates as well as schisms and a change in the hierarchy.

The sultanate system is a self-sustaining structure beyond the state, looking for further obligations and authority. How it develops further will depend on future political decisions, of which the question of women is only one part. So far, the government has not officially recognized the function of the *bai a labi*. Through the financial support of primarily male representatives of the 16 Royal Houses, the role of the sultan is strengthened but that of the *bai a labi* neglected. On the contrary, on the grassroots level, influenced through international NGOs, all clan members — male and female — are included in the decision-making and reorganization of the clan and sultanate, which remains a non-governmental structure. In the next chapter, I discuss the extent to which local women's power and empowerment are based on traditional laws in the general framework of the “no war, no peace” environment, modern state politics, and Islamic influences.

Chapter Three: Between Re-traditionalization and Islamic Resurgence: Gender Debates in a “No War, No Peace” Environment

Introduction

The re-traditionalization movement that has taken place in Lanao del Sur through political agents has not included the empowerment of women, since hierarchical structures are nurtured instead of developing the potential to strengthen women’s participation in decision-making in general. Further, royal women complain about the decline of traditional women’s rights, specifically in terms of the lack of respect for women in contemporary times. In pre-colonial times, female royalty were held in high esteem, but today they are more easily taken for granted.

Traditional views and positions of women were partly replaced by national gender norms, above all concerning education and employment. Equal access to education for both sexes was provided and co-education was introduced in Lanao, whereas employment in well-paying and prestigious positions remained dominated by men (Eviota 1992). Certainly, the Muslim rebellion had effects on gender norms. Acting as an agent of change, the movement allowed Moro women to develop their leadership qualities and political activism (Angeles 1998). The Islamic resurgence movement finally partly strengthened conservative norms on female dress and public appearance but also provided well-defined public spaces for women, for example as *madrasah* teachers.

Islamic narratives of justification assume critical importance in the “no war, no peace” environment since they are linked to the question of self-determination. Gender thus became a political issue connected to nationalism (Moghadam 1994). After the Maguindanao massacre on November 23, 2009 (see chapter one), a member of the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) mentioned two great challenges for the ARMM LGUs at the nomination celebration of Nariman “Ina” Ambolodto as Maguindanao acting governor. The first one was to strengthen the Islamic moral code and the institutions to support it (against which the culprits of the massacre had acted), and the second was to show to the “West” that Mindanao has strong Muslim women leaders who are empowered (in order to show that Islam provides women’s rights, this being demonstrated by the nomination of a female acting governor) (Gutoc 2010). Seen by many as one of the young Maranao women leaders, Samira Gutoc-Tomawis notes that women’s leadership is also tested from inside the society, despite not only Islamic but also cultural norms which protect women. She thus sees the challenge to female leadership not only as

a false Western perception of Islam but also as corresponding to social reality which is not always in accordance with certain religious or cultural norms. The massacre and the connected debate demonstrate the tensions between norm and practice that women are confronted with in a “no war, no peace” environment in the Philippines.

Both Islamization and re-traditionalization movements use Islamic narratives. One can find conservatives applying them to reduce the public space for women, as well as traditional elites who refer to them in order to justify female public participation in politics. Since the 1990s, new protagonists have also been participating in the power struggle for the definition of Islam. Islamic feminists specifically cite the Qur’an as the source of women’s rights while non-Muslim civil funding organizations provide space for Islamic definitions. In this chapter, different fields of female power are examined by setting them in relation to traditional and Islamic influences, with a special focus on counterhegemonic movements (Ong and Peletz 1995: 4). These can be detected in traditional conceptions and in the framework of religion being shaped through Muslim women’s movements and in particular Islamic feminism. Because of the “no war, no peace” environment, Islamic narratives of justification are of crucial importance, making an argument for women’s rights in the Islamic framework more or less an obligation for women’s activists. In addition, the ongoing political re-traditionalization, a movement which is Muslim but syncretistic, taking the form of a revival of the ancient sultanates and the fortification of the traditional *datu* system, uses this angle and does not refer to *adat* laws. For a theoretical debate on feminism, this means that religious or post-secular movements (Braidotti 2008) have to be taken into consideration as a possible source of female agency (to be understood as the ability to empower a person).

I. Traditional Spaces of Power

A. Symbolic Equality and Male Hegemony: The Multifocality of Power

Gender debates on Southeast Asia often highlight a relatively high status of women in this region for various reasons. Karim (1995) points out that a researcher has to consider that, in opposition to “Western” gender concepts, those used in Southeast Asia are derived from

the need to maintain social relationships through rules of complementarity and similarity rather than hierarchy and opposition, and the need to reduce imbalance in power through mutual responsibility and cooperation rather than oppression and force. (p. 16)

It is thus not surprising that in the *Pat a Pangampong*, a complementarity of male and female royal titles can be found, establishing a form of symbolic gender equality or parallelism as the following pictures demonstrate. The first one shows an enthronement ceremony at the Sultanate of Patani in Lanao del Sur. Seven men and seven women were enthroned at the same time (in the picture one woman is missing). As the second picture indicates, male and female titles correspond to each other; thus there is a Sultan a Pithi-ilan sa Patani and a Bai a Pithi-ilan sa Patani, and so on and so forth. The pictures raise the question of symbolic equality. Apart from the equal number of enthronements of men and women and the counterparts in male and female titles, it has to be noticed that the Sultan a Pithi-ilan sa Patani is seated as the only person on an outstanding chair referring to a superordinate position.



Picture 17: Enthronement Ceremony, Sultanate of Patani, Lanao del Sur, *Datus* and *Bais*

The sultanate enthrones seven men and seven women at the same time. In the picture, one woman is missing. Seating order from left to right: Sultan a Romapunut, Datu sa Patani, Sultan a Dimasangkay, Sultan a Samporna, Sultan a Cabugatan, Radia Moda, Sultan a Pithi-ilan sa Patani, Bai a Pithi-ilan sa Patani, Poona Bai, Bai a Cabugatan, Bai a Samporna, Bai a Dimasangkay, Bai a Patani, Bai a Romapunut. Photo taken by the author, 2008.



Picture 18: Sultan a Pithi-ilan sa Patani
Photo taken by the author, 2008.



Picture 19: Streamers Showing Counterpart-Titles of Men and Women in the Sultanate of Patani
Photo taken by the author, 2008.

One can ask how far the detected symbolic equality in Lanao del Sur is a hint of egalitarian structures, which are frequently referred to in studies of other ethnic groups in the Philippines (Burton 2004,²⁷⁶ Hofmann 1997; Lauser 1997). Among other things, it has to be considered that parallel gender structures cannot easily be reconciled with an egalitarian society in which both genders are equally powerful in their respective fields. One can only speak of a certain form of equality when parallel structures are not hierarchical but complementary (see, e.g., Schröter 1997).

The cross-cultural existence of gender egalitarian societies was most prominently proposed by Eleanor Leacock (1981), who suggested that researchers so far have tended to follow the “myth” of male dominance in order to “take the universalist position”, thereby ignoring the existence of culturally-defined egalitarian societies (Ortner 1996: 142). Ilse Lenz (1990), in her research on power and gender in non-patriarchal societies, follows this argumentation but adopts a more nuanced definition of what egalitarian relationships are. She highlights the approach used by Leacock of multifocal qualities of power²⁷⁷ instead of the unilinear definition of Weber.²⁷⁸ Based on this presumption, she defines various spaces or fields of power (Machtfelder) which can autonomously be regulated, controlled, and decided on by people of both genders. This can create a balance between relations of the sexes²⁷⁹ on the whole when there is no hierarchical order of the fields but complementary sources that are used as the basis for negotiating the social order (Röschenthaier 1997: 284). The balance between female economic and male political autonomy among the matrilineal Hopi, as well as the domestic authority of the woman and the

²⁷⁶ Burton specifically detects egalitarian structures among the Mamanua, who were initially nomadic hunters and gatherers in the northeast of Mindanao (2004: 190). Among neighboring agricultural groups (the Higaonon, the Blaan, and the Manobo), the man was the main decision-maker of the group. With the introduction of shifting cultivation from the neighboring Manobo, which provided men with greater control over production and distribution of goods as well as the *datu*-ship system, the Mamanua egalitarian gender structures were diminished. Among those groups, however which changed from shifting cultivation to cash crop economies, the relative power of the woman has increased since women take part in the production and do the selling of the products. The shared responsibilities with the men in contributing to the subsistence of the family in consequence give women more influence in decision-making processes.

²⁷⁷ Power in this context is defined as the influence, based on resources or skills, that a person can achieve in social relationships (Lenz 1997: 232).

²⁷⁸ Weber (1980) defines power as any chance within a social relationship to assert one's own will against resistance (p. 28).

²⁷⁹ “I understand gender-symmetrical societies as a wide-ranging circle of groups with a balance between the sexes. This balance is the result of a symmetry of fields of power available to men and women: central fields of power are production, human reproduction, sexuality and the body, political processes, and the symbolic order of a society.” (“Unter geschlechtssymmetrischen Gesellschaften verstehe ich den breitgefächerten Kreis der Gruppen mit einer Balance zwischen den Geschlechtern. Diese ergibt sich aus einer Symmetrie der Machtfelder in der Verfügung von Männern und Frauen: Zentrale Machtfelder sind Produktion, die menschliche Reproduktion, Sexualität und Körper, politische Prozesse und die symbolische Ordnung einer Gesellschaft.”) (Luig 1990: 282)

representation of the matrilineage in public through the man among the Minangkabau in Indonesia are taken as examples for such gender symmetry. The specific trait in these examples is that the spaces are not entirely gender-segregated. Instead, there is exchange, minor participation, and reference to the other sex (Lenz 1997: 233, 1995, 1995a; Metje 1997: 284; Schlegel 1997).

Lenz (1990) argues against the notion of egalitarian societies, since in using it the differences between men and women are not sufficiently pronounced. She instead suggests using the notion of gender-symmetrical societies (*Geschlechtssymmetrische Gesellschaften*). This analytical tool serves to describe gender equality and differences of gender identity (Lenz 1995: 56; 60). Ortner (1996) argues more vehemently against the egalitarian approach supported by Leacock and Rogers (1975). Concerning the mythical dominance of men referred to by Rogers, the idea that male dominance is only mythically constructed but that in reality women are powerful in society, she writes that when such an asymmetry of the sexes in favor of men is culturally accepted — even if it is only “mythical” — the society is still dominated by men. Women can have more and men lesser power than is mythically constructed but this does not mean that there is a balance of power and prestige between the sexes in general (for instance, the woman may have the power or the resources and the man the public prestige). Nevertheless, Ortner admits that she and Whitehead in their publication *Sexual Meanings* (1981), in which a worldwide male dominance is discussed, ignored or at least misread cases like those presented by Leacock (1996) “because they [the cases] fail to see that these societies are put together on quite different (‘egalitarian’) principles” (p. 142). Ortner (1996) accepts the problem of the existence of different forms of power and prestige in which women can become as powerful or prestigious as men or more so, thus questioning the theory of a general male dominance (quoted in Collier and Rosaldo 1981). She, however, does not start her argumentation on the supposition of equal or non-patriarchal societies in order to explain certain symmetrical phenomena. Instead, she suggests an approach using the concept of hegemony in Gramsci and Raymond Williams (1977). She proposes that in every society there is a hegemony of certain orders of prestige. This does not mean that they prevail in every respect:

I have found that viewing prestige orders as hegemonies — that is, as culturally dominant and relatively deeply embedded but nonetheless historically emergent, politically constructed, and nontotalistic — is analytically quite liberating. It means that all the pieces of a given ethnographic instance do not have either to fit together through heroic analytic efforts or to be explained away. The loose ends, the contradictory bits, the disconnected sections can be examined for their short- and long-term interactions with and implications for one another. This does not

mean that everything has equal analytic weight and plays the same sort of role in the overall dynamic. There is an ordering — a “hegemony” in the sense of a relative dominance of some meanings and practices over others. (1996:147)

This approach allows space for symmetrical as well as hierarchical male-female power relations in their historically, politically, and culturally constructed character; however, a general male hegemony is still regarded as predominant. Lenz (1997) instead departs from studies on non-patriarchal gender relations, taking a multi-focality of power as a basis, and highlighting non-hierarchical cooperative and complementary power relations between the sexes. She defines four fields of power in which women in non-patriarchal societies in most cases have strong positions: (1) Production: women have access to material resources, land and the products of their labor. (2) Reproduction: women as well as men can decide about relationships, which can easily be created or dissolved by both sides, and women also have a say in the number of children they want. (3) Sexuality and the body: women as well as men have autonomy concerning their body and sexuality; for example, pre-marital sexual relationships for both sexes are not a problem. (4) Symbolic order: shown in rituals, religion, or language in which women have an influential position. In an article about the Minangkabau, Lenz (1995a) adds political participation as a possible source of balanced power. In Lanao del Sur, according to this approach, influential positions of women can be found in the first and last two fields. Traditionally, women have the right to inherit equally with their male siblings and they can possess land and can keep the income from their labor. The equal inheritance law, however, was challenged by the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (CMPL) of the Philippines adopted in 1977, and female labor is often-times not recognized as much as male labor.

Regarding point #4 (the symbolic order), the traditional realm provides several influential roles for women like healers, witches, and being acquainted with black and white magic. Spirits and ancestors, who are believed to influence the daily life of the people, can be male or female. In folk tales like the *Darangen*, women have powerful positions as queens. Within a conservative Islamic framework, however, women are ideally secluded from the public. Islamic resurgence strengthens these *purdah* rules. At the same time, it also provides additional religious spaces for women, especially as teachers in *madaris* or in the form of women-only seminars, giving them the opportunity to develop and profess their religious expertise. Regarding political participation, specific female elders and titleholders have to be mentioned, having the right to take part in community discussions as representatives of their lineage. Women also have royal titles that are

the counterparts to male titles, while the public representation of the lineage usually rests with the sultan. Additional fields of female power can be added like the bilateral (cognatic) kinship system. Although to inherit a title one has to have ancestors from both lineages, more weight is given to the male lineage. In the other fields mentioned by Lenz, including the control of the body, a dominance of male elders can be found in Lanao del Sur, in many cases strengthened by conservative traditional and religious demands. One can conclude that mythical or real male-dominance in Lanao del Sur is not a comprehensive structure and that certain spaces of power provide women with a separate source of influence in society. Re-traditionalization and re-Islamization are of interest in this context, as well as the question of how far both movements offer the potential to enlarge, restrict, or add new fields of power for women. Whereas traditionalists emphasize the positive characteristics of *adat* laws regarding women, Islamists as well as Islamic feminists argue that they rest on an incorrect interpretation of Islam, highlighting its negative impact on women. In the following section, I consider the potential of *adat* laws to empower women, stressing that they empower not all women but favor those who come from illustrious family backgrounds, thus nurturing hierarchical structures.

B. Traditional Fields of Power and their Hierarchical and Moral Character

Elders, especially titleholders and their representatives, have the potential to resolve *ridos* in their area. Solving conflicts involves several people. The women's role is nevertheless recognized as particularly useful in negotiations. One reason is that they can cross the lines between the parties without being attacked since women are honored and are not supposed to be the direct victims of retaliation (Gonzales 2000: 92). A male negotiator might be suspected and killed by the other side, but "the chance of a female kin being harmed in a dispute is remote. Therefore, women often make good negotiators" (Doro 2007: 219). Thus, a sultan or *datu* might send his wife or another woman of influence to represent him when needed. A female representative could also be involved in order to prevent others from spoiling the sultan's *maratabat* by refusing his request. They can reject his proposal when his female representative brings it, but they can "still count on the assistance of their male kin [the sultan] despite his displeasure" (ibid.). Further, a man does not lose his *maratabat* if he satisfies the request of a woman since there is a paramount demand to honor a woman. Correct behavior regarding women is mentioned in the *taritib* and thus becomes a matter of *maratabat*. Disrespect for a woman can

lead to an outbreak of a *rido*. A *rido* that breaks out because of a woman can become very violent and serious since to violate the honor of a woman is a great insult.

Several legal tools exist to solve conflicts. The *taritib* and *igma* are used on an *agama* level. Religious laws are partly mixed with these regulations and some *datus* say that it is advisable that a mediator be knowledgeable about them or engage an *alim* for advice. *Sharia* laws concerning family and civil law are also executed in *sharia* courts, but these are not visited frequently.²⁸⁰ In Marawi City from 1995 to 2002, 211 cases were brought to the *sharia* court, the vast majority concerning divorce (60) and questions of support for children and/or a wife after divorce (83). Women filed all of these cases without exception, while more were dismissed than decided. One reason for the high percentage of dismissals is the lack of personnel and equipment at the courts (Solamo-Antonio 2003: 19, 28, 48-52). Recourse to the national law is applied when the offense is brought to the court, which is seldom the case. Sumaguina (2000) writes that indigenous institutions among Maranaos exercise a high degree of authority because the “indigenous methods of dispute settlement are in harmony with Islamic beliefs and values as well as within the Maranao indigenous beliefs and values.” Furthermore, manipulation of decisions “in favor of the rich, powerful and the relatives of the *datus* and political power holders” is seen as immanent in the legal system, which in addition is seen as too expensive. The proceedings remain “more likely to be understood only by the lawyers” (pp. 215). As a Maranao NGO worker states, there is a preference for the indigenous system:

Most Maranaos do not submit their *rido* case to the Philippine court because it is a shame on their dignity that they cannot punish the killer with their own hands. Many of the family victims had bad experiences in submitting conflicts for resolution in the Philippine court. They knew that without much funds they could not avail justice. Appeal to the Philippine court is only done to imprison the killer or offender but *rido* does not end because once the killer or offender is released from the prison, he could still be killed or retaliated by the other party. The possibility of retaliation is still at hand because of *maratabat*. (Atar 2007: 9)

National courts, however, including *sharia* courts, may be consulted in case “the traditional settlement of disputes gets rejected or fails to make decisions on conflicts and disputes. The legal settlement of disputes is backed up by coercive legitimate power to make an outright decision or action on disputes that tend to be unmanageable by the traditional authorities” (Sumaguina 2000: 216).

²⁸⁰ The *sharia* courts are responsible for the enforcement of the Code of Muslim Personal Law of the Philippines which was established under Marcos in 1977. The MILF labels these courts “fake Islamic Courts” (McKenna 1990: 476).

When the traditional system is applied, people of influence and power are important in order to settle a *rido*. Besides local *datu*s and royalty, members of the (Christian) military as well as the MILF help to resolve conflicts (Abreu 2002). The involvement of these two groups in local conflict negotiation depends on personal interests; for example, one might wish to win back *maratabat* against a strong *datu* with the help of armed forces.

Conflicts seen as “family affairs” are resolved via *kokoman a kambhatabata’a* (the law of kinsmen), which means that minimal punishments are applied to the guilty party and that a few rituals and ceremonies conclude a settlement (Sumaguina 2000: 219). Serious conflicts known as *rido-or-sesalakawa-a-tawo a miakaolika* (which occur between Maranaos who are not directly related) usually involve mediators who are neutral relatives,²⁸¹ that is, a person who is related by blood or affinity to both parties. Mediators can also be influential relatives of the offended party (Bula 2000: 28). A mediator, in any case, has to have personal qualities that are above average. These may be material wealth; traditional authority as a *datu*, *bai*, or sultan; political power as a military officer or rebel commander, or professional or religious power as an *imam* or *alim* (Sumaguina 2000: 217). The mediator first gathers information about the case; then gets a commitment to the resolution (*kitakhesen ko makambabala*) from the conflicting parties, to insure that they do not retaliate during or after the mediation. During the negotiations, the mediator uses different strategies: pleading (*kapedi-pedi na kalimo-limo*), reminiscing (*kapananadem/kapangangaloy*), threatening (*kapangangalek/ kapangalap*), or imposing of wisdom (*kitegelen ko lalag*). When the parties are convinced, he asks for a waiting period (*taalik*) until the resolution ceremony (*kaphasada ko rido*). That ceremony takes place at the house of the offended family or any other defined place. After the ritual speeches, both parties swear on the Qur’an to end the conflict and be brothers. A *kandori* (thanksgiving celebration) concludes the ceremony. In case the parties do not arrive at a compromise, the mediator withdraws and the conflict can break out again. As a consequence, there may be a search for a new mediator (Atar 2007: 11).

A mediator should have a high descent line status. For a female mediator or negotiator, it helps if she has already achieved a leading position in the clan or family. The main criteria for choosing a mediator are “socio-economic status, power/position in the government, communication skill, and relation to one or both parties in conflict” (ibid.: 10). In addition, one is required to have mastered special skills, which are learned through socialization. Knowledge of

²⁸¹ A neutral common relative is called a *sukodan* (Bula 2000: 10).

kambilang atao (decorum) is needed, which requires the mediator to observe strict impartiality and to choose an approach that will not offend one side. The mediator should have a working knowledge of *taritib*, *igma*, and Islamic law. All sides should recognize him or her as *mapia a tao* (a good person), whose proven honesty and trustworthiness are known by the community. Cases are thus settled on the basis of kinship relations, which are stressed, and social contacts that are utilized. The descent line status is also important, because it provides the negotiator with the needed respect. This is joined by the influence of the person and family the mediator represents, which brings with it fear of and respect for the mediator. A mediator should be able to acquire the needed money to solve the conflict; he or she might even contribute his or her own money. Only selected men and women are able to master all these demands. A *datu* comments:

Commoners cannot mediate in a Maranao conflict. Therefore, any decision to be arrived must be through a collective effort of the sultanates, *datus* and *bais*, in accordance with the provisions of the traditional laws and Islamic remedies like *damm* or *diat*, blood money in cases where murders are involved, or *sala*, penalty, when it involves transgressions, personal insults that led to physical injury, car accidents, etc. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

This quote underlines the importance of descent line status and hierarchy when a conflict is resolved in the traditional framework. Only members of the elite can be mediators. Tago (2003) states that in case of a *rido* “only male members of the clan are consulted” (p. 51) but several other studies show that women are also involved; an idea reinforced by the roles strong traditional female leaders play as mediators, like Tarhata Alonto Lucman. As a member of the influential Alonto/Alangadi/Adiong family, she negotiated and mediated several *ridos*. I will discuss two of them. In an interview, she recalled, together with her son, Norodin Alonto Lucman, an incident that happened in the 1960s, before her term of office as Lanao del Sur governor:

A case of a persistent and violent clan war in Tugaya resulted in more than 30 deaths. Governor Madki Alonto and Senator “Domocao” Alonto had a hard time pacifying the clan war. Congressman Rashid Lucman also expressed frustration in resolving it so he called on his wife Princess Tarhata Alonto Lucman to try and resolve it. After several weeks of mediation, the resolution of the clan war was narrowed down to one *datu* who was indignant and stood his ground as against the resolution of the case. Many families of Tugaya were frustrated with his non-conformist attitude.

One day, Princess Tarhata went to the house of the *datu* and asked him for a private one-on-one conference inside a room. The *datu* agreed and entered the room for a private conference. Princess Tarhata, escorted by aides and *datus*, closed the door behind her and pounced on the recalcitrant *datu*. She beat up the *datu* with a whip whereupon the *datu* cannot fight back because under Maranao

traditional law, it is forbidden to fight a woman, least of all a princess. The *datu* agreed to the resolution of the case because his *maratabat* was erased because of a woman's intercession.

Taritib and *igma* protocol always assert paramount respect to female gender as a sign of good leadership and understanding embodied in the Qur'an. The man did not lose his face in front of other people because the beating took place in private. The people outside thought that Princess Tarhata was able to persuade the *datu* peacefully to agree on the resolution of the case. Nobody saw Princess Tarhata Alonto Lucman actually beating him up. (Written abstract of the original Interview by Norodin Alonto Lucman, Manila, 2008. For the original interview, see Brecht [forthcoming])

In this case, a woman could batter a man in order to enforce a settlement of a *rido*. The man did not hit her back since she was a respected woman from a powerful family and he would have spoiled the *maratabat* of the family of Tarhata Alonto Lucman, resulting in another conflict. Instead, he could give in to her since he would not lose his *maratabat* by giving in to a woman. The incident was not made public to save the face of the participants. Even though traditional laws can be protective and empowering to Maranao women, the incident described remains a rather specific one. It could only be repeated by a woman having the same highly respected and influential family background, the same guts to beat up a man, and the same ability to rely on *taritib* and *igma*.

According to the *taritib* and *igma*, men are not allowed to touch or raise their voice against a woman since either would spoil her *maratabat* and provoke a strong reaction of her whole clan against him. If a husband is not satisfied with his wife, instead of talking to her directly, he can talk to her close relatives or the *datu* of the community (Disoma 1999: 45). A complaint against a man accused of mischief can begin an investigation and lead to strong measures.²⁸² If a woman is beaten by her husband, she can complain on the basis of the *taritib* and *igma* and the *imam* prescribes the penalties after an exhaustive investigation, which is made public to avoid a confrontation of the families. Since clans do not tolerate any humiliation of a female clan member, the death penalty is theoretically applied in cases of beating a woman. Local Muslim women's organizations like Al-Mujadilah, however, estimate that actually no one would report battering because of the "stigma attached to being the wife-mother of a broken home, belief that women are supposed to be subservient to their husbands, lack of sensitivity of the authorities for victims, lack of support mechanisms and facilities for victims" (Anayatin et al.

²⁸² The man is asked to marry the woman when she is single or at least to pay a fine if he refuses. During the reconciliation, he and his kin have to dress in white, holding a rope as a sign that they may get tied up and pleading for compassion at the house of the offended family (Cayongcat 1986: 24).

2003: 70). Some women do not report domestic violence because they might feel ashamed²⁸³ or fear an outbreak of a *rido*. Sometimes, domestic spite turns into a clan war because the family of the husband considers the accusation of the woman as false and insulting.

Cases of women battering men, however, are talked about more openly by women, as the case of Tarhata Alonto Lucman shows. Other women also mentioned such cases, referring to traditional laws that protect the dignity of a woman, who cannot be touched if one does not want to provoke a *rido*. The problem of violence against women is thus traced back by one young royal Maranao woman leader to the decline of the *taritib* and *igma* and the fact that women of today do not know about their traditional rights and not, as some NGOs are claiming, to a traditional conception of shame, which hinders women from complaining:

You cannot even raise your voice against a woman. You cannot even inflict some physical . . . Also, there might be some physical violence against women . . . *Rido*, the whole clan will go against you. But it is not women battering but husband battering in the area. I do not know . . . how they understand it from the outside. . . I am not battering my husband! But if the Muslim women, if they only knew it they would have a greater voice in their home and in their society. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

It is debatable to what extent the decline of the *taritib* and *igma* are responsible for the mistreatment of women. The issue of shame, which is also based on and nurtured by traditional and Islamic conceptions, is completely neglected in this argument. It is important to note, nonetheless, that royal women believe in their empowerment through traditional laws. Traditionalists, however, complain that the influence of women based on the *taritib* and *igma* has lessened. It is said that in former times, a woman had just to show her *panta* (wig of long hair) to stop a clan conflict and that the men had to be quiet and listen to the woman. Today, their appearance is not enough to stop a clan conflict immediately. When Tarhata Alonto Lucman was asked if other Maranao women were involved in mediations, she answered that most of them today are scared to be, which was explained by the increasing existence of loose firearms since the rebellion, the decline of the sultanate, and the fact that people do not trust the army or the police to enforce the law. Martial law and the resulting proliferation of arms and questioning of the social hierarchy by younger community members in connection to the rebellion made it more difficult for traditional *datus*. Indeed, other members of the community might define *ridos* as a “method of oppression against them” and now have the means to defend themselves (Sumaguina 2000: 221). In fact, it is questionable whether women ever had immense influence in the

²⁸³ For the conception of pride and shame among the Tausug, see Bruno (1973).

traditional system just because of their gender or whether this is only a privilege of the very few with favored positions like Tarhata Alonto Lucman. Muslim feminist organizations regard traditional conceptions as actually being a hindrance to women's empowerment. They take into consideration how far the traditional rights of a woman are bound to status and lineage and the good will of the family to defend her, thus making the application of sanctions rather a family than a general matter, and one which can be hindered by moral conceptions such as shame.

Descent line status plays an important role regarding the influence of a woman. This counts also for women who mediate in conflicts. Usually, women claim authority by referring to their descent and the position of a close male relative. In a bilateral lineage system, the power of a close male ancestor is shared by the female descendant who can represent him. Tarhata Alonto Lucman and her son related another incident:

Norodin Alonto Lucman: She also pacified a *rido* in Tugaya. When she was a child, this *rido* was already raging.

Tarhata Alonto Lucman: This was before I became a governor.

NAL: She talked to both sides.

TAL: Luckily, I am the daughter of my father. So I have the privilege to represent . . .

NAL: The privilege is that she is the daughter of the Sultan sa Ragain who is well respected in the area. So both sides actually recognized her intervention as mediator in the conflict. So they were apparently receptive to her role to play for the *rido* to be pacified. She talked to the ordinary people and the important people, she explained to them the evil behind family wars and *ridos*, and she used her own money to pacify them. She talked to Datu Pacalna, one of the clans in Tugaya, and also to Pukunum, who is a rival of Pacalna. In fact they were killing each other; I think more than 30 people were killed in the 1960s because of this political rivalry . . . Here is the makeup of the families: Pacalna is the uncle of Sultan Rashid Lucman, of course she [Tarhata Alonto Lucman] is married to Rashid Lucman. And Pukunum is married to her niece from Ragain. That is why you could pacify because there are connections, blood connections and by affinity. How did she pacify it? She gave thanksgiving to the other side, *kandori* (food offering) to both sides.

TAL: I can go freely to both sides.

NAL: After so many days of going back and forth . . . she was able to bridge the gap between the two sides, because of this physical effort, persuasion and mediation and she was backed up by the people of Tugaya . . . she was able to bridge the gap between the Pacalna clan and the Pukunum clan . . . through *salsila*, through common relatives. Through the recognition of the Sultanate of Ragain . . . The people gave *diat*, blood money . . . all through those years when the clan war was raging people could not go out of their houses, could not have normal lives. So when she came to pacify the *rido* the people themselves, other clans actually donated money to pacify them . . . Even though they were not really involved in the *rido* . . . The money involved had been more than PHP 300,000 . . . She divided that money into two, one part for the Pacalna clan and one for the

Pukunum clan. And if I may add, after the resolution of the case, she also arranged marriages between the two clans to cement it. So now the kids are very big there is no *rido* after that. (Interview, Manila, 2008)

As the case of Tarhata shows, being related to the conflicting parties (by consanguinity and marriage) is a major condition, since trust, respect, and status are drawn from kinship relations. She is linked to the same royal houses as the protagonists (Ragain and Bayang) and thus, by birth and marriage, in a good position to be respected as a mediator. Coming from a high lineage and influential family, she was in a key position to pacify *ridos* among her relatives.

The daughter of Tarhata learned her mother's techniques and settled a *rido* in the 1990s. When Normallah Alonto Lucman was the Lanao del Sur vice-governor (1995-1998), she was asked to resolve a conflict and, like her mother, mediated by relying on the respect of her relatives in Bayang towards her father, a descendant of the Sultan sa Bayang, and his family as leaders of the place:

My first New Year as vice-governor. We planned a big party [in Marawi] so I invited my friends. And there was this call from the other side of the lake [Bayang], from my hometown. That there was fighting. And I told them to call the police. So they would stop the fighting. But even the police was not around. I talked to the leaders. So they told me, Vice-Governor, if you do not want your relatives to die you have to come over and stop them. So I had to go, because I do not want them to die. Especially not in my father's hometown. So we took the very, very small *banka* [canoe]. All women. So I went to the other side. I talked to the negotiator. Then they did not want to stop fighting. And I told them that I go to the other side, and I led my cousins to the other side... Eventually I was able to... It took us how many hours? We were there 4 o'clock, until 10 pm I heard the fighting. Until I had to make, you know, drama. I told them on the radio:

I have to leave, because you are not listening to me. It is very painful to realize, because my father is not around, that you do not have respect to me. You have completely forgotten my father. So I am leaving because I am [not being] heard.

Suddenly the fighting was gone. And they told me over the radio: Vice-Governor, Vice-Governor, please stay! We will go down and negotiate; you got your wish. Ceasefire for seven days. I had my New Year in this place. No food! They were partying in Marawi and we were there [in Bayang]. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

The role of a *bai a labi* as mediator might go beyond solving conflicts between relatives. In applying her role as peacekeeper of the place, she can settle conflicts between people who are not from the area and locals in order to prevent an escalation. The basis of authority in front of her relatives, however, remains the same: as representative of the common lineage. The Bai a Labi sa Marawi, Nabila Bolawan Tobacan, narrated an example in which she was related not by

blood but only by friendship to the people asking her help. Thus, she became involved by speaking on behalf of her friends to defend them in front of her relatives, performing the role of a peacemaker, which is generally reserved for titleholders:

There was this incident which happened to a male settler. [The word “settler” here means that this man came from another province and he was not a native of the place.] He encountered a conflict in his province and brought this conflict in the city where he met his enemy, *ridowai*, and they exchanged fire shots. It caught the attention of the mayor and he asked who these disputants were.

When the residents knew that it was the settler who caused the tension in the area, they wanted to shoot him. The *bai a labi*'s uncle was even angry and wanted to shoot the man for the disturbance he made in the community. Some of the *bai a labi*'s friends are relatives of the settler. The friends requested her to stop her uncle from shooting the man so that the conflict will not escalate.

It took courage for the *bai a labi* to ask favor from her uncle because of the thought that her request might be refused. As a *bai a labi* she is supposed to help resolve conflicts in the area. She is also conscious of her title as *bai a labi* and wanted to act upon her role as peacekeeper. To value the request of her friends, the *bai a labi* immediately went to her uncle to plead not to kill the stranger. After uttering some calm statements she told her uncle about her concern. [The uncle gave in to her request.] It was decided by her uncle to let the settler and his relatives move out from the place in exchange of the favor done. The *bai a labi* then went to the relatives of her friends and advised them not to stay in the place because of the threat that her uncle might retaliate and shoot the settler on that night. The settler's relatives agreed and the settler and they moved out from the city the next day. (Interview, translated by Monalinda Doro, Marawi City, 2008)

However, in conflicts between locals, it is an advantage to have a mediator who is related to both parties. When a high-ranking person feeling responsible for a case lacks needed relations to one of the conflicting parties, the one who provides these relations will be chosen as mediator. A *bai a labi* describes such a situation. A woman leader of an influential family, which was involved in a murder case, asked her to help in negotiations. Superior to the *bai a labi* at her working place but also by status, she was related to the husband of the *bai a labi*, who was related to the bereaved family. In spite of the total involvement of the *bai a labi* in the case, the final settlement took place at the home of her brother, a relative of the deceased person, in order to show the ultimate surrender of the killer (see appendix 10 for the whole story). The *bai a labi* thus displayed unofficial power in the background.

International civil society groups lament that women mediators are not publicly appreciated for their work; instead, it is mainly men who arrange the final settlements (Bamgbose 2003). The women themselves, however, often feel uncomfortable with the idea that they should

be more appreciated for their mediations, fearing that it will change traditional gender relations. One *bai a labi*, a professor at MSU, comments when asked if the role of women in settling *ridos* should be more publicly appreciated: “In Islam we are under the umbrella of men and we accept that; we cannot show that we are more powerful than men” (Interview, Marawi City, 2007). She argues further that women already feel empowered and do not need the public appreciation. This suggests Rogers’s (1975) “mythical male dominance” (1975), but as Ortner (1966) has argued, the acceptance of male dominance in a culture also signifies that it is a reality. The family and the clan provide social and emotional security for women in Lanao. When a woman questions the underlying gender relations, the support for her in the community may be in jeopardy. Additionally, the traditional system holds certain fields and possibilities of empowerment for women, even though these might be behind closed doors, or unofficial (see Roces 1998). For royal elite women, the threat of the decline of the *taritib* and *igma*, and thus of the collapse of their source of influence, is of greater concern than the need to embrace different gender values.

C. Public Decision-Making: “You Have to Fight for Your Rights!”

Source materials on women in pre-Islamic times in Mindanao are relatively rare. Except for some written documents by merchants and Spanish colonial forces, the transmission of oral stories remains important, like the one about Bai Etha, known for having been a proven leader in war and peace supporting her uncle, the Sultan sa Marantao. Referring to her marriage to a descendant of Sharief Kabungsoan, her descendants could later claim and gain the title Sultan sa Ragain. Apart from these oral transmissions, most of the families have their own version of the *Darangen*. In the 1970s, Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi City translated this epic poem into English. The process of transmission “Islamized” the *Darangen*, thus changing certain contents to make it fit Islamic teachings. In the story, the male hero saves his people from aggressors and wins the heart of many princesses, but in the end he and his kingdom Bumarban become petrified “because all of them refused to accept Islam” (Coronel 1983: 2). However, the English translation still gives the impression of the gender relations which had been transmitted over the years; told to children in good night stories; and sung, danced, and played on special occasions, referred to as a moral codex and as an ideal to be achieved.

Female main characters in the story are either princesses, witches, powerful queens, or spirits in the sky world, who are also called *diwatas*, whom Saber describes as demi-goddesses or spirits who “corresponded to the gods called *devas* or *devatas* in the mythologies of India” (Saber

and Tamano 1985-86: 184). One chapter is devoted to the manner of how the hero Bantogen liberates his kingdom from Walain Pirimbangan, who reigns as queen together with her brother. During a fight with the help of spirits between her and the hero, she loses because the spirits decide that her deed, imprisoning the whole kingdom of Bumbaran in huge stones, is too cruel (*Darangen*, Vol. 1, Books 1-3: 226, 230). Women are thus not only objects in the story but make decisions and (co-)rule. No assembly takes place without consulting them, and in times of conflict they are part of the decision-making process (Tabay 2003: 95). When the assembly of *datus* disapproves of a decision, the question is given to some male authorities first. When still no solution can be found, it is given to the women, whose decision the assembly binds itself to accept (*ibid.*: 87). The hero of the story nevertheless plays tricks on the invincible princess in the sky, and with the help of the spirits defeats the queen. The ideal female marriage partner in the *Darangen* is not the powerful queen or the witch, but the devoted princess who gives her consent when her husband wants to take other wives to strengthen the clan and who would rather die than to be a source of shame to her clan.

Similar structures can be found in the sultanate system. Women as well as men of the *datu* class have a claim on royal titles. This means that beside every sultan there is a female counterpart. The first *bai a labis* were normally the sisters or daughters of a sultan.²⁸⁴ However, since the female titles are inherited bilaterally, today the *bai a labi* and the sultan of one place can be relatives of any degree. Whereas regarding the distribution of titles a gender symmetrical structure is prevalent, the distribution of public decision-making is not symmetrical and gives priority to men. Female elders may be included and can take part more easily in the decision-making process. Maranao women and men, particularly younger women, are restricted regarding their contacts with the other sex. However, Maranao women elders in their 50s are considered “morally trustworthy” and are therefore allowed to attend conferences, social gatherings, political rallies, meetings, and so forth on their own without escorts to look after them. Women in their 30s also attend gatherings without escorts; they, however, appear in groups.

Madale (1996) describes what a community meeting and the public decision-making process of *datus* and *bais* in Marawi looks like:

²⁸⁴ For the importance of the sister and the higher status given to women via their kinship roles, rather than marriage roles, see Ortner (1996), writing about hierarchical societies in Polynesia. She argues that within marriage “women’s distinctive feminine . . . attributes . . . are highlighted, whereas in kinship roles they are not. Thus in marriage a woman is more open to being seen as a radically different type of human being, whereas in the context of kinship she is more easily seen as simply occupying different social roles. In all societies, of course, women (like men) are both kinspersons and spouses; what is at issue is the relative dominance of one or the other dimension.” (p. 111)

In Maranaw social gatherings, men and women sit separately but not too far from one another so that they can hear one another as well as react. A woman leader can, if needed, stand up during a community meeting and air her stand on an issue or request a male relative to express her thoughts for her. This is permissible in the case of elderly or titled *baes*. Younger Maranaw women prefer to sit and listen. (p. 105)

As can be seen from this description, men in mixed-gendered groupings usually dominate the proceedings (see also Bamgbose 2003: 55). These groupings can have different characters, as shown for example in the traditional Provincial Council of Elders, which is not as strongly segregated as conservative religious organizations. The religious Provincial Ulama Council has a male and a female group. The groups are segregated; the women organize themselves, but they are under the umbrella of men. In traditional mixed-gendered groups, women do not necessarily have a large part in decision- or speech-making, but they are usually present and can thus intervene when needed.



Picture 20: The Provincial Council of Elders

Men and women stand side by side, the women in the front and the men in the back. Source: 49th Founding Anniversary of the Province Lanao del Sur, June 28-July 4, 2008.



Picture 21: The Provincial Ulama Council, Men

Source: 49th Founding Anniversary of the Province Lanao del Sur, June 28-July 4, 2008.



Picture 22: The Provincial Ulama Council, Women

Source: 49th Founding Anniversary of the Province Lanao del Sur, June 28-July 4, 2008.

Through her gender research for the British NGO Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)-Toscardar in rural areas in Lanao del Sur in 2003, Bamgbose (2003) highlights that community meetings (*maswarah*) usually take place after the *maghrib* prayer at the mosque. Women are excluded from these meetings, except when especially invited and even then they are mainly “not made to feel part of the process” (p. 64). A Bai a Labi sa Marawi reports similar structures from the Marawi Sultanate League. Women in this framework rather influence the community decisions by making “informal suggestions to their husbands or other male relatives about community issues” (ibid.: 64). In many cases, women do not want to change this arrangement since an “elevated role of women in decision-making embarrasses the women as they judge that this undermines the role of men” (ibid.: 66). They thus prefer to have an indirect and inconspicuous influence. However, this does not mean that they are not involved in community affairs or that they do not have the means to put their husbands under pressure in case they feel neglected or not informed. In the ideal case, this may trigger the *maratabat* of the man who has to show that he treats her well. Disoma reports that:

my impression shows that the wife always interferes with the activities of the husband, and that she will be angry whenever she is not consulted on any venture made by her husband. An angry wife is always demanding for a divorce, or tells bad words to her husband even at the presence of other persons. (1999a: 35)

The gender distribution involving a limited female public participation in the decision-making process is not always stringent and there are possibilities for women to take part when insisting on their traditional rights as representatives of the lineage. Those women who are more actively involved in such processes explain that they experienced appreciation by the community when doing so. Influence on public activities is usually connected to age, social standing, illustrious family background, personal achievements, education, or profession/position. If based on these characteristics a woman would also take part in public policymaking. She, however, has to be adamant, as the Bai a Labi of Bayasungan and professor at MSU Marawi explained when describing ad hoc meetings in her community. In the *agama* Bayasungan, Lumbatan in Unayan, the *bais* and *datus* with responsibility (who may or may not be titleholders) meet on occasion; for example, when a conflict erupts. The meeting can be called, mainly through text messages, by any person of responsibility. It usually takes place wherever is convenient, like at a fast food restaurant. The person who called the meeting explains the situation, ideas are exchanged, and suggestions made. In the case of the Bai a Labi of Bayasungan, she was the only woman who participated. She explained that most of the time, men take women “for granted,” meaning to say

that they do not necessarily expect that a woman would want to take part in public decision-making. Thus, a woman who would like to be consulted has to assert herself and “fight for her rights.” The *bai a labi*, hence, insisted on being invited; if she had not been invited, she would have investigated the reasons for the neglect.

It is easier for female titleholders or elders to press a point in traditional mixed-gendered groupings than it is for younger Maranaos. Today’s educated married youth, however, transgresses these barriers in order to participate in community decision-making. During clan meetings organized by RIDO, women — even though there were fewer women than men — were especially invited to speak in front of the group. Among them were Samira Ali Gutoc-Tomawis, a young journalist for the *Manila Times*, daughter of late Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Datu Candidato Gutoc and granddaughter of Vice-Governor Sheikh Ibrahim Miro-Ato Ali, the Sultan Dimasangkay of Dansalan. Gutoc-Tomawis also helped to organize the women’s sector of the clan. Additionally, she is the membership convener of the Young Moro Professional Network (YMPN). This group was founded in 2000 and consists of about 200 highly-educated young Muslims who have spent years in the country’s best schools or overseas. The YMPN is a mixed-gendered organization where women as well as men speak out equally. Its goal is to improve the socio-economic situation of Mindanao through peaceful means. The members are well-connected to other Moro organizations like the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) with its Tausug director Amina Rasul, and to international organizations, like the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Friedrich Ebert Foundation). Local elders and the MILF also recognize the YMPN members as youth representatives.

Whereas the young professionals found a way to break with traditional conventions by establishing their own group, other Maranao women leaders remain within the traditional framework. One young professional from a major descent line who was granted a royal title some months after the interview explained how education helped her to overcome traditional roles and to participate more actively in public decision-making:

One of the indicators of education is being able to express yourself. This is very Maranao, that if you are able to express yourself you are easily noticed. So: “Why do not we choose him, why do not we choose her?” And it is very rare for the ladies to be talking that much. To say: “Excuse me, I have a point here!”

It’s usually a male dominated . . . they have the monopoly. It is not to prevent women but there is a tendency for women to just agree with what men say. Because it is like saying, anyway they will be the one[s] to implement whatever it is being planned, so just let them talk. It is not because you are being prevented to do so. Because for me I do not really feel that I am prevented to do so. It is

probably because of the national order of Filipino patriarchal society. And it is added to the Maranao culture [we have], where it is not actually preventing the women, it is dignifying the women, but it becomes over-dignifying the women to the point of preventing them. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

Men are obligated by Islam, *taritib*, and *igma* to protect their women and to treat them like a treasure. Young and especially unmarried women before the introduction of general and mixed-gendered education were very much secluded from public life and were only seldom seen by men. This is judged as one reason why they were highly regarded by men and sometimes referred to as a *montiya*, a precious stone (Tawano 1979: 119). Some *bai a labis* are saying that since women can be seen everywhere today, they have lost some of this regard. Muslim activists, however, criticize this seclusion as a way of controlling “women's freedom of movement under the smokescreen of admiration” (Bamgbose 2003: 60). According to traditional conceptions of gender, a woman should feel appreciated as long as she does not violate the limitations set by the society. A *datu* explains: “She might virtually be carried on hands. Everything she wishes to purchase, as long as the budget is there, will be bought: diamonds, cloth, furniture, cars, etc.” These are things a woman may also demand from her husband in order to be able to participate in the acquisition of status symbols. Then again, her freedom of movement may be restricted with the argument of protecting her morality and dignity, a protection that young educated women sometimes regard as “over-dignification.”

A *datu* explains the extensive forms this protection may develop in a religious framework, where women have to be guarded from everything that might be perceived as immoral; otherwise, God will curse the homeland:

Maranao traditional and religious leaders, speaking on pulpits during Friday prayers, always remind their congregation not to neglect their duty to Islam and their womenfolk and communities. Which means that women should be “protected” and sheltered from all temptations in the e-media (Internet, cellphones, sexy movies on cable TV, etc.) and immorality. Otherwise, God will put a curse on those who fail in this sacred duty. Worse, a collective neglect in the performance of this sacred duty will bring famine, hunger and curse to the Maranao tribe and homeland. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

The moral pressure on women under the cover of protection can thus be overwhelming whether in the traditional or religious context. However, both systems leave women several fields of power from which they might negotiate in society. Among the first this is the chance to take direct part in public decision-making, particularly if the women are ready to “fight for their rights” on the basis of their descent line status, traditional rights, and personal achievements.

Among the latter, Muslim activists are empowered by referring to the Qur'an and by strengthening their opposition to traditional elites.

D. Gender Roles and Economic Realities: Non-Recognition of Female Labor

In the 1920s, the Muslim regions experienced an educational boom (Tabay 2003), as well as the introduction of media, industrialization, a new political system, private land ownership, and taxes. Marawi City was “Americanized” or “Westernized”. The goal of the colonial officers had been to assimilate the Moros into the Filipino state. Since Moro elite women were considered to be influential in their society, their education in modern schools and even in American universities was promoted (Angeles 1998: 213). Conversion of Muslim women to Christianity was nevertheless not part of the program, since this would have destroyed their status and value among their people (ibid.: 213). Elite women made the first steps toward changing the woman's role by becoming educated and later on, becoming professionals. In following the elite's example, more and more women were sent to school and education brought a general change for women in the southern Philippines (Angeles 1998; Lacar 1992; Usodan-Sumagayan 1988). Before colonization, adolescent girls did not leave the house, except on special occasions. With the introduction of public schools they were enrolled in co-educational institutions. Saber writes that with the introduction of democracy and Western education women could become teachers and politicians, which “both were not sanctioned by tradition” (Saber 1979: 117).



Picture 23: Co-Education in the 1930s

Maranao Students, 1938. The girls and boys wear “western-style” clothes.

Photo kindly provided by Norodin Alonto Lucman.

Over time, typically male occupations, such as lawyer, turned out to be appreciated occupations for women. There are Maranao female lawyers dealing with the national law as well as female *sharia* lawyers, though there is presently no sitting Maranao woman judge in an Islamic *sharia* court. It is, however, assumed that they can become *sharia* court judges, following the example of Nurkarhati Salapuddin Sahibbil from Jolo. After some controversy, she became the first female Muslim judge of the *sharia* court system in the Philippines in 1994.

There is a difference between what is perceived as male and female labor. Besides assisting on the farm and taking care of *sari-sari* stores (convenience stores), teaching is one of the occupations that is most sought after by women. Bamgbose (2003) reports that a majority of teachers in Lanao del Sur are female and that this occupation is considered to be “women's work” and a source of status for the women who hold it. It additionally increases their chances of getting married since men “would like to marry a teacher as she has a stable income” and can provide loans to relatives (2003: 59). Teaching as a preferred profession by women is followed by nursing and midwifery, both of which are most often connected with the desire to go abroad to study or work in America, Europe, or the Middle East. Nevertheless, a woman's first duties remain in the household and the family. This means that she is doubly burdened.

That the household is the woman's terrain but also her responsibility is often stated by men: in the house, the woman is the “boss.” Some men would even define the whole society as a matriarchal society in considering the context of the household. Muslim feminists report that men only think that women are powerful since they are doing all the work in the household, but that one has to differentiate between responsibilities and decision-making: the women have a lot of responsibilities in the house but the men are the decision-makers (Tan 2001: 77).

Maranao men are perceived as the primary breadwinners, but the wife is said to hold the “family's purse strings” (Doro 2007: 219; see also Umpa 1981: 6), as she is responsible for the fund management, whereas the husband remains the head of the family. Maranao women thus keep the income of their husbands to manage the household and some would state that by doing so, they can control their husband's actions.²⁸⁵ Hadja Tawano wrote in the 1970s that, even though the husband is responsible for providing for the family, the “disposition of properties by the husband, his social activities outside, and the family income are under close scrutiny of the wife. The domestic situation described in Tagalog as ‘under the *saya*’ (skirt) is prevalent in

²⁸⁵ For a debate on women in Southeast Asia controlling the household budget, see Karim (1995); Li (1989); Reese/Hardillo (2006); Sullivan (1994).

Maranao society.” (1979b: 120). Madale (1996) writes that if a sultan is asked for a donation or contribution, he first consults his wife. She then goes and gets the money, and gives it to the husband, who is the one to donate it (1996: 118). Bangbose reduces the power of the purse to the domestic sphere; the husband mainly decides about matters of land and farm equipment whereas the wife decides about those of the household. She adds that in the rural Maranao community of Gata, men usually keep their income and decide how it will be used and that “women had to ask for money little by little to meet the household expenses” (2003: 75, 66, 99). Also Sarip (1985-86) in her study on Marawi City, and Reese and Hardillo (2006) on the Philippines in general, write that the female power of the purse is mainly restricted to decisions on what food to buy or household expenditures to spend; other decisions may be taken as a couple or by the man, no matter who is earning more (Sarip 1985-86). Reese and Hardillo add that when the family is poor, the power of the purse means that the wife controls the funds in order that the husband will not spend it for his leisure, since it is the wife who is responsible for the financial management of the household. However, the wife will have to deal with accusations of mismanagement if she runs out of money, and is then held responsible to get the needed money. Thus, the control can become a burden. A Maranao woman activist who defines herself a Muslim feminist recounts how she changed this traditional gender conception in order to empower herself as well as her husband:

In my case, I earn more than my husband. My husband is just a wage earner. But in fairness to him . . . What I am doing is, ok we are Muslims, in Islam, the man is the provider of the family, it is given, so he has to provide us. So he has to provide the food. But in my case I provide the non-[food] . . . for example the gas of my car, the allowance of my children. That is me. For him, he provides. But we will never get hungry. We have a tradition that we have to control our man. So in our first year of marriage that is what I did. I really have to control my man. Controlling means, getting all his salary and you do the budgeting. Most of the women are doing until now. But I have this grandmother who is very observant. My husband is always, he cannot go out, because he has got no money. Then my grandmother would say — that old woman is gender-sensitive: Don’t you know that if your husband will meet a relative in the street or he will break a glass along the way he cannot pay for it because he has no money?

And my husband was sulking all the time because he has no money . . . I arrange. He gives me the money, all his earning, then he asks for transportation. Then me, I have to budget it. But when I run short of the budget, he will say: I give you the money it is up to you!

Then I realized — I think only after 10 years, I think 1990, we got married in 1977, more than 10 years — I realized that this is not good. So he has his own earnings and I have my own earnings. I do not know his he also does not know my earnings. But he is providing the food. He always buys all the groceries for one month. You will see oil, sugar, rice. And in my case, I provide extras. That's the, so

I am also getting away with other things, in marketing, no more. When I was holding the money, I do the marketing, I do the budgeting, when I run short of the money, he got angry with me. That is our culture. But now I am freer and he is also free. He cannot run short of the money, because he is providing a family . . . It is one way of empowering me and empowering others, or enslaving me . . . That is our experience in our family. It is very hard. When you do the budgeting and you run short because of emergency or there is an illness. One of your children, all of a sudden . . . And you run to the hospital and you run short of the money. I realized then that it is not good. But until now, most of our women are doing this. Because they control their men. I said: These men have no balls! Because they are under control. Because of my personality, the people are saying: Oh! You have a very strong personality!

But in fairness to my husband, I am afraid of my husband. Because in our community here, in MSU, they saw me as very strong, as very authoritative, or what. But no, I still seek advice. At the end of the day, he also seeks my ideas. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

The activist was able to change the monetary regulations since she had her own income. For women who are financially dependent on their husbands, this is not a possible solution. In doing this, she followed the Qur'anic "notion of mutuality of spousal support," highlighted by Islamic feminists and which, according to Badran (2007), becomes "increasingly operative in the middle classes" (p. 39). In explaining this phenomenon, Badran emphasizes that the Muslim feminist interpretation takes into consideration changing social and economic realities. In Morocco in 2004, the mutual protection of the spouses found its way into the *sharia*-grounded family law, *Mudawwana*, which recognizes husband and wife as heads of the family: the wife can travel and work without the consent of her husband, her rights to divorce were revised, and polygamy and marriage under 18 are only allowed when fulfilling certain conditions²⁸⁶ (Badran 2007: 40; Ende and Steinbach 2005: 670).

These social realities have not yet been taken into consideration by the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (CMPL) in the Philippines. The CMPL was enacted under President Marcos in 1977.²⁸⁷ It is *sharia*-based, and is enforced in *sharia* courts, which handle matters concerning family law. National law deals with cases involving criminal law. In the CMPL, the norm is that women are taken care of financially by the husband. The obligation of the wife is the management of the household, but everything she spends for the maintenance of the family has to

²⁸⁶ Eddouada (2008) mentions that there is opposition of the judges to the amended text and that in many cases the exception to a law became the rule, as for example regarding the authorization of girls to marry under the age of 18, which is "alarmingly" high (p. 43).

²⁸⁷ The first judges of the court were appointed in 1983 (Barra 1993: 80).

be paid or reimbursed by the husband.²⁸⁸ This demand, when confronted with a different reality (in which the wife earns more than the husband) can lead to a regulation, in which the husband is more or less only the symbolic head of the household. It can however, also strengthen the economic restrictions on women.

In the 1960s Maranao women from the *datu* class would refrain “from being seen selling inside shops or marketplaces” (Saber and Tamano 1985-86: 129); they were mainly secluded from the public. If a woman worked, it was predominantly family-based employment, as a mat-weaver or as a hired *onor* (singer) at weddings, enthronements, etc. (Sarip 1985-86). Today, Maranao women, including those from the royalty, are in many cases professionals, even though this, according to conservative religious and traditional standpoints, is not always perceived as the ideal, especially when there is a non-segregated work environment. Many Maranao women, however, need to work in order to make ends meet and would do so in a non-segregated environment despite religious demands, as one Maranao merchant in Manila (Greenhills) stated:

Actually if you follow Islam we are not allowed to mix with people like men, we are not allowed, but because of crisis, because we have to survive in our living, we have to do that. Anyway, Allah knows what is in your heart. (Interview, Manila, 2008)

Social realities have led to there being Maranao female breadwinners all over the country and even abroad.²⁸⁹ Their husbands are in some cases relegated to the role of househusbands. This phenomenon has provoked a reassessment of the women’s role in cases where the Islamic norm of a husband providing for the family does not apply. Because of strong cultural role models, which are strengthened by the CMPL, the two sexes handle this situation with difficulty. Bamgbose writes that women in the Maranao community Dansalan are ashamed when their husbands cannot fulfill their role as the main providers, since they are laughed about in the community (Bamgbose 2003: 87). A Maranao man being a *yayo* (variant of *yaya*, a female baby-sitter), in a male-dominated environment where men pride themselves as warriors in a martial society, is thus not wished for by either gender. However, to make ends meet, many women work to add something to the income. Sometimes they are the main or sole providers of the family.

According to Islamic law, the money earned by the woman belongs to her since the man is the provider. This right, though, is not granted often; instead, it may even strengthen gender

²⁸⁸ She can exercise a profession, with the consent of the husband, who can object if he considers his income sufficient for the needs of the family.

²⁸⁹ According to the National Statistics Office, in the year 2000, 2% of the ARMM population worked abroad. The majority (56%) were women, with a median age of 24; the median age of the male overseas worker is 27.

discrimination in the economic sphere in the form of non-recognition of women's work. Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro (Women for Truth and Justice in the Bangsamoro), a Moro Women's organization that constitutes the Filipino section of the transnational Musawah movement, comments on this paradox and thus criticizes the CMPL:

This delineation of the rights and obligations [of the wife in the CMPL] springs from the notion that the husband is the head and provider of the family and the wife is primarily responsible for reproductive functions. This stereotyping puts unnecessary burden and restrictions on both women and men, and should be reviewed. It is also not in keeping with the reality on the ground, where more and more Muslim women are taking on productive work and/or heading the family. (Homepage of Musawah, National Profiles: The Philippines, 2010)

The employment rates by gender in the ARMM in 2008 shows that there are only slightly more men being employed than women. Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro specifies that women in the ARMM dominate the non- or low-income fields of employment. In the region, comparable to national accounts,²⁹⁰ more females work as laborers, unskilled workers, and unpaid family labor, especially on the farm (see also Fianza 2003), than males:

Women's contribution to agriculture is invisible. As pointed out earlier, female participation in agriculture is largely as laborers and unskilled farm workers or unpaid family labor. This signifies women's lack of recognition as agricultural workers and their limited absorption into the paid sector. And when they do get into the paid sector, their daily nominal wages are still lower than men's, implying continuing invisibility and undervaluation of female labor and lack of institutionalization of equal pay in agriculture. (Homepage of Musawah, National Profiles: The Philippines, 2010)

Women are not supposed to be the main providers of their families according to Islam, but the reality is that women work nevertheless in order to make ends meet. It remains an exception that they are the main breadwinners of the family, not necessarily because they are hindered in this regard but because their work is not equally recognized. The traditional and religious demand that the man be the main source of income of the family thus supports the non-recognition of female labor that is inherent in the national economic structure.

E. A Gender-blind Reward System in a Lineage Society

There is a reward system among Maranaos: if a person proves himself or herself to be an asset to the clan, he or she will earn respect and admiration, material comfort, and protection by the clan. The gender-blind pride in the success of a kin member and thus the appreciation of one's

²⁹⁰ In the Philippines, about 48% of women 15 to 49 years in 2000 were engaged in gainful activities (NSO).

lineage is most obviously shown in the streamers hanging all over Marawi City. Relatives in this status-observant society celebrate in public a success in final exams, the occupation of a political position, a royal title, or a return from the *hadj*. People will also be welcomed by flattering them, thus giving them more credit than is actually due; for example, in treating them as a PhD even though they are only a candidate. Flattering people is one way to avoid a possible insult, which can lead to violence, but it also helps the person excel in a certain activity. If the importance of a person is taken for granted, he or she may act indifferent and dull (Disoma 1999: 186). Streamers and posters usually show veiled women, but their faces remain visible. In most cases, they are dressed up and wear make-up and the pictures are as prominent as those of their male counterparts.



Picture 24: Marawi City: City of Streamers
Photo taken by Monalinda Doro, 2008.



Picture 25: Relatives congratulate the governor
Photo taken by the author, 2008.



Picture 26: Posters Showing Sultan and Bai a Labi sa Pagalamatan

Mr. and Mrs. Cairon Mangurun Macala Domato announce Hadji Jawhar Romuros Domato as the new Sultan of Pagalamatan. To his left (the traditional place for a woman), the new Bai a Labi sa Pagalamatan, Hadja Sittie Hosnia Pithailan Romapunut Ala Blangan Romoros Bala, is praised by her daughter Dayanzaman Bala Ala. Photo taken by the author, 2008.

Besides the public display of pride, the clan can elevate a woman to a high political position as a government official or the like as long as it abides by the collective wishes of the kin community. Tarhata Alonto Lucman recounts how she was asked by her clan to run for governor in 1971:

I did not want to be governor; it was my brother [Domocao Alonto]. The people told me my brother said: “Make her the one to lead the province. She can handle it.

My brother was the governor [Abdul Gafur Madki Alonto, 1957-1967]. But he was weak, he was a soft-spoken man and he is soft in moving . . . “Why do you want her to be the governor?” “Oh, she is 100 times better than the governor [Linang D. Mandangan, 1968-1971] now!”

My brother called me up: “You have to run for governor!” “No, I am tired with politics! I do not like politics.” Very early in the morning I ran away to Manila, I took the plane. But then after I left . . . my nephew in-law . . . knows my signature, so he was the one to sign for me. So they called me up in Manila: “Do not say anything . . . (says [the nephew] on the phone), I am the one who signed for you. Do not send me to jail. Please come home. I will go to jail if you do not come.”

When I arrived at the airport I did not know that this people go to the airport to welcome me. I said: “Why are so many people here?” And then when I got down from the airplane, I said: “Why? What happened?” “You are now the candidate for governor!” “Who told you that?” “Yes, it is already there, from here you are going to the platform (in a school in Marawi). Please do not refuse, do not refuse!”

When I went there, I said: “I am hesitant to address all of you because I am not willing to run.” They said: “No! You have to run!” So I said: “I am forced by circumstances; someone will go to jail if I will not run for governor. So in behalf of someone I accept the challenge, I am running for governor.” “Ah!” the people were saying, “so what is the challenge?” “When I become a governor, I will punish all of you that will not believe me!” “Ha ha!” Because I was just joking on them. Up to the ending of my speech, it is all jokes. That is why they liked me so much. “You can make us laugh and why don’t you make us cry?” “Suppose I will tell you that I am not going to run!” “Ahhhh!” (Interview, Manila, 2008)

Princess Tarhata was the only female governor in the history of Lanao del Sur. This leadership shift was largely due to the influence and power of the political clans that supported her candidacy since no male candidate was seen as fit for the position. Maranao women who had been successful in politics, in most cases, had a royal background and were from prominent clans and political dynasties. The Alontos are one example but there are several others (see appendix 4), of which the most popular are the Dimaporos in Lanao del Norte. In the 2010 elections, the Dimaporos could occupy five political posts, among them the governorship. Thus, the highest elective posts in the province are occupied by Dimaporos: the mother, the son, and the daughter,

nurturing a dynastic rule which has lasted for 50 years, being initiated by Mohamad Ali Dimaporo.²⁹¹

Bangbose writes in 2003 that there are “increasing numbers of Maranao women in politics from the *barangay* to the congress level” (2003: 67). This evolution is not reflected on the mayoral level. In 2001, nine cities were headed by women; in 2004 there were four, and four in 2007. In the 2010 elections, five women were (re-)elected. No Maranao congresswoman, or female provincial board member, senator, governor, or vice-governor was elected in 2010 in Lanao del Sur. However, a steady increase of female vice-mayors from 2001 (two) to 2013 (seven) can be observed and after the 2008 ARMM elections there were two female Maranao assemblywomen, as there had been from 2005 to 2008. However, despite this relative success, most of the women being elected were part of family dynasties. The majority of women who were elected followed their male relatives, who concluded their third term as mayor before them,²⁹² or replaced them in cases of political violence (one woman became mayor after opponents shot her brother). Since 1998, no local elective official can serve for more than three consecutive terms in the same position, which explains the increase of women in political offices. To keep the position within the family, the wife, the daughter, or the son will follow— whoever is considered an effective leader of the clan or the family. This situation is known all over the Philippines; Hega (2003) from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung calls these family members “benchwarmers.” Whereas men are preferred as leaders, women get their turn in case there is no man available to keep the position within the family. Besides genealogical connections, the other “three Gs” (guns, goons and gold) also have their effects on who is elected. One female mayor, the wife of a known drug lord, is said to have bought her post for up to PHP 15,000 per vote. She also bought herself a royal title, giving herself the needed descent line status to be an effective leader. Genealogy, however, seems to be the most important factor for female public leadership, as well as the introduction of limited terms.

²⁹¹ Iligan City nevertheless is not headed by a Dimaporo since it became a lone congressional district in 2010. The division of Lanao del Norte and Iligan City helped the Dimaporos to occupy the two other congressional districts. Before, Iligan accounted for more than half of the total congressional voters, while the remaining seven towns of the 1st District, to which were added five more municipalities to comprise the new district, are the territory of the Dimaporos. In 2007, Imelda “Angging” Quibranza Dimaporo ran for the 1st District but lost against Iligan City businessperson Vicente Belmonte, among other reasons due to the anti-Muslim campaign angle of her opponents. Belmonte was re-elected as congressman in the 2010 elections, this time for the lone Iligan City District.

²⁹² The most popular example is Topaan “Toni” Disomimba and his wife “Jan Jan” Alangadi Pundato Disomimba who both occupied the mayorship of Tamparan for a number of years. “Toni” Disomimba was elected in the 2010 elections after his wife finished her third term.

Family support for some positions is, however, not sufficient and additionally “political clout,” especially in the “no war, no peace” area of Lanao del Sur, is needed. This can be established in the unofficial “female” domain (see Roces 1998). Dr. Hadja Sittie Nurlaylah Emily M. Marohombsar, MSU President in 1993, was supported in her career by President Ramos (1992-1998) and his sister. Holding the office of the MSU President is dependent not only on academic qualities but also on political connections, since the President of the Philippines appoints the university president. Emily Marohombsar possessed both since she was highly educated (in the Philippines and abroad) and grew up in a political family.²⁹³ She recounts how she traded a position in congress that had been offered to her for the MSU presidency, for which she felt more qualified, with the influence of the sister of the president:

I grew up actually in the university. I started as an ordinary professor. And then later on I became an assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and then later Dean of that same College, and then Vice-President of Academic Affairs and then later on when Governor Dimaporo became Officer in Charge of the University he appointed me Vice-President for External Studies. And as Vice-President for External Studies, I supervised all the external campuses of the University . . . So when we conducted a search for MSU President, I did the search and I was number one in the list. And it is very difficult. Because many people said to President Marcos, because he was the president then: Oh, do not appoint Emily because the Muslims will go against you because a woman is not supposed to be holding an effective position. So later on, when Ramos became president, he sent somebody to me and he said: Would you like to go to congress?

Because, he said, instead of being appointed president of the university, which he had promised to a politician. Because when Ramos was running for president of the country, ambassador [Lindy Pangandaman], they are very, very close, he asks him to run for congress under his party. And Lindy told him: “Mr. President, I am not interested in running for congress. But I will support you under the condition that if you win, you will appoint me President of MSU.”

Which he agreed to. So when he won Lindy approached him about it and he wrote a marginal note on the letter to the search committee. But he was told by somebody that Dr. Marohombsar is first one on the list. So he sent somebody to me and he said the president is offering me to be a member of the congress. Because at that time there were appointed members. So I said: “Please tell the president that I cannot accept. He is making a very wrong decision,” I said. “Why send me to congress when I am not in politics? And he appointed someone that is in politics to . . . I am an academic and Lindy is a politician. So this is a very wrong decision.”

So I went to the sister of the president (Leticia Ramos-Shahani), who is very close to me. And I said the president is offering me to be in congress. And she

²⁹³ Her father, a military officer, was Lanao provincial governor (1946-1949) and her husband, Attorney Abdul Gani Marohombsar, became Lanao del Sur vice-governor and an assemblyman of the ARMM. Additionally she had contacts with the sister of President Ramos.

said this cannot be. “I will see him, Emily. I tell him to choose between politics and academe. And he should give preference to the academe.” So she went to Malacañang Palace and talked to the brother. But then the president had a problem. What to do with the promise to Lindy? So he sends for Lindy, and Shahani told him: “Why don’t you make him run for governor of the ARMM?”

So he sends for Lindy and offered him the official position. But Lindy was rejecting it. Because according to him he was not sure of winning. But anyway, he said: “I think you stick better in there.”

So a member of the board sends a private lunch for Lindy and me, he invited us. And he said, during this lunch: “I think Dr. Marohombsar should be in MSU and you should be in the ARMM.”

And Lindy was hesitating, I said: “Now, we will all vote for your victory.” So he said: “I will accept under the condition that you and your husband will support me.” I said: “We will!” And I said: “The president and his sister also promised that they will put all their resources for the administration, so you will win.” So he accepted. And I was appointed. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

A woman leader from an influential family can achieve quite a lot among her people; she can occupy a public leadership position based on her personal skills and the family dynasty’s political clout in the unofficial realm. In the case of the Alonto clan, it is said that there are leaders for the men and leaders for the women. In order to keep the clan in power and away from the humiliation of poverty, women may become clan leaders in the absence of strong, authoritative male heirs. Besides Tarhata Alonto Lucman, Soraya Alonto Adiong, daughter of the late Congressman and Senator Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto and widow of the former Lanao del Sur Governor Mamintal “Mike” Adiong can be mentioned. Her two prominent sons work with the government. Her brothers are ineffective as leaders of the family and therefore cannot be relied on for hard decisions and guidance for the rest of the clan. Soraya Alonto Adiong provides the logistics and employment needed by the clan to cover their domestic expenses and other financial needs in return for their loyalty. When there is a community gathering, the women of the clan gather around her and the men around the male leaders. Soraya is said to be the kingmaker of the clan by providing the connections and financial support of her late father and husband.

The rather lax restrictions on women becoming clan leaders or politicians — in case there is no male candidate — can partly be traced back to the bilateral lineage arrangement. Dube (1997) described the possible positive effects of this system in Southeast Asia on gender relations. Likewise, in Lanao, clan membership and rights are transferred via both the male and female lines. These gender-blind pre-Islamic and pre-Western family arrangements become, to a certain degree, more important than restrictions on women’s leadership. In general, however, women are seen as the counterparts of men, establishing their own social networks, which might

also include political clout through the female relatives of leading politicians. These unofficial connections, as Roces (1998) demonstrates in her work on female power in the Philippines, are in a lot of cases even more effective than the power of women occupying political positions. When inhabiting a political post, women have to abide by the rules of the male-dominated public environment. In the unofficial space as relatives of politicians, they can act more freely to a certain degree.

Traditional fields of power with symbolic equality for women are predominantly unofficial and have a moral and hierarchical character. Thus, women have theoretical rights according to the *taritib* and *igma* but in some cases, they are not used because of moral conceptions of submissiveness and shame, or due to the lack of support by the clan and family, or maybe because a woman is considered still too young for some issues. On the basis of a certain descent line status, age, and personal achievements, a woman has the possibility to take part in public decision-making, especially if she insists on her rights to do so. In order to keep power positions in the family, women, when considered able, will even be pushed by the clan to take public positions. It can be concluded that tradition provides the potential to empower women in the official as well as in the unofficial spaces. The possibility of displaying their potential in public is, however, limited by moral and hierarchical restrictions, and service to the family and clan.

II. Family Arrangements

In the Constitution of the Philippines, it is written, “The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.” (Art. 15). To support family structures is thus a national goal. Mulder (2000) writes that the dominant role of the family in the private and public spheres in the Philippines that is often mentioned by scholars can be traced back to rather negative images that Filipinos have of themselves and of the larger society. The overshadowing of the public by the private sphere can also be found in Lanao, with state structures that are dominated by family politics. In this context, the strict regulations on family arrangements in Lanao have to be seen not as neutral but as constituting a space for the institutionalization of a specific gender politics in order to regulate not only the private but also the public sphere (see Foucault 1998). The gender norms that are applied are influenced by the “no war, no peace” environment in the form of

strengthening ethnic groups through marriage politics or by re-Islamization through the implementation of conservative religious ideas on family planning.

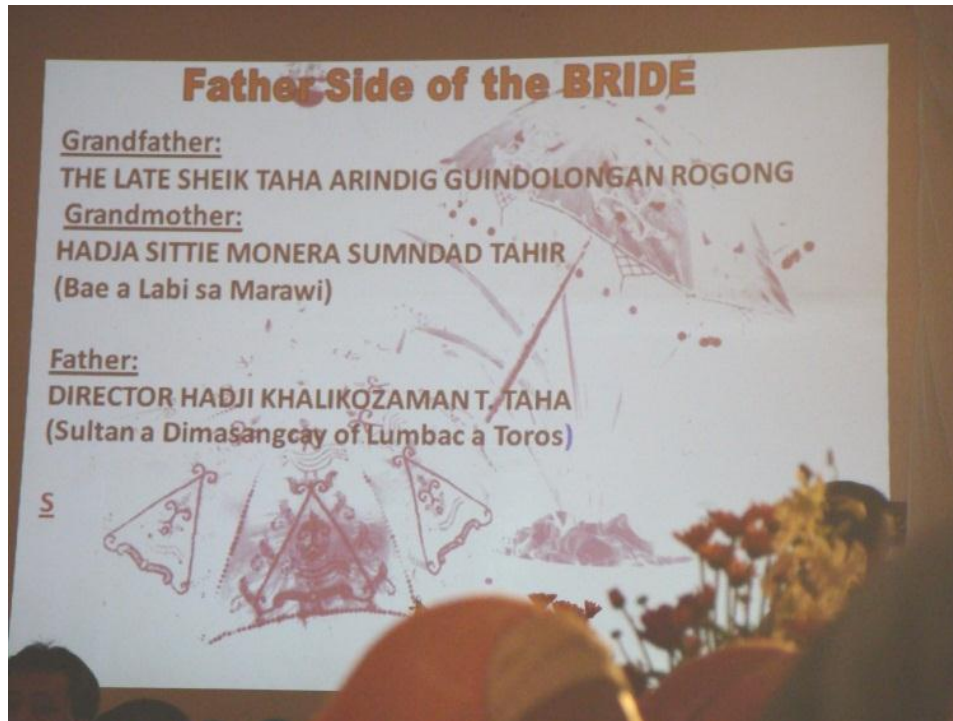
A. Marriage and Divorce

1. Arranged Marriages: Neo-Traditional Arrangements

Traditionally, the elders and parents arrange marriages even without the consent of the future couple. Islamic feminists argue that this is against Islam since the girl has to be consulted. Among Maranaos, Islam became an authoritative source of narratives of justification. In practice, however, traditional syncretism remains predominant. In the following example a wedding involving a powerful Maranao political clan that took place in a hotel in Cagayan de Oro is described more in detail, displaying a mix of Islamic, Christian, and Maranao cultural settings,²⁹⁴ demonstrating the sometimes paradoxical gender norms Maranaos are confronted with. Solutions to these paradoxes are mainly found in neo-traditions (modified to fit social realities) and re-Islamization (in applying Islamic narratives of justification).

A wedding normally starts with a gathering wherein the families debate about the bride price. This is followed by another meeting, at which they finally announce the wedding, without the couple being involved. The wedding ceremony itself then varies. The one described here is vastly influenced by Western and Filipino practices concerning dress, decoration, and food. The bride wears a white wedding gown and the groom a white suit. The room is decorated and the bridesmaids and groom's men are dressed according to a theme, as can be observed in Christian Filipino marriages. The bride and her bridesmaids do not wear veils whereas women in the audience do. Instead, they wear modern dresses while the men wear *barong tagalog*, the traditional Filipino attire. While this seems to be a rather Western and Filipino influence, the public display of unmarried women in front of an audience is also a traditional feature, as was explained in chapter two. The most obvious traditional feature is the display of the genealogies of the couple as a PowerPoint presentation in the background. Many marriages are strategic, not only concerning political connections but also concerning descent lines and the possible inheritance of a royal title. The display of the *salsila* at marriages shows not only how the future couple and their families are related but also their royal backgrounds. Royalty say that commoners avoid this ritual.

²⁹⁴ For an extensive description of courting and marriage practices as well as their changes because of Islamic, Western, or Filipino influences, see Disoma (1999).



Picture 27: Alonto-Adiong-Taha-Wedding: PowerPoint Presentation of Genealogical Background of the Bride
Photo taken by the author, Cagayan de Oro, Lanao del Norte, 2008.



Picture 28: Alonto-Adiong-Taha-Wedding: The Wali and the Groom Pressing Their Thumbs
During the wedding ceremony, the bride is absent and is represented by the *wali*. She is only fetched after the ritual.
Photo taken by the author, Cagayan de Oro, Lanao del Norte, 2008.



Picture 29: Alonto-Adiong-Taha-Wedding: Bride and Groom and the Groom's Men and Bridesmaids Present Themselves on a Platform After the Wedding Ceremony

Photo taken by the author, Cagayan de Oro, Lanao del Norte 2008.



Picture 30: Alonto-Adiong-Taha-Wedding: Female Relatives of the Groom

The women in the audience are veiled whereas the bride is not. The tables are gender segregated. Photo taken by the author, Cagayan de Oro, Lanao del Norte, 2008.

The ritual itself is a mixture of Islamic and traditional features. The *wali* (guardian) of the bride (most likely her father) has the task of facilitating the marriage, which is done without the future wife but with the groom, under the supervision of an *imam*. The groom and the *wali* press the thumbs of one hand together, covered by a white cloth, symbol of purity. The *imam* restates the condition under which the groom can marry the bride (no alcohol, no gambling, etc.), and the groom has to answer yes, thus affirming what is considered as an Islamic lifestyle. Then the *wali* is asked to give his rights and duties pertaining to the girl to the groom (Disoma 1999: 38). The groom then goes to a nearby house or room where other girls hide the bride. Before being allowed to enter and touch his wife, the groom pays her relatives to get the key to the bride's quarters (*leka sa gibbon*). After that, he touches the forehead of the bride with his thumb, which he pressed against the one of the *wali* before, or kisses her. This *batal* or touch that makes the bride his is traditionally seen as "surrender of her chastity" (Alonto 1980: 78; Macaraya 1987: 188; Pumbaya 2003: 220).

After the groom fetches the girl, they may come back to join the guests. At the observed wedding they sat on a stage while the guests took pictures and ate Western food, which is thought to be prestigious. Rings are also exchanged. The representatives of the clans are present and seated left and right (usually the side of the bride is to the left of the groom), and the groups are sexual segregated. Speeches are given in a certain order; men and high representatives of the eight families involved give most of them.²⁹⁵ The wedding ceremony excludes the future wife and the arrangement is made between the *wali* and the future husband. The bride price is largely a deal among the relatives of the couple.²⁹⁶ There are, however, arrangements that empower the bride. After or during the wedding, a gift has to be given to the bride (*sayat or let a igaan*); otherwise, she can refuse the husband. Further, before colonization, the couple had to stay at the place of the wife until the payment of a gift to the bride (*kalaawi*), about one year after the wedding.²⁹⁷ The family of the husband then invites the wife and her arrival has to be celebrated. After that, the couple might stay at either place. These traditions show a tendency to strengthen the status and influence of the wife and the matriline, in particular the practice that the couple has to stay with the family of the woman first before moving to the husband's place. The *kalaawi*,

²⁹⁵ The eight families involved are from side of the bride (mother's mother, mother's father, father's mother, and father's father) and likely the side of the groom.

²⁹⁶ There are traditionally several other occasions where money has to be given; otherwise the wedding will not take place. For example, this is the case if the girl has an unmarried elder sister; see Disoma (1999).

²⁹⁷ The first child is expected after one year: this will increase the status of the woman, including "a tendency for her views and suggestions to prevail over those of their spouses" (Fianza 2004: 15).

however, has become, according to Tawano (1979), obsolete since the new Civil Code does not demand it (p. 120). Disoma (1999) explains its decline by the fact that it is considered un-Islamic (p. 171). In some families, *kalaawi* is still practiced but the waiting period is shortened from one year to several days, after which the couple moves to the husband's house if *kapugad* has been done. Three days after the wedding, the groom's relatives visit the bride and give her sacks of rice, live chickens, and other goods, as well as some cash for herself and for expenses for food (which will be served to the groom's family). When the couple is closely related by blood and lives in the same *barangay* or municipality no *kalaawi* follows since the purpose of it is that the groom's relatives know the lineage of the bride.²⁹⁸ It can be concluded that the favorable tendencies for the bride have lessened. The decision where and when to move is mainly influenced by economic realities: the couple chooses a place where they have access to employment, making the *kalaawi* dispensable, thus giving economic considerations a priority rather than the logic of kinship-relations and descent line connections.

Besides tendencies in *adat* laws that reinforce the position of the wife, arranged marriages are predominant in Lanao del Sur, thus denying women the free choice of a marriage partner. However, arranged marriages strengthen descent line rights and political possibilities. This counts especially among political clans, since they are eager to establish connections with other families and clans, which are the basic source of power in the traditional sense. The bigger a clan is, the more affiliations it will have and the more influential it may be. Marriages outside of the descent line (but preferably ethnically endogamous) are thus encouraged to strengthen the existing social connections, the number of possible supporters, and the number of possible claims to royal titles. Bamgbose observes an increase in the number of marriages but also of divorces, in order to renegotiate political ties, during the run-up to an election (2003: 68, 73). For elites, marriage is first a political issue. Disoma (1999) writes that generally clan exogamous marriages are preferred but that most marriages are nevertheless clan endogamous since they are less physically and financially burdensome (p. 185).²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ In some cases, the *kalaawi* is also performed for the groom's relatives so they can know if the marriage has been consummated. Because of arranged marriages, this is not always be the case. Information provided by Monalinda Doro and Amer Hassan E. Doro.

²⁹⁹ For a debate on exogamy in lineage societies that define themselves predominantly as endogamous, see Ortner (1996): "It should be noted for future reference that even the export of chiefly daughters to other groups for purposes of foreign political alliances has significance different from that of the exogamy typically practiced in unilineal systems. Given the cultural emphasis on descent group endogamy in Polynesia, even exogamous marriages are viewed as 'incorporative', or at least centripetal" (p. 70).

Marriages to non-Maranaos can be a source of problems for the children of the couple. The first choice in marriage partner is generally a full-blooded Maranao since status, rights, and support derive in large part from descent lines. Thus, non- or half-Maranaos have fewer (birth-) rights and less support within the *Pat a Pangampong*. This may become a handicap for those children wanting to serve as politicians and public servants in Lanao del Sur, or aspiring to traditional titles. The preference for marrying a Maranao can, though, be broken with if the clan sees an advantage in doing so. In Lanao del Norte, the intermarriage between a Muslim and a Christian political family solved a *rido* and helped the Dimaporo family stay in power. Further, in a status-oriented society people might overcome a lack of blood status by achieving status through other means, for example education (one MSU President was a half-Maranao).

Marrying Christian men may be acceptable for Maranao families if they convert (at least officially) to Islam and pay a proper bride price. However, it is generally easier for a man than for a woman to marry a non-Maranao since he is considered the head of the family and thus the wife has to follow his religion. Such intermarriages increasingly occur among male Maranao merchants, seen by some as part of “bringing Islam to non-Muslim communities” (Madale 1997: 111).³⁰⁰ To remedy the problem of a lack of descent line for the children, a man might be asked by his clan to additionally marry a Maranao woman in order to remain legitimate in the eyes of Maranao society and in consequence to keep the claim to a certain title within his family.

Marriages are usually arranged by the elders and often without asking the future couple. Some young girls stated that they prefer this, since the family knows best who will be a good partner. Respect towards the parents and elders of the clan and their decisions is rampant and is not easily questioned publicly, even though the child might disagree. Some women have been warned by their families not to bring their beloved, if he is Muslim but non-Maranao, to the house. These women finally have to decide between the wishes of their family and their beloved, with whom they would have to leave their home community. A *bai a labi* gives in an interview a concrete example of being pressured into an arranged marriage; after she at first refused to cooperate, she was “tricked” into agreeing by being presented with *faits accomplis*:

I am a victim of young love. Parental marriage. Imagine I was only third year high school when I got married [approximately between 16 and 17 years old].³⁰¹ And

³⁰⁰ For a further debate on religiously mixed marriages in North Cotabato, see Lacar (1980).

³⁰¹ According to NSO statistics, the average age of newly-married Maranaos in the year 2000 was 25 in Marawi City, 21 in Lanao del Sur, and 20 in the ARMM. In another survey concentrating on women in the Philippines, released in 2005 but also based on the 2000 census, the average age to marry in the ARMM was 16. This statistic is confirmed by the Moro women’s organization Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro and by Bamgbose (2003), who studied three

when I graduated in the fourth year, I already have one daughter. Because my grandmother and the father of my husband were first cousins. So they were the one[s] who negotiated our marriage without our knowledge. We were not even consulted. And during our wedding, I did not know. Because we were in school and they were the one[s] having the wedding ceremony. But not yet wedding, because I did not attend, they did not formally conduct the wedding ceremony. But they assembled together and they made the celebration.

So after that they just dismissed without wedding because I was not there and I expressed already my refusal. So they have a technique that they told me that the marriage was postponed until I have finished my degree. So they told me you can have your vacation in our native place because the man is in Manila continuing his study and waiting for you until you graduated. So I went home. That was vacation time; I was thinking that this was true. So that was their technique. Because when I arrived there, they sent someone to the family of the man to come and perform the wedding ceremony. So I cannot go out because I do not know where to go. During that time [in the 1970s], I did not know how to go to Iligan. Because we were not permitted to go out. We seldom go out. So I have nothing to do but follow their decision.

How did I continue [my studies]? The reason why I was able to finish was my mother. She really supported me. My mother promised to me, as long as you cooperate with our decision you have no problem with your children. We will be the one to take care. So my mother took care of our children. And even fed us.

We did not separate [from my parents] until we had five children. And we were still sharing with our parents. We shared with them, they gave us food, they gave us cloth[ing]. So they wait until I have a job and my husband also has a job. That is the time that we separated from them. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

Whereas arranged marriages have remained the norm, procedures have changed, especially concerning courtship regulations. In a traditional context, courting proper starts after the wedding. Before, it takes place mainly between the families or between the future groom and the family of the future wife, via a go-between, or within certain formal structures. Abdulcal Alonto (1980a: 62-3) as well as Madale (1996: 21) mention the game *kanggogorowa*, playing teacher.³⁰² Other forms of courtship were reported in the 1970s, showing a minimal form of choice (the man would choose his future partner). A woman from a royal family whom I interviewed related a meeting with her future husband at the age of 14. In 1974, a camp of the MNLF opened in Tubaran, called Ranonun. The girl was talented at reciting the Qur'an and so was asked to

Maranao rural *barangays* (p. 69).

³⁰² In this game, ten women and ten men sit opposite each other in the yard of the *torogan* and in the middle there is a teacher, a *guru*. One woman goes to the *guru* and whispers the name of a man from the other group. If this man is the one who comes to the *guru* to whisper the next choice, he is caught and stays in the middle. The game ends when a group loses all its members. In case the women lose, they can ask for another game. Traditionally the loser — which will normally be the men since the game is played, even for several days, until the women win — gives gifts to the women and a *carabao* is slaughtered, making it a ceremonial offering. Today the game can be played without the gifts, when it is played at all.

perform. Qur'an reading contests take place frequently and women as well as men will read the verses. This is also seen as one possibility to prove ones abilities and present oneself in front of the other sex, as was the case with royal women playing the *kolintang* in pre-martial law times.

A commander of the MNLF noticed the girl reading the Qur'an and asked who she was. This was followed by a brief courtship. The man started bringing her gifts. Among others, he gave her half a piece of money on which a *sura* of the Qur'an was written and he kept the other half. Then, he asked his brother to be a go-between and she was given a bird. The bird carried the name of the suitor, symbolizing that the girl would take care of him. The parents of the two were satisfied with the choice since they wanted to strengthen the ties between the two families and the marriage was pushed through.

With the introduction of co-education and non-segregated working places, it became easier for future couples to get to know each other without the supervision of the parents. In one case, members of two different clans fell in love at their work place. The family, which wanted the girl to marry someone else, refused the man's proposal. However, the man would not stop courting the parents. After two other attempts, the family asked the girl whom she would like to marry. She answered that she would follow the decision of the elders. Since the suitor had a good family background and seemed to be very serious in his attempt, the family finally decided that the two could marry.

Especially in (co-educated) non-Islamic schools and universities, young girls and boys might have (sometimes in secret) a boy- or girlfriend. Emails and mobile phones are one way to communicate without the supervision of the family. A young woman might be snobbish about such advances since it is the *maratabat* of women to behave with integrity and they are supposed to appear as "hard to get" whereas the man can plead with a woman to be with him. Women will show their interest more indirectly; thus it may be the sisters of a man who is a potential marriage candidate who tell him that there are women interested in him. Other women, however, may write secret love letters or give away their phone numbers. In some cases in Iligan, young Muslim women take off their veils and go to nightclubs. This is possible if they study and live in the city without the direct supervision of their parents. Some young professionals emphasized that a certain time of "rebellion" is not unusual among the youth. After that, they may discover the value of Islam. Non-Muslim NGO workers in Iligan City remarked that these actions sometimes lead to trouble among Christian and Maranao men when the latter want to defend the *maratabat* of their female relatives. As the murder case reported by the *bai a labi* in this chapter shows (see

appendix 10), love affairs and the transgression of traditional gender roles can have severe consequences. These lie within the realm of the body and family arrangements in which young women do not have any say. Moro Islamic feminists campaign for more rights for young women in the choice of marriage partners and thus against the traditional practice of arranging marriages against the will of the girl. To underscore their argument, they highlight the fact that “the consent of the girl [to marry a certain person] is indispensable,” quoting several *hadith* to back up their claim within the Islamic context, giving them more authority against traditionalists, since *adat* is supposed to be derived from the Qur’an (Anayatin et al. 2003: 73).

Parents whose marriages were arranged sometimes fear that such a marriage may not work out, among others because they themselves had bad experiences with it or maybe because, in contact with Filipino mainstream culture, they have lost belief in it. A Maranao woman, by now an elder, gave one example of such changing marriage patterns. She is the daughter of a Western-educated Miss Lanao and of the first Muslim graduate of the Philippine Military Academy (then appointed Lanao military governor). She reports that her father gave the couple a chance to get to know each other before marriage and refused to arrange her marriage entirely. He even encouraged her to entertain possible suitors:

My father did not believe in arranged marriages. Whenever there were men that were interested in us, he said: go and court! You know he was a very educated man. He was so advanced. Whenever we had male visitors and we did not like to entertain, he gets very angry and he said, you should not have this attitude, even if you do not like this person you should entertain [which was traditionally the task of the family since the daughter stayed hidden], because when a man take[s] court to you they are doing you the highest honor. Because among all the women that he has seen, he has chosen you. You need not accept him, but to entertain, and you can turn him down politely. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

However, it is questionable how broad her choices really were. She finally married a relative of hers who had been a lawyer and who later on became Lanao del Sur vice-governor. This was a choice that, even though not arranged, does somehow fit into the usual pattern of marriage partners.

Other families will still arrange marriages but allow their child to meet his or her partner before the marriage is finalized. The children thus have the possibility to get to know each other as well as their families as possible future in-laws. This change in the way marriages are arranged does not mean that one can easily refuse the chosen candidate. A Bai explains:

Bai: Marriage, there is now a change. Before marriage was prearranged. My marriage is of same kind, but it worked. There are always advantages and disadvantages. One

disadvantage is for instance: what if the marriage will not work? Second will be the maturity of both. That is why currently, what is being done actually — probably also because of the change of the culture — is that, it is still being prearranged . . . but at the same time, the parents of the woman will say: “Oh, you let your son be there. So that they will know each other.” So it is not like a surprise. . .

Birte Brecht: What will happen, if the couple meets and does not like each other?

Bai: There is actually a tendency that it will be ok. In most cases, around 90%. And the only reason will be that the marriage will not work, if one of them is also having an eye on somebody else. But also, this has changed because of the influence of Islam [which discourages divorce]. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

This means that marriages, even though the couple has the chance to get to know each other before, remain arranged and the moral pressure to stay married is high through the influence of conservative Islam. Islamic feminists, on the other hand, propagate the Muslim family code in order to emphasize that women in the framework of Islam have the right to divorce, which is, according to them, not widely known. They also emphasize that, if the two do not like each other, they might not get married if there are severe reasons. Disregarding these rather modern developments, the couple might still be “tricked” into marriage by traditional parents. The woman (or the man) then might refuse sexual intercourse; officially, the marriage is thus not yet finalized. This may lead to an annulment of the marriage, or the husband demanding his rights before a court, or the elders or the parents might convince the husband or the wife to fulfill their duty towards their family. When the woman rejects the proposal, it also may happen that the time of getting to know each other and thus of official courting before the wedding is lengthened until she agrees to the marriage. A Maranao NGO worker explains this form of procrastination:

For instance in my case, our family . . . He [the husband] is actually my uncle by second degree, but at the same time it was his decision [to marry me]. So it was his decision and the parents were the ones to arrange it. And so my parents said: “You let your son come here and you will see.”

I was trying to escape from that, I was trying to really avoid that. Probably, no, not that I had someone else in mind, but my problem at that time was, we worked together in some youth activities. That only I really preserved my integrity, my dignity, because I was always going out, because I see that my parents would say: “Oh, that's why you were always going there!” So for me, to prevent that, I also have to prove that: Well I know him, and I probably met him, but we really did not have any relationship. So it took him, I think, four years.

We were engaged in 1992, but the marriage . . . I cannot explain it, the engagement was broken sometimes three, twice, and then again. But the marriage finally happened in 1996. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

Despite the general statement that arranged marriages work out well since the couple learns to love each other, this is not always the case and many have suffered from being forced to marry a person they did not want. Some arranged marriages end in divorce; others cannot divorce since the clan does not agree or since the marriage was linked to settling a *rido* and a divorce would lead to another outbreak. Hilsdon (2003) describes the tremendous pressure on women regarding arranged marriages, which are often connected with the threat of a potential violent conflict, defining the situation as one of violence against women. Some women and men who have been married off by their parents without their consent say that their children will not go through the same hardship and that they will not arrange their marriages. However, even if one parent or both refuse to arrange the marriage of their children, the extended family might still do so. Thus, arranged marriages, being deeply connected to the achievement of power and influence, have remained the norm in order to strengthen family politics. Modern neo-traditional conditions have, however, brought a new version of arranged marriages in which the future couple is consulted and has time to get to know each other.

2. Bride Price: Between Security and Sellout

Betang (bride price) is defined by Disoma (1999) as “property sought of a man (the groom) by the guardian of the woman (bride) as a requisite for marriage” (p. 40). This might include money and a piece of land that can be tilled by the couple or a relative of the bride. The main part of the bride price is usually given to the bride’s parents, close relatives, and friends. Madale (1996) describes how during a traditional wedding the relatives of the bride demand their share of the dowry (a term commonly used in place of the word *betang*):

Long speeches extolling the virtues of the bride are delivered by relatives who desire a big share in the *dowry*. Through it all, the groom's parents shell out money and more money until they can no longer give. (p. 136)

In addition to the *dowry*, a share (*adat*) is given to the *datus*, sultans, *bais*, and the *imam* who help to prepare the wedding (Benitez-Barcenas 1984-85). The bride receives a gift. Disoma (1999) notes that *let a igaan/sayat* (gift to the bride) for royalties was before colonization a bed with an *okir* design³⁰³ and sets of dishes (p. 39). With the introduction of modern kitchen equipment,

³⁰³ *Okir* is a Maranao artistic design. Madale writes that “Maranaw men use flowing scroll signs suggestive of femininity, while the opposite is true of the female” who use zigzag geometric male designs, which are predominant on mats or *malongs*. The designs of men are named *okir a dato* and those of women *okir a bae* (1997: 95). An *okir* design is associated with social rank since “only the sultan has the monopoly to display the different *okir* motifs” (Madale 1996: 3).

instead of dishes the bride might get a washing machine or electronic appliances (Madale 1997: 41); the gift can also be a house or a car. In case the husband fails to give this gift, she can refuse to be with him (Disoma 1999: 39).

A Muslim bride has according to the CMPL (Art. 36, 4) and the Qur'an (4:4)³⁰⁴ the right to a gift which is sometimes called a *dowry*, sometimes *mahr*. The husband gives this gift to the bride; the amount and even the time when the wife receives it depend upon the regulations of the families. The Moro Islamic feminist group Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro criticizes cultural practices whereby nothing is left to the wife and everything is spent for the wedding or on the relatives:

the *mahr* pertains to the bride, and not to anyone else. It is not a “bride price” that is given to the parents or guardians of the bride. It should also not be used for the payment of expenses incurred in the celebration of the marriage. Yet, these erroneous beliefs are observed in many instances, to the detriment of the bride. (Homepage of Musawah, National Profiles: The Philippines, 2010)

Some families, in explaining their actions through reference to Islam or other reasons, do not give an expensive celebration but the *betang* is given to the couple. The amount of the *betang* formerly depended on the class rank and the potential claims a woman could be heir to as well as the rank of the man and the relations between the families. After colonialization other elements of importance were introduced: for example education or profession, and thus ability to contribute to the family income. However, a low ranking half-Maranao woman would not get as much *betang* as a full-blooded Maranao woman coming from a high-ranking clan, even though they have the same education or profession. A high *betang* is also paid because it can be expected that a Maranao woman with extensive clan connections will become a high-ranking government or political figure because of her clan affiliation. One example was a female lawyer from the Alonto clan: another clan offered large sums of money for her hand and the family of the groom, also a lawyer, spent hundreds of thousands of pesos for thanksgiving (*kandori*) parties in Marawi City and Cotabato City. The groom may have had some political ambitions in proposing to the woman and spending such a large amount of money. Marriage and bride price are thus among other things connected to access to political influence, not only because the wife could become a

³⁰⁴ “And give to the women (whom you marry) their *mahr* (obligatory bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) with a good heart; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it, and enjoy it without fear of any harm (as Allâh has made it lawful)” (The Qur'an, in an English version that is used in Lanao del Sur).

politician but also because the chances for the groom to be supported by the clan of the wife in his political ambitions increases.

Today's *betang*, especially among political clans, can hit PHP 1 million (about EUR 17,000), but this might just be the sum being announced publicly as a means to represent the rank of the family rather than the actual amount being given. An average *betang* might be about PHP 500,000 (about EUR 8,500) and a low one about PHP 100,000 (about EUR 1,700). There are cases when it is set very high to prevent a candidate from marrying the person of his choice. However, it is possible for women to contribute secretly to the *betang* in order to be able to marry the man of her choice; this is an option that may annoy the elders of the community and which thus may be kept secret. In other cases, the *betang* is reasonable since the family is more practical or has Islamic motives. Traditionally, the whole community of the groom contributed financially (*tabang*) to the bride price, seeing it as money that is borrowed and is expected to be repaid in future. If a family is rich, the assistance of others might not be asked and thus the family is not obligated towards them (Madale 1996: 135).

A well-educated Maranao woman recounted her problems with the idea of a bride price and how her perception changed when she started to understand it as *dower* (morning gift, in an Islamic context, *mahr*), which would make it difficult for the husband to divorce her or marry another woman. Her main argument was that it would be hard for him to spend that much money a second time. Additionally, if there is a *mahr* that was not already given to the wife but can be demanded by her in case of trouble,³⁰⁵ this can, especially if the *mahr* is high, be seen as a protection of her rights. In case of a possible divorce initiated by the wife a high *mahr* may, however, present a difficulty. In the framework of the CMPL, when a woman is demanding the divorce according to *khul* (release), she has to give back the *dower/mahr*, or part of the dowry to the husband. In case she has to give back money when seeking a divorce and it has already been spent, this might become a financial problem for the wife, since this form of divorce is the only possibility for a Muslim woman to initiate a separation without having severe reasons for it.³⁰⁶

That the *bai* in the following interview emphasized that the high *dowry* provides protection against divorce or a second wife by the husband, and is not a hindrance to her

³⁰⁵ According to Madale (1997) the wife can, in times of trouble, ask for the *sela sa adat*, which is part of the *dowry* but which is not demanded by the wife except in times of discontent between the couple (p. 43). In case the *sela sa adat* is very high, this might prevent the husband from divorcing his wife.

³⁰⁶ Other forms of divorce can only be demanded if there are severe reasons according to Islamic law, like impotence. Dissolving the marriage (divorce according to *faskh*), or the right to *talaq* (repudiation) cannot be initiated by the wife herself unless this right was delegated to the wife by her spouse.

divorcing him, can partly be explained by the fact that only men can take a second wife and because it is easier for men to get a divorce in the Islamic framework (Disoma 1999: 46). The bride price and/or gift, however, make it more difficult for a man to remarry, not only because of the financial burden but also because of community pressure:

the *dowry* is a gift actually, it's supposedly a *dower*, a gift to the woman. But in the culture of the Maranaos . . . if you are educated your *dowry* becomes higher. Before I really did not appreciate, it is like I'm being sold. But it is only afterwards that I realized that, you can actually consider it as a safeness. You can prevent any broken family, not good relationships between the two. Because for instance, even on the money alone, the man will realize that: "I cannot afford to give another *dowry* again. So I might as well give [everything] for this marriage.

[Divorce, especially since the influence of Islamic revival, or taking a second wife is prevented] because you are not only marrying a woman alone but you are marrying a whole clan. You are guarded by the whole clan and your clan is also guarding your man, he is also guarded by the whole clan. Because they will say: "Oh! I contributed something so it is going to be a shame for the family if you do not do good!" Because all of them went there [to the wedding] all of them became responsible for your action. So it becomes not just a marriage of the two but a marriage actually between the clans. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

A marriage is not only an individual commitment but a community affair in order to connect certain families and clans. This is especially important in case of political clans, which arrange their affinal relationships strategically in order to gain support from as many persons as possible. The clans thus have influence on marriages and divorces, not only for financial but also for social-political reasons. This can be understood as an advantage and a form of security. Nevertheless, it can be a disadvantage in case one would like to divorce (or stay married) and is hindered in doing so through community pressure or a financial burden. Such situations might turn into violent conflicts such as that described in chapter two where a cousin-in-law kidnapped the wife and the husband retaliated by shooting the kidnapper in the back.

3. Polygyny and Divorce: The Importance of Family Politics

Mednick wrote in the 1960s that high social pressure from the relatives of the wives' descent lines (which is normally higher than or equal to that of the husband) to treat the wives equally resulted in a low number of polygynous marriages. In case one wife is treated differently from the other, the one being disadvantaged would be backed up by her relatives in demanding equal status since it would be a blow to their *maratabat* to be treated below their status. From the start and because it is connected with a status of inferiority, a family does not willingly give its women as second wives (Mednick 1965: 158; see also Disoma 1999: 50). According to custom, a

man can take a second wife if the first one allows him to do so, in case she is sterile, physically infirm or unfit, or in case of avoidance of a decree of restitution of marital acts or insanity (Tawano 1979: 123). However, a fine has to be paid to the family of the first wife to appease their *maratabat* (Cayongcat 1984: 54). To marry more than one Maranao wife is thus expensive but it is also a gain to the husband and prestige-laden since it means he can afford to have more than one wife and since he is now connected to more families who will help to support him in certain respects, for example elections or *ridos*, concerning the kin group. To avoid asking someone outside of the clan for help, it is useful to have a large number of relatives who are culturally encouraged to support each other.

Polygamous marriages are not the norm but there are some, in addition there are those which remain only temporary (*mut'ah*)³⁰⁷, when *Shia* law³⁰⁸ is applied (Madale 1997: 44). Those in favor of polygamy argue that the right to marry several women was given by Allah “in an understanding of the nature of men.” A woman should not be selfish and should share the husband since there are more women than men in the society because of war, which is accepted as a valid Islamic reason. Further, according to a global Islamic narrative of justification, polygyny was established to take care of widows and orphans, and because of polygyny, there are no outcasts in a Muslim society since there are no secret girlfriends or illicit children. Finally, by accepting a polygynous marriage the woman will get the blessings from Allah and “a sure ticket to heaven” (ibid.).

Maranao politicians and traditional leaders are known to practice polygyny for many reasons: to broaden their political base, to acquire certain descent lines, or for pecuniary reasons, as when a clan leader marries a relative who is a government employee and thus can help to increase the financial status of the man. One famous example of a recent polygynous marriage involved a man of high political and religious influence who married six wives (the majority of them non-Maranaos) and justified his situation by saying that a man can marry four wives, and, as reported by a *bai a labi* commenting on the marriages, “one plus two plus three plus four is even more than six.”

³⁰⁷ The duration of this marriage depends on the contract the couple has made. A *mahr* can be given.

³⁰⁸ The exact differentiation between *Shia* and *Sunni* doctrines is not always observed in everyday life. The majority of Maranao are *Sunni* and the *Shia* community remains small, sometimes sharing mosques with *Sunnis*.



Picture 31: A Datu and His Wives, 1930s

Datu Dagalangit and some of his 13 wives, about 1930s, Lanao, Lumba Bayabao. Most women wear the *malong* and the *kumbung*. Photo kindly provided by Norodin Alonto Lucman.

In the 1960s, high-ranking men preferred to divorce their first wife before marrying a second. One *datu* had 15 wives, one after the other, and he was said to have been the most powerful *datu* of his time since he had the most connections (Mednick 1965: 160). Bamgbose (2003) notes that divorce rates in Lanao del Sur, as estimated by Maranao women, were about 70% in the 1970s. Since then they have decreased to about an estimated 20%. Some women argued that this decrease can be attributed to the influence of Islam, which allows divorce but discourages it (p. 72).

A divorced woman according to Islamic law should not remarry for three months after divorce, in case she is pregnant, so as to establish paternity of the baby. Maranaos do not follow this law. Instead, “her guardians or close relatives ‘marry her off’ to another person, preferably from within the kinship, who cannot easily refuse the marriage, or he will be branded as a kin who has no *maratabat*” (Disoma 1999a: 47). A divorcee is said to have lost status and the bride price for the second marriage is lower than that of her first (ibid.: 41). Muslim men and women can demand divorce at a *sharia* court: a study on divorce cases filed in Basilan and Marawi found that the majority of those filing cases are women but that “very few of the cases are decided,” since the husband, despite many summonses, just does not appear in court (Abdulkarim 2001: 24; see also Solamo-Antonio 2003: 17, 43).

Islam regulated polygyny by reducing the number of wives to four, but it also strengthened the right to marry more than one woman. It remains an advantage to have several wives because of an increase in political connections and prestige. Traditional features, such as marrying numerous wives by divorcing one after the other, were limited. Divorce patterns changed according to Bamgbose (2003) because of Islamic influence, which discouraged divorce. *Sharia* courts grant women the right to divorce but they often do not have enough authority to enforce these laws before the clan and the families. Generally, it can be said that the influence of a conservative Islamic resurgence is huge regarding family structures and that the rights (for example to divorce) provided by it are diminished.

B. Gender Norms and Sanctions

1. Illicit Sexual Relations: A Strong Conservative Traditional and Islamic Moral Code

Disoma (1999: 68), Hilsdon (2003: 25), and Madale (1997: 37) report cases of female circumcision among Maranaos but do not explain which form is practiced. A publication by the Pilipina Legal Resources Center, Inc. (PLRC) described the procedure as done in Mindanao in the following manner:

The circumcision may range from mere touching of the girl's vagina with a cotton swab to the light scraping of the vagina with the sharp edge of a bamboo stick. In some cases, the swab hides from the child the end of a knife that is actually used for the scraping. (Anayatin et al. 2003: 66)

Even though the Qur'an does not demand female circumcision, traditionally Maranao women were considered pious if circumcised. Sagola Tago, a member of the Muslim Feminist Al-Mujadilah Foundation, writes that circumcision is not practiced anymore and that this is seen by elders as a reason why young Maranao girls of today are "more wild and hot" (2003: 51). The moral code of women "snobbing away" in case of courtship, however, generally remained. A Maranao woman should not show any interest in sexual activity or sexual gratification. The wife is not supposed to expose her body to the husband but to show reserve towards him. Women should be:

demure, reserved, refined. A wife should not refuse her husband when he wants to have sex because of the *hadith* that women will be cursed.³⁰⁹ Women have also been taught to be submissive to the husband at all times. (ibid: 50)

³⁰⁹ If a husband calls his wife to his bed [i.e. to have sexual relations] and she refuses and causes him to sleep in anger, the angels will curse her till morning (Bukhari 4.54.460).

As a Maranao Muslim feminist states, the husband or the family decide in most of the cases how many children will be born, while the wife is not supposed to use family planning without the consent of her husband and the family (Lao 2001: 77). Women have no control over their bodies since birth control and abortion are frowned upon. Unmarried women are expected to keep their virginity until marriage. For married women, family planning is more likely to be accepted, for example, when the wife's health would be in danger. In such cases, natural measures like withdrawal or rhythm are used predominantly. This trend corresponds to the national developments; thus the UN reports that 47% of married Filipino women who used contraceptive methods in 2000 applied traditional methods whereas only 28% opted for modern methods (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat).³¹⁰

Women's rights groups emphasize that contraceptive methods are not prohibited by Islam and that during the Prophet's time, Muslims practiced *al az'l* (*coitus interruptus*). They argue that some *ulama* claim that contraceptive practices that do not destroy the ability to procreate permanently are permissible and that the aversion against family planning "is based on the belief that they should propagate Islam by reproducing as many children as possible" (Anayatin et al. 2003: 75). This, however, they note, is negated by the Qur'an itself which emphasizes that it is not the (number of) children who will bring the believer nearer to Allah (Saba 34:37).³¹¹ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reports that in the ARMM a special project was designed in the 1990s to target a community with higher maternal and infant mortality rates than the national average. *Ulama* were included in this project to advocate the advantages of family planning. They went on a study tour to Indonesia and Egypt to discuss the issue with other religious leaders. On this basis, literature promoting family planning was published and, as a consequence, an increased number of Muslim Filipinos using contraception was reported in 1999

³¹⁰ Family planning in the Philippines is partly dependent on the decisions of the local government units. There are areas where family planning is especially discouraged, as for example in the City of Manila. In 2000, Mayor Lito Atienza issued an order effectively banning birth control from city-funded clinics; birth control can thus only be bought at private clinics or received freely from local or international NGOs. The UNFPA (2005) describes the general politics of the Philippines towards family planning as "retrogressive" with regard to funding of modern methods. Instead, "natural" family planning is promoted (p. 49). In 2009 a bill, authored by, among others, by "Noynoy" Aquino, was blocked in Congress that would have required municipal health centers to provide free birth control services and products. Representatives of the Catholic Church in particular lobbied against the bill. A survey conducted by the Social Weather Station in March 2010, however, showed that seven in ten Filipinos would defy the Roman Catholic Church and elect a president who supported the use of condoms and pills for birth control.

³¹¹ "And it is not your wealth, nor your children that bring you nearer to Us [i.e., pleases Allâh], but only he who believes [in Islamic Monotheism], and does righteous deeds [will please Us]; as for such, there will be twofold reward for what they did, and they will reside in the high dwellings [Paradise] in peace and security" (The Qur'an, in an English translation (with comments/explanations in brackets) of the Qur'an that is widely used in Lanao del Sur).

(UNFPA 2005: 41). Later on, a Special Committee on Reproductive Health and Family Management was established, headed by the House of Islamic Opinion of Central Mindanao. It drafted a religious *fatwah* “stating that contraceptive methods were acceptable as long as they were safe, legal, in accordance with the Islamic *sharia*, and approved by a credible physician (preferably Muslim) for the benefit of both the mother and the child” (ibid.). The Grand Mufti of Egypt endorsed the *fatwah*, which was publicly pronounced in the Philippines in March 2004 “with two hundred Muslim religious leaders from all over the country in attendance” (ibid.). The *fatwah*, however, is rather vague and the question remains what is safe and legal according to the *sharia*.

Among the urban middle class in Iligan and Marawi, the contraceptive pill is used, often without the knowledge of the husband, since women can easily purchase them in Iligan City (Bamgbose 2003: 76). The PLRC, however, reports that Muslim women in the Philippines often reject the contraceptive pill because they are afraid of the side effects, “sometimes even without basis.” The behavior is explained by the lack of education and information on family planning. Thus, the fertility rate continues to rise (Anayatin et al. 2003: 69).

Muslim women’s activists emphasize that Islam allows family planning. Muslim conservatives instead defend a contra-family planning politics with the argument that the nature of women is to have children and that contraception is incompatible with Islam since it goes against “the divine plan.” Children are generally perceived as a blessing and a pregnant woman as being blessed by Allah. She should ideally be treated like the queen of the house. In case her family and husband fail to do so and she loses the child, this “would be blamed on the person displeasing her and not on the woman for not taking care of herself” (Madale 1997: 31). Clans usually want to keep their bloodlines, and children are seen as tools for establishing connections with powerful families. Children also help in keeping or increasing the size of the clan and as a possible source of support of clan members. The social pressure on a couple to have children immediately after marriage is tremendous. Likewise, the status of parents is dependent on the number of children, with those having more children having higher status. It does not matter if the child is a girl or a boy.³¹² The average number of children born to married women 15 to 49 years old in the year 2000 was 3.24 in the ARMM (3.7 in Lanao del Sur). Though this is not the

³¹² In the 1970s, a ritual “brought about by Islam” was introduced that demanded the slaughter of one goat if the child is female, and two if a male child is born (Plawan 1979: 79). It is unknown to me whether this ritual is still practiced.

highest birth rate per region in the Philippines³¹³, the highest unmet need for family planning is documented for the ARMM (33%), followed closely by Region V (32%) (NSO 2000/2008). This shows the dominance of conservative Filipino religious agents advocating strategic family politics in their opposition to family planning against public demands for access to it.

When a Maranao woman gets pregnant before marriage, the man has to give a high monetary contribution to the family of the woman and an arrangement is made to hide the incident³¹⁴ (like marrying the woman to a relative). Sometimes, a secret abortion becomes an option (Kanti 2003: 49).³¹⁵ In the worst case, the woman or the man, or both — in contradiction to Islamic demands, where for illicit sex in which no adultery is involved the punishment is hundred lashes (which can also lead to death) — are killed by relatives because they have besmirched the honor of the family, with greater “embarrassment on the girl’s kinsmen” than to the boy’s kinsmen (Pumbaya 2003: 210). Some couples choose to elope in order to hide at the place of an authority of the clan who will mediate. They may be forgiven and get married. In other cases, they would have to leave the area or hide their identity. If the marriage of an eloped couple is arranged, it might be mediated by a *bai a labi*, a sultan, or a *datu*.

In the event of adultery, the husband may kill his wife. In some cases, he cannot retaliate because the woman comes from a higher-ranking clan or descent line. Sometimes, a divorce and a new marriage take place because the adultery is seen as resulting from the “force of nature.”³¹⁶ If the wife is killed because of adultery, her family does not consistently take revenge: this depends also on personal considerations about the guilt of the victim. A *datu* recounts:

In the case of one prominent leader in Marawi City, his wife, a member of a big clan in Malabang, was involved in an amorous affair with a soldier based in Malabang. After finding out that his wife is really involved with the soldier, a shameful predicament in the eyes of the Maranao society, the man caused the death of his wife by hiring a killer. The killer ambushed the woman on her way to Malabang. She was killed instantly. The soldier was reassigned to another posting.

³¹³ The highest birth rate can be found in Region V (Bicol) and Caraga with 3.4 children per mother.

³¹⁴ The marrying off even of victims of rape can also be found as a solution in the national law of the Philippines which states that in case a rapist marries his victim, he is absolved of the charges. Article 89 of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, in relation to Article 344 and Article 266-C, holds that “marriage of the offended woman and the offender in crimes against chastity shall extinguish criminal liability.”

³¹⁵ Local Muslim women's activists note that abortion is not prohibited by Islam when the life of the mother is in danger. For some schools of Islamic law, abortion is permissible during the first three months (Anayatin et al. 2003: 75). Filipino laws (which prohibit abortion except when the life of the woman is in danger) are thus even stricter than some Islamic interpretations. Nevertheless, illegal abortion is relatively easily available in the Philippines. According to a United Nations Population Fund report, half of the Philippines’ 3.1 million annual pregnancies are unwanted or unintended, and 400,000 of them end in abortion (UNFPA 2005: 31).

³¹⁶ For an example, see in this chapter, III.B.2, “The Executive Rights of the Family: Norm and Sanction.”

The family of the woman did not contemplate revenge because the accusation was true. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

Women as well as men can get into trouble for having sex outside of their marriage. In reality, the man's position is privileged, with the legal possibility of having several wives and availing of the right to temporary marriages under the *Shia* tradition. Additionally, like in the Philippines in general,³¹⁷ it is more commonly accepted for married men to have secret affairs outside of the community than for women. It is the *maratabat* of the woman that is spoiled; the man involved is seen as the aggressor who has spoiled it. The family might banish a woman because of promiscuity (Gutoc 2003: 52). Women are also more restricted concerning sex before marriage; thus the state of virginity becomes crucial. In arranged marriages, the bride's family is asked privately about the bride's status as a single woman. The bride's family guarantees the virginity and purity of the woman; failure would entail great dishonor. In addition, there is a move to duplicate the tradition in Egypt, which requires the groom to use a handkerchief after coitus to extract blood from the bride's vagina as proof that the woman was a virgin.

Human trafficking is another issue that Maranao women's activists are concerned about. "Due to lack of choices and opportunities within the country, many girls choose to engage in high-risk occupations abroad, including being trafficked in prostitution," domestically or internationally (Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro, quoted on the homepage of Musawah, 2010). Women who are caught being prostitutes risk being killed by their families since this spoils the family *maratabat*. A *datu* remembers one case among a related clan:

A member of a well-to-do Maranao family, a girl, fell in love with a Maranao boy who comes from a not so prominent family and was reprimanded by her clan. She was not allowed to see her boyfriend again whereupon she was sent to Manila to further her studies under the care of her aunt. In the years that followed, the clan did not know what she was doing outside her school. One day, she was caught engaged in prostitution in Manila and this revelation shamed her clan especially her brother. Her mother fell ill and she has to go back to Marawi City to see her ailing mother. A day after her arrival, the family confronted her whereupon she denied their accusations but her brother has enough evidence to prove that she

³¹⁷ In the Philippines, definitions of what constitutes adultery are different for men and women. A woman commits adultery if she has sexual intercourse with a man not her husband. A married man is considered to commit adultery "only when he keeps a mistress in the conjugal dwelling, has sexual intercourse under scandalous circumstances with a woman not his wife, or cohabits with a concubine in any other place." Senator Richard J. Gordon commented on this: "Thus, if the husband's sexual relations with a woman not his wife does not fall in any one of these circumstances, he is not criminally liable, unlike the wife where all it takes for her to be criminally liable is one sexual intercourse with a man not her husband." (Proposed Act to Change the Crime of Adultery Into Marital Infidelity, Amending Article 333 and Article 334 of Act No. 3815). In addition, the Penal Code on extra-marital sexual relations provides "that women should have a maximum penalty of six years imprisonment, and men four years — thereby reinforcing the double standards regarding sexual infidelity" (UNFPA 2005: 11).

prostituted herself in Manila. Later, her brother pulled out a gun and his mother was trying to shield her from him but the man lunged at her and shot her in the head. She died instantly. She was buried in an undisclosed grave to hide the family's shame. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

Bamgbose reports that pregnancy from rape is not usually talked about since the *maratabat* of the woman and her family is spoiled. Rape, among other things, was part of the Philippines' Muslim war in the 1970s when soldiers raped women in the communities. Today it is said that most women are immediately evacuated in case of conflict and thus removed from the risk of being sexually violated (2003: 89). However, the risk of being raped during war time remains an issue. A woman who has become pregnant from a rape may be brought to a large city like Cebu or Manila to give birth in an unmarried mothers' institution. She may then return home without the baby (2003: 79). Bamgbose concludes that the threat of retaliation by the family of the violated woman creates a culture of silence since the "victims do not want their assault to result in further violence" (ibid.: 79; Maruhom 2003: 52). Rape (*kapelolobed*) counts as an offense, like murder (*bono*), elopement (*katengaga*), abduction (*kapalagoy sa babay*), mauling (*kaperaraneg*), and false accusation (*katongkir sa di benar*), which can be cause for a *rido* (Intuas 1996: 95). Cases of Maranao women being sexually violated while being in prison do not end up in *rido* since their families feel ashamed and keep it a secret. In a report on Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Lanao, Dela Torre and Gloria (2007) state that women are particularly in danger of sexual abuse and slavery in times of refuge but that they usually will not talk about the abuse:

Cases of sexual abuse and slavery in the hinterland municipality of Butig were told by the IDPs to NGO workers in Marawi City in hush-hush tones as the prevailing culture prevents them from saying it openly for fear of shaming the concerned women and their families. In Muslim communities, it is difficult to get a documentation of serious violations of human rights perpetrated against displaced men and women during and as an aftermath of the war. Cultural concepts of pride and shame prevented families of the victims to surface, tell their stories and file cases in appropriate courts. Only anecdotal stories from service providers and some IDPs serve as telltale signs of the abuses. (p. 34)

Considering the problem that sexual violence could not be addressed openly because of cultural norms, the Mindanao People's Caucus included problems related to the issue in their national peace agenda. The conflict produces high numbers of refugees, while the "no war, no peace" environment, in which *datus* and warlords are dominant, increases the possibility of abuses of power. Deviance is common, as shown in the cases of gang rapes in Sulu of which scions of influential families were accused (Alipala 2009).

2. The Executive Rights of the Family: Norm and Sanction

According to Elwert (2004), “self-help” (Selbsthilfe) is one way to sanction the violation of a norm (p. 32). In relation to local conflicts, it is mainly up to the families or clans involved to decide how to solve them, rather than through a centralized state power. Interestingly, the profession of lawyer is one of those associated with high status among Maranaos, since “he can represent his kin’s interest especially in disputes and conflicts that characterize our society” (Disoma 1999a: 26). However, apart from the prestige of the lawyer-title, there is actually a low demand for the profession, “due to the scarcity of cases submitted for adjudication in the justice system” (ibid.: 27). Instead, actors outside the state (rebel groups, warlords, religious leaders, and strongmen as well as clan elders, *datus*, *bais*, and sultans) have more influence on the definition of norms as well as the form and execution of sanctions in case they are broken (Fianza 2004: 36). A *datu*, as part of the sultanate system, has to follow certain regulations, based on the *taritib* and *igma*. However, since leadership is permanently being challenged, rules are open to interpretation and depend on the power of the group enforcing them. It is finally the *datu* himself who decides what a *datu* has to do and not do. Beckett (quoted in Gutierrez and Vitug 2000) writes about *datu*-ship in Mindanao: “Thus finally, a *datu* is what a *datu* did” (p. 206).

Since the elders, *datus*, and *bais* generally sanction the disregard of cultural norms, they might apply the tools that serve their own interests the most in order to sanction a violation. Thus, Vice-Governor Bai Monera Dimakuta Macabangon (2004-2007) applied the national law and filed administrative and criminal cases against Governor Basher “Mustaqbal” Manalao from the OMPPIA Party. She succeeded and assumed the position of governor for three months when Manalao was suspended by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) based on the complaints filed against him by the Provincial Board. The prevalence of the traditional system in national regulations can best be seen in relation to the authority of police officers. The police in some cases do not dare to interfere in a *rido* and just follow the advice of some elders. In one case, after a conflict, one family required police or military help to escort the culprits safely home. In other cases, elders decide to put the culprit in prison without a charge: he may be freed after they make a judgment according to the *taritib*, *igma* and Islamic law. Civil justice does not replace traditional laws: a person sent to national prison for a deed might still be shot down by the other party when released.

Norms can be enforced by the family, the clan or by state agents (who might be “privatized” by a political dynasty, see Kreuzer 2009). Depending on the context, different norms

are considered important. Thus in one family, a woman might not have problems if she wants to marry a Christian; in another family she might be threatened with ostracism by the community. In determining sanctions according to the *taritib* and *igma*, the descent line status has to be taken into consideration. Because of the law of the family and the importance of their position within the lineage system, sanctions and norms are, in practice, debatable to a certain degree, depending on the rank, position, attitude, and relations that the involved clans and persons have in society. This means that murder, for example, will not automatically follow adultery. The act might also be accepted as an expression of a law of nature, especially if the partner is from a higher ranking lineage and a marriage that follows will be to the advantage of the clan (see also Hilsdon 2003: 27). Descent line status can thus overrule Islamic laws and has an influence on sanctions and normative decisions. There was a case of a woman from an influential clan who was having a secret love affair with a high-ranking politician. The husband found out and tried to shoot her (not the man) but failed. The affair could have been resolved if the male lover had divorced his first wife and married his mistress; her family would have accepted this as a “law of nature,” seeing an advantage in the connection. The divorce from the first wife, also from a high-ranking clan, was however refused by the politician since it might have disturbed the relationship between him and his wife’s clan. The option to take the mistress as a second wife was not accepted by her family since this is seen as a degradation of status (only lower-ranking women would agree to be a second wife) (Disoma 1999a: 39). Currently, she is secretly the second wife and she remains an outcast from her family who has to stay in Manila.

Descent line status is important in relation to sanctions. If the family or clan sees an advantage in a connection to another person via marriage, adultery can then be acceptable. Sanctions are thus to a certain degree debatable, depending on rank, status, and the attitude of the family and the persons involved. In this context, gender norms are also debatable since they become less important than the lineage system.

III. Islam and Gender Norms

A. Islamic Resurgence

The global Islamic resurgence movement manifested itself in Mindanao in the late 1970s. Among other things, this resurgence can be seen in the introduction of *sharia* laws into the national constitution. The predominantly conservative Islamic movement had particular consequences for gender relations. Most obviously, the impact of Islamic resurgence on the role

of women in society can be seen in the widespread adoption of an Islamic dress code for women. Wearing a veil even became obligatory for women in Marawi City under Mayor Mahid Mutilan of the Islamic OMPIA Party.

Since the 1990s, civil society organizations have prospered, demanding rights for women, peace, and inter-religious dialogue in an Islamic framework, partly counterpoising conservative claims by reinterpretation of the Qur'an from a woman's perspective. Since the 2000s, Islamic parties have lost influence in Lanao, and are being replaced by traditional elites. Islamic feminism instead has had an impact on the recently developed ARMM Gender and Development (GAD) Code (Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act No. 280), on which the Moro feminist group Nisa Ul-Haqq Fi Bangsamoro collaborated with the provincial government. Islamic resurgence, often accused of having disastrous consequences for women, in the context of Islamic feminism has a positive character for women. This can be explained by its openness to *ijtihad* (Arabic: rationality) meaning, the use of reason in interpreting the Qur'an rather than being satisfied with the mere quoting of it (see Schröter 2007). The development of Islamic feminism is not the consequence of secular feminism but rather the outcome of a countermovement initiated by Muslims, based on religious premises. The separation of secular and religious feminisms poses the problem of a gap among women's activists according to their creed or approach. Then again, it offers a chance to Muslim women to be empowered in a context that is acceptable in a "no war, no peace" environment in which gender has become a political issue.

The ARMM GAD Code, the regional translation of the Magna Carta for Women (RA No. 9710), was signed into law at the beginning of 2011. It was regionally interpreted in order to fit into an Islamic framework, which did not prevent it from adopting the definition of discrimination against women by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The impact of this law on women's political and economic participation and the possible flexibility of its definition according to conservative religious interpretations has yet to be seen. It is also of interest what future impact the code will have on religious laws already put in place under the OMPIA Party but also on traditional gender relations and restrictions. Meanwhile it has to be seen as a positive political development concerning women's rights in the ARMM.

1. Islamic Parties: Success and Decline

Lanao was Islamized via Maguindanao in the sixteenth century. The Maranaos were the last major Muslim group in the southern Philippines to convert to Islam. This may be due to the rather isolated area around Lake Lanao that they inhabit. According to Majul, the *datus* accepted the new religion first and only later did the whole population become Muslim (1999). A sultanate system and a syncretistic form of Islam finally covered the whole area. American colonization did not affect religion to a large extent; nonetheless, in the 1950s, Maranaos describe Marawi City (at that time it was still Dansalan City) as having been “Americanized.”³¹⁸ By 1959, there were nightclubs, three movie theaters, and only five organized *madrrasah* schools (Saber and Tamano 1985-86: 103-4). After World War II, Islamic missionaries came from the Middle East and Indonesia, thus increasing the local knowledge of Islam. The first Filipino Muslim students were sent to the Middle East to receive scholarships, with a peak in the 1970s, and Islamic literature in Arabic and English reached the Philippine Muslim communities (ibid: 20-21).



Picture 32: Bitiara Club, Muslim and Christian Professionals in Dansalan, 1954.
Photo kindly provided by Norodin Alonto Lucman.

³¹⁸ From 1907 (when Dansalan became a municipality) to 1940 (when it became a city) the municipal president of Dansalan was a lieutenant of the American army.

One of the major promoters of an Islamic revival movement was Senator Ahmad “Domocao” Alonto (1914-2002). He established scholarships for Maranao Muslims to be educated in Egypt.³¹⁹ The students came back from the Middle East to Mindanao and spread their knowledge. Maranao women who returned from Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well as members of the Tabligh movement helped to popularize the *niqab* and the *abaya*,³²⁰ especially in the 1980s and 1990s (Maruhom and Allian 2005: 146). More *madaris* were founded under the authority of the communities. Libya, Saudi Arabia, and the Office of the Islamic Conferences of Foreign Ministers financially supported them. Through them, the understanding of Arabic and exegesis of the Qur’an were emphasized. In addition, Islamic institutions of higher education were established, integrating women and men alike, as students and teachers.³²¹

One outcome of the increasing Islamic resurgence movement, since the 1950s but especially as a result of the democratic wave after the downfall of the Marcos government, was the emergence of Islamic parties in Mindanao (McKenna 1990; Maruhom and Allian 2005: 143). The involvement of *ulama* in politics was, according to Maruhom and Allian, a new phenomenon, since the religious sector had previously been separated from the worldly sector. *Ulama*, beside their religious functions, operated as advisors of political leaders but not as leaders themselves (p. 143). Founded in 1986 by Mahid Mutilan, the OMPPIA Party, one of the biggest Islamic parties in the Philippines, reached its height in the 1990s. Its members are mostly Maranao preachers trained at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, the World Islamic Call University in Libya, and Islamic schools in Pakistan. It started as a movement against a hydroelectric project on Lake Lanao. Vitug and Gloria (2000) describe Mutilan as representing a moderate form of Islam. He was supported by the government to curb the MILF and the threat of an *ulama*

³¹⁹ Because of his commitment to the Islamic religion and his campaigns for constitutional rights of Filipino Muslims in the Philippines, he is mentioned by Alam as one of the 100 great Muslim leaders of the twentieth century (2005: 359).

³²⁰ The *niqab* is a face-covering veil; the *abaya* is an outer garment that covers the whole body.

³²¹ One example is the Jamie’o Mindanao Al-Islamia Matampay, which was founded by Sheikh Ahmad Bashir, former president of the Agama Islam Society in Marawi City. Today the school is managed by *ulama* and the heirs of the late Sheikh Bashir. It comprises about 2,000 pupils (66% male and 34% female). Of 121 faculty members, over 70 are women. The tuition fee is PHP 1,000 per year and those pupils that do not come from Lanao del Sur only have to pay half. Poor students do not have to pay any. There are English courses in addition to the Arabic curriculum. The school provides bachelor’s degrees in *sharia* law, education and *da’wah* (literally “call to faith,” meaning the peaching of Islam). One of their goals is to recommend qualified pupils for scholarships to the Middle East to study Islamic Studies (in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt). In 2007, four pupils received a scholarship. It was reported that the number of scholarships was higher when Rashid Lucman was in Saudi Arabia. While in exile, he recommended more than 400 Maranao students with the approval of Dr. Omar Abdullah Naseef and Prince Sultan.

unification under its authority. Thus, Mutilan founded the Ulama League in 1996, which was open to dialogues with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) (Vitug and Gloria 2000: 151). The formation of the Kuwaiti-sponsored Ummah Party, headed by Abu Mohammad Sarangani, followed that of Mutilan's OMPPIA Party in 1998. The party was founded by the conservative *da'wah* (call to faith) movement Sabaab, which spread in Marawi City under the leadership of *ulama* who had studied in Kuwait. This movement is involved in socio-economic community activities and gives seminars on Islam for men and women. It favors plural marriages but is less strict on *purdah* (segregation of the sexes and seclusion of women) than the Tabligh (Madale 1997: 110; Maruhom and Allian 2005: 141). A coalition of Islamic political parties and organizations earned the OMPPIA and Ummah parties a number of political victories in municipal elections. Mayor of the Islamic City of Marawi from 1988 to 1992, Mutilan then ran on a platform of reform and honest government in the provincial elections and won overwhelmingly against the incumbent governor despite meager campaign funds. The OMPPIA Party governed the province of Lanao del Sur for the next nine years, until 2001.

The political experiment of a religious party in power did not turn out to change much, and by the end of his nine-year stint as Lanao del Sur governor, Mutilan was said to have been caught in the familiar Filipino maelstrom of money politics.³²² Charges of official corruption were filed against Mutilan³²³ and the coalition Islamic partner, the Ummah Party, denounced the OMPPIA Party as un-Islamic in character. Later, *alim* Basher "Mustaqbal" Manalao, member of the OMPPIA Party and Lanao del Sur governor (2004-2007),³²⁴ was suspended for six months in 2006³²⁵ by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) because of administrative and criminal cases filed by Vice-Governor Monera Dimakuta Macabangon together with most of the provincial board members. The internal and external political power struggles finally led to a loss of power of religious parties and in 2007, the elder brother of Ansaruddin-Abdulmalik "Hooky" Alonto Adiong, "Bombit," became Lanao del Sur governor. Thus, traditional political elites, in the instance the Alonto-Adiong families, returned to positions of power. Since 2007, the religious OMPPIA Party lost contests for every major political position available in the ARMM

³²² Nonetheless, in 2001 Mutilan became ARMM vice-governor for one term. Four years later, "Hooky" Alonto Adiong (Lakas-CMD) replaced him.

³²³ According to the files of the Office of the Ombudsman, Quezon City, Metro Manila, 1997.

³²⁴ Vice-Governor *alim* Basher "Mustaqbal" Manalao succeeded Hooky's father, Mamintal "Mike" Adiong (Lakas-CMD 2001-2004) as governor when the latter died in office.

³²⁵ Vice-Governor Monera Dimakuta Macabangon during this time became acting governor.

regional elections. Power reverted to clans and traditional politics, under the influence of Filipino government officials in Manila.

In 2007, Ustadz Elias Abdulsalam, also known for his links to the Ulama League of the Philippines (ULP), became the figurehead of the OMPPIA Party after Mutilan's death in a car accident (on December 6, 2007). In June 2008, Mindanao's pioneer Islamic political party entered the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (CMD) while remaining an autonomous entity. By doing so, it announced its support for President Arroyo in the August elections in the ARMM and thus for the candidates of the Lakas-CMD party, Governor Zaldy Ampatuan and Vice-Governor Adiong.³²⁶

An electoral failure of Islamic parties in Lanao does not mean the failure of Islamic philosophy *per se*, or the lack of influence of Islamic morals on the society. During the time of the religious parties, Marawi City was increasingly influenced by Islam and those who were successful in politics were often *ulama*. Taking the case of Mutilan, it is said that he was not rich and did not even have his own car. His political success was due to his status as an *alim*. As Marawi City mayor, he and his supporting *ulama* passed laws to prohibit drinking and gambling and to make the wearing of the veil in public obligatory. The suggestion to introduce the *abaya* as dress for women was however refused because women complained that it would be too expensive. Whereas no public police was founded to enforce the Islamic laws, some used them as a basis to act against women. Before Mutilan's election, this violence reached its climax:

In 1987, several bodies of women were found floating in a river in Marawi City. The police retrieved the bodies but there are no claimants. Days later, the bodies were identified by people but their families did not claim them. It was found out that these women were snatched in Cagayan de Oro City by their relatives and executed in Marawi City. They were accused of engaging in prostitution in Cagayan de Oro City. Thereupon the Imams made pleas during Friday prayers that wayward Maranao women committing acts of lasciviousness will be dealt with harshly by their irate families. The police did not charge anyone but nevertheless

³²⁶ A majority of the traditional elites during the Arroyo administration who occupied a leading position in the ARMM or in the provincial government of Lanao del Sur were members of the Lakas-Christian-Muslim Democrats. However, during the 2010 national elections the Adiong-Alontos supported Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino of the Liberal Party, showing the importance of "patron-client" relationships that surpass party politics. Beside these national parties, there are several regional or provincial parties in Lanao del Sur that have their headquarters in Marawi City but that are only partly following a religious agenda and have only a marginal influence, like the Muslim Reform Party in Lanao, of which Kamar Mindalano is the president and Mandangan Decampong the secretary. The People's Consultative (Mushawara) Party covers Basilan, and the provinces of Lanao, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga del Sur. Basher Calauto Edris is the president and Zain Ali Sharif the secretary-general. The Lanao People's Party covers Lanao del Sur; the attorney Casan Macabanding is its secretary-general. The Siap Party covers the ARMM; Alim Abdul Matabalo Amerol is the president and Mohamad Haris Tanog the secretary-general.

filed the cases under “unsolved murders” file. (Written statement by a *datu*, Marawi City, 2008)

McKenna reports alike that during that time in Maguindanao Islamic laws were austere applied by some clerics:

During the latter part of the rebellion and in the years following the ceasefire, dead bodies (most often female) would regularly be found floating down the Pulangi River from liberated areas. [But the] majority of the MILF adjudicators reportedly do not dispense legal decisions resulting in penalties which are significantly different from those traditionally imposed. The reason most often given for their leniency is that local Muslims are not yet true Muslims so do not deserve strict Islamic sanctions. (1990: 468-9)

In 2002, under the governorship of Mamintal “Mike” Adiong, women were again harassed by some Islamic preachers, spraying liquid paint in their faces because of improper dress. The ULP confirmed the incidents by stating that the women had been punished. The *Philippine Star* (Unson 2002) wrote that “[t]wo alimas [sic] or women preachers, who belong to the ULP, said the ulamas [sic] (Muslim religious leaders) are also ‘punishing’ women who wear tight jeans.” Facing a public outcry against those practices, physical violence changed into symbolic violence. In 2008, for example the faces of women on streamers were painted black. The aim remains the same: an attempt to enforce the Islamic dress code on women. It is interesting to notice that violence against women in Lanao del Sur on the basis of Islamic laws is mostly reported from times when Islamic parties did not govern the province and the city;³²⁷ it might thus be understood as opposition by extremists (not necessarily members of the Islamic parties) against traditionalists. Local *datu*s accuse not the OMPIA Party of such extreme actions but members of the MILF:

In fact, the MILF ordered such defamation against women [painting the faces of women on streamers black] to be carried out . . . Commander Bravo made the operation as part of MILF’s effort to force Muslim women to dress modestly or the like. Muslim women being displayed in public is frowned upon by their clans. He explained to me that women should not be displayed in public wearing thick make up and extravagant clothing. (Email correspondence, 2009)

These forms of symbolic violence, however, find only minor appreciation among inhabitants of Marawi City. It is more striking that normally the faces of women and men are shown proudly and that their kin appreciate them.

³²⁷ The mayor of Marawi in 2008 was not an *alim* but a sultan, Sultan Fahad Salic, who has two wives, of which the second is Parañaque City councilor Alma Moreno, a Christian and former actress.



Picture 33: Symbolic Violence Against Women

Photo taken by the author, Marawi City, 2008.

In the end, traditional elites and the *datu*-ship system remain predominant alongside the Islamic influence. The two ideologies cannot, however, be separated. It does not seem that with the return of the traditional elites Islamic laws in Marawi City were abandoned. For instance, Islamic rhetoric remains important in justifying the leadership of men and women and also a certain dress code (at least to cover their head), whether obligatory or not, remains the usual practice by female politicians. Conversely, as Gonzales noted in 1997, like “the *datus* and the sultans, the *alims* [sic], *ustads* [teachers], and *imams* tell believers whom to vote for. They exploit the culture of patronage and the clan system that reinforce Islam and partisan politics.” (2000: 132). Both camps do not hesitate to enter into strategic relationships. Thus, “Bombit” financially supports the *ulama* group which was founded by Mutilan, though he does not enforce Islamic laws in Lanao del Sur. A certain form of Islamization remains ongoing, even though marginalized.

Violent incidents in Marawi City against women on the basis of religion seem rather limited. In addition, neither the Islamic nor the traditional parties officially support these actions. McKenna and Abdula (2009) write that generally the position of Muslim women has not been tremendously affected by the Islamic resurgence movement (p. 233). Islam among the majority in

the *Pat a Pangamong* is an Islam in its “Maranoized” version, which is a syncretistic form of Islam that is judged by conservatives and extremists as un-Islamic. For traditionalists, however, to be a Maranao means to be a Muslim. *Adat* and the *taritib* are based on Islam and the *sharia*. The descent lines are sacred since they go back to Prophet Mohammad and *ridos* about *maratabat* are thus justified. For them, *bai a labis* as well as sultans are representatives of the descent line. Modern Muslim activists like Norma Maruhom do not follow the traditionalist gender approach of symbolic equality but strive for a reinterpretation of the Qur’an in order to achieve a more gender sensitive Islam. Equality of the sexes is then based on Islamic sources, not on tradition, giving the Muslim activists a more authoritative basis of argumentation against extremists. Maruhom and Fatima Allian (2005) thus state in a publication of the Malaysian Sisters in Islam that:

Unfortunately, it is the radical and extremist Muslim groups [referring to the MNLF, MILF, and ASG] who are defining which Islam is to prevail among Muslims in the country . . . To counter this trend, there is a need to encourage and develop a new interpretation of the Qur’an that is gender sensitive, progressive, and contemporary, and to make this a global advocacy among concerned Muslim individuals and organizations from different parts of the world. (p. 155)

According to the authors, in the Philippines the Islamic resurgence movement includes different groups: the conservatives (the Tabligh movement and the Islamic parties), the extremists (the MNLF, MILF, and ASG) and the modernists (only recently organized in the Muslim group Al-Mujadilah). The extremists favor or use violence “or force to attain goals including, among others, the establishment of an Islamic state where the Shari’ah or Islamic Law shall be strictly observed” (ibid.: 134). The conservatives campaign “for the return to the ways and practices of early Muslims during the time of the Prophet Mohammad and often assert . . . the liberal and textual interpretations of the Islamic teachings as enshrined in the Qur’an and the Prophetic Sunnah” (ibid.). The modern, or liberal, Muslims in the Philippines espouse

the reinterpretation of the Islamic doctrines according to modern times, without necessarily deviating from the fundamental teachings of Islam, to be able to meet the challenges of modernism and secularism with the belief that only this can be the solution to existing problems confronting the Muslim world . . . Most of them are professionals who are schooled in the Western system of education, the educational system that is adopted in the Philippines . . . Their liberal views are heard only occasionally when they are invited by the media to speak on issues related to Islamic teachings. (ibid.: 134-5)

The dominant Islamic parties in Lanao, OMPIA and Ummah, are thus defined as conservative. They are not secular but integrate women in their dynamics, mainly in the framework of

unofficial power. The wife of Mutilan campaigned for the OMPPIA party and organized its women's sector. There is, however another direction of Islam, followed by traditionalists: a syncretistic form. Traditionalists are less religiously organized but have tremendous social and also political impact.

2. *Syncretism versus Islamic Resurgence: "I am a Maranao and thus a Muslim"*

The clan society in the "no war, no peace" environment is in a state of insurgency which is aimed partly at the protection of its culture in opposition to the mainstream culture, which is perceived as Christian. In a state of rebellion men and women have to be united; thus, internal critique is seen as inappropriate and any change of norms through the non-Muslim Filipino culture is a difficult issue, particularly if this goes along with a change of power from traditional to modern agents. Islam is seen as part of the clans' culture and as reinforcing their position, but, again, the question of agency in the sense of who is to specify what Islam is³²⁸ should be asked.

The strength of normative structures, as Zitelmann explains, is marked by their ability to endure conflicts (2004: 43). Islam had its effects on the traditional system. Rituals that were thought to be Islamic but contained cultural elements were partly changed by Muslim scholars. Whereas before *kandidiyaga* (crying or rhythmic crying over the dead) in some parts of Lanao was part of the death ritual, it was found to be un-Islamic and abolished with the argument that everything is only borrowed from God and thus a person has to thank the Creator, while lamenting is rebellion against him (Tawano 1979a: 83). However, not all cultural habits were changed according to Islamic teachings. Disoma (1999) writes that Maranaos are confused concerning their rituals, which may contain many elements said to be un-Islamic and thus that should be abandoned, but which are still kept in place because of habit or remaining belief in the old system (p. 107). In addition, *ulama* are not necessarily united regarding the changes in tradition (ibid.: 169). Islamic resurgence, which brought a change to rituals, is actively pursued by Islamic groups, including women's groups and individual women who give seminars on the role of Muslim women, take part in the *da'wah* movement or lead *torils*,³²⁹ stay-in *madaris*, etc. Whereas this movement had its high point in Marawi City, especially under the leadership of

³²⁸ See Foucault (1998) on the power of definition.

³²⁹ As mentioned above, a *toril* school is a residential school where children from three years old and above are confined in one place and taught the Islamic religion and the Qur'an.

Mutilan and the Islamic OMPPIA Party, Disoma states that a majority of Maranaos remain “marginal” between tradition and (Islamic) modernity (ibid.: 181).³³⁰

Local culture was in many ways Islamized when Islam was introduced to the region; for example, the *Darangen*. The Islamic resurgence movement led to an increase in local narratives of justification based on Islam. In the 1980s, some *ulama* in Marawi City forbade the singing of the *Darangen* since it was considered to be un-Islamic (Lawa 1980: 11). Old folks and traditionalists, however, did not cease to sing and refer to it. Another example is *djinns*, which are mentioned in the Qur'an as existing side by side with human beings (Wieland-Karimi 1997: 216). In Lanao del Sur, *djinns* are sometimes equated with local spirits (*tonong*),³³¹ becoming a syncretistic phenomenon. They can possess people, especially those who are socially or bodily vulnerable, like unmarried or pregnant women. Wieland-Karimi writes that among Muslims in general more women are possessed than men, explaining this by the male dominance of the religion, and the exclusion of women from public social and religious space. Possession by *djinns*, however, is cured through the help of folk Islam professed by women, providing them with social and religious space (1997: 215-16). Anne-Marie Hilsdon notes (2003) that in Lanao del Sur “those in precarious social positions and subject to stress are thought to be more prone to spirit possession,” and in most of the cases these are women. Their possession, she concludes, can thus “be regarded as a protest or an unconscious retaliation against their inhuman treatment” (p. 27). Possession through *tonong/djinn* thus can provide space for women’s protests, which they may not be able to articulate otherwise.

Among local healers, there are also women who can evoke a *tonong* in order to ask it for help, for example in curing a person. In other cases, the spirit medium comes to a certain person because a *tonong* has a message for him or her. The *tonong*-concept, being justified via Islam, can thus broaden the space of traditional female healers. Spirits can be male or female. In the *Darangen*, clans had spirits, which could be called upon for help, and still today communities

³³⁰A similar process was observed in Cotabato by McKenna (1990), who writes that “[t]hese popular traditions [referring to the first touch by the groom of the bride after the wedding ceremony] have in no way been eliminated by the objections of the ustadez, but clerical disapproval has clearly had a dampening effect on them in terms of lessening their incidence and social intensity” (p. 466).

³³¹ They can be the spirits of ancestors or unseen beings (*tonong*), which are usually known as helpers of the Maranaos. They can talk to people through a spirit medium (*pendarpaan*) and manifest themselves in almost any creature. Spirits can also be the twin spirit of a person (*inikadowa*), an angel or an evil spirit (*saytan*) (Disoma 1999: 84; 111).

have certain spirits or ancestors who protect people or the rights of a descent line, to which are attached a curse.³³²

Apart from spirits and ancestors, who are all-present, Maranaos also use white and black magic, many times with the help of the spirits. Hilsdon (2003) describes Maranao women who can use love magic to win over their sweethearts or prevent violence against them. A man can also use love-charms (*kakasi*) and, if his *maratabat* is injured, “resort to black magic to inflict pain and sickness on his unresponsive object of love” (Madale 1997: 62). Amulets (*adimat*) to protect a person from spirits may contain a phrase out of the Qur’an or, traditionally, an object that is believed to be provided by a *tonong*. If a person becomes possessed, he or she might be helped by an *imam* or *pamomolong* (a person who can heal, also called a spiritual healer; it can be a man or a woman) who prays for him or her and appeases the spirit with certain rituals (Dirampatan 1979).³³³ The belief in spirits has become partly neglected through the influence of “Western” modernity and Islam and some rituals are not practiced anymore. Disoma especially refers to the dysfunctional effects martial law had on Lanao when people refused to hold rituals for a better harvest because it was wartime. Beside the effects of martial law on traditional rituals, the Islamic resurgence movement has played a part in the decline or, at least, reinterpretation of traditional features. The solidarity of Muslims towards the Islamic religion grew especially during the time of the rebellion. Maruhom and Allian (2005) report:

It was in the early 1970s, when many of the students in the Middle East began coming home after finishing their studies and were employed by Muslim institutions abroad as da’wa workers in their hometowns, that there was the establishment of many madaris and the increase in their enrollment. That was also at the height of the trouble in Mindanao when martial law was proclaimed and many young Muslims joined the ranks of the Moro National Liberation Front. Those who did not join the movement enrolled in the madaris so that they could help maintain their religion, which was then, in the mind of the Muslims, under siege. (p. 145)

As described previously, the Islamic resurgence movement was additionally supported by the state in order to appease Mindanao Muslims. The result was a decline of traditional rituals and habits. They however remain popular even though they are reinterpreted in an Islamic framework, and are linked to what is defined as Maranao identity. Traditionalists may state that

³³² In some cases, people offer something to certain *tonong* or ancestors before doing particular tasks, like on the field or carvings, etc. since it was a certain ancestor who first invented or practiced this work. Without seeking the support of this ancestor the harvest might be spoiled or the artist get ill (Orogan 1980).

³³³ If a ritual is not successful, it is explained by saying that it was not properly done, that the spirits were offended, or that it was fate. To believe in spirits does not prevent people from working hard or going to a doctor, since spirits are powerful but a person must also “do his own part” (Disoma 1999: 144).

God has cursed Lanao, which is the reason for poverty and conflict, because its inhabitants did not follow Islam and thus their ancestors. A *datu* explains:

But then due to the general apathy of the people in practicing Islam and refusal to follow its tenets — unity, harmony, honesty in leadership, etc., people fear that God’s curse is upon the Maranaos for not being truthful as Muslims. And that our ancestral spirits are not happy, *ragaor o mga apo*, with their descendants. As a matter of fact, some people believe that Muslim Mindanao as a whole is suffering from this pathetic curse . . . in this “age of jahiliya” (ignorance). (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)

A general apathy of the people in practicing Islam and a refusal to follow its tenets are lamented by religious people. Arguments based on Islam are not necessarily heeded. Community activists campaign against gambling (especially cockfighting) on the basis of Islam but they apply this verdict with the more successful argument that gambling spoils the *maratabat* of the family (Bamgbose 2003: 103). Islam is thus important in the framework of identity (Maranaos are Muslims), but the interpretation of what Islam is remains largely syncretistic and traditional, providing women with space, expertise, and a tool of protest in a spiritual framework in which they otherwise would be marginalized.

3. Religious Organizations: The Ulama League of the Philippines, the National Ulama Conference of the Philippines, and the Tabligh Movement

Conceptualized by Mutilan in 1992, the Ulama League of the Philippines (ULP) is one of the most popular *ulama* organizations in Lanao del Sur. It is known to act as an advocate for peace and interfaith dialogue. Its president was automatically a co-convener of the 1996 Bishop-Ulama Conference, a gathering of members from different religious congregations and a place for interfaith dialogue to promote peace and development in Mindanao under the support of the Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (OPAPP) (Rood 2005: 22).

The members of the ULP board are male. Alima Khadijah Mutilan, the first wife and widow of the founder of the organization, thus could not rise in the hierarchy, despite her graduation from Al-Azhar, Cairo, and her personal supervision of the political participation of women in the OMPIA Party. She also organized the Nisa Ul-Islam, a group of *alimat* (female graduates of Islamic theology). “The group was vital in pushing for the Islamization of the communities as it started holding Islamic seminars in public places, involving more professionals, who were schooled in Western education.” After the death of her husband, Khadijah was “seen as a quiet force keeping the OMPIA together to pursue the vision of her late

husband” (*Moro Times*, March 28, 2008). Also at the First National Ulama Summit in 2008, those 25 *alimat* who participated from Mindanao were under Khadijah’s leadership with regard to the discussion of how they could help to establish peace and development in Mindanao (*Moro Times*, March 28, 2008). Despite her activities, Khadijah did not become a member of the board of the ULP. Instead, in 2009, she became a member of the mixed-gendered board (12 men, including the ULP President, and three women) of the newly-formed National Ulama Conference of the Philippines (NUCP). The NUCP is the first *ulama* organization in the Philippines that provides representation for women. Financially supported by the embassies of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, it was founded by, among others, former Senator Santanina Rasul and her daughter, Amina, from Jolo. On January 26-29, 2009, the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and the Magbassa Kita Foundation, Inc. (MKFI) organized the Second National Summit of Ulama in the Philippines, gathering about 200 leading *ulama* of the country and 30 *alimat*.³³⁴ The NUCP was formed to serve as a vehicle for unity among thousands of *ulama* in the country. It was founded during a time when the ULP was said to have lost influence after the death of Mutilan and the political opposition in Manila was looking for an adequate substitute to connect with; thus NUCP could use the power gap to become influential.

The NUCP elects 14 members of the board, coming from the different sectors of the Muslim communities, to the 15-member interim board of trustees. Currently, there are three female board members, including Alima Khadijah Mutilan (Marawi City) and Ustadza Albaya Badrocin (Education Supervisor at the Department of Education in Cotabato City). The third woman, former Senator Santanina Rasul (chair of MKFI), was given the 15th seat due to her status as advisor of the PCID, the initiating organization. The three women represent the three major Muslim groups, Maranaos, Maguindanaos, and Tausugs, and they are not only religious women under a male authority but also professional political actors. The men elected to the board of NUCP likewise represent various ethnic groups and provinces (including all ARMM provinces, and Manila and Cebu). At least a third of them are politically active, without necessarily being involved in religious parties.³³⁵

³³⁴ Invited to the summit were the secretary-general of Nadhlatul Ulama and Anwar Abbas of Muhammadiyah, both from Indonesia; Prof. Dr. Abdullah Saeed of the University of Melbourne; and the Briton Dr. Hisham Hellyer, a principal fellow at the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies. Among the guest speakers were Ambassador Rafael Seguis, the newly appointed chief government negotiator; the attorney Leila de Lima of the Commission on Human Rights; the attorney Nasser Marohomsalic, former Human Rights Commissioner; and former President Ramos.

³³⁵ The members are: Dr. Hamid Barra from Marawi City (Department of Education secretary of the ARMM,

The claim of the NUCP to be an umbrella organization of all *ulama* in the Philippines (in fact the head of the ULP is a member of the board of NUCP) led some *ulama* to maintain that this new platform would undermine the existence and contributions of the ULP itself. The statement of NUCP's founding organization, the PCID, in its declaration of principles, that the only solution to the peace problem in Mindanao is meaningful democracy, is also lamented by some *ulama*. In a counter-proposal, they affirm Islam as the solution to the peace problem in Mindanao, saying that the PCID declaration has invoked a parameter of dialogue not acceptable to Muslim rebels. They emphasize that Muslims are not against the rule of democracy in the Philippines but that Islam enriches the democratic system (*Mindanao Examiner*, January 28, 2009). The NUCP has a different approach than the ULP, not only in its attempt to include women as well as men as representatives but also in locating their attempts more eagerly within the framework of democratization, which is seen by some as a countermovement to the MILF rebellion. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the MILF (publicly) shares this critique, as the example of the Bangsamoro Supreme Council of Ulama of the Philippines (BSCUP) shows. Grand Imam Sheikh Jamil Datu Haron Yahya from Marawi City heads the organization. In March 2010, the *imam* issued a *fatwah* that declared former President Estrada, Senator Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, and Franklin Drilon, vice-presidential and senatorial candidates respectively of the Liberal Party, as enemies of Islam and the Bangsamoro people. Estrada was declared guilty of having launched an all-out war against the Bangsamoro in 2000 and having threatened to do so again if he were re-elected in 2010. For their part, Roxas and Drilon were accused of opposing the 2008 MILF-GRP Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) and reproached with having filed a petition before the Philippine Supreme Court against the signing of this agreement, which, according to them, would have brought the conflict in Mindanao to near closure. The *fatwah* finally declared that all Muslims in the Philippines who voted for Estrada, "Mar" Roxas, or Drilon were committing an act that is *haram* (forbidden). The *fatwah* was emphasized by the Concerned Muslim Citizens of the Philippines, which organized a prayer rally in Iligan City in

February 1, 2010); Abhoukhair Tarason from Basilan (chairman of the Basilan Ulama Supreme Council); Sulu Mufti Sharif Jul Asiri Abirin (councilor of Jolo); Tawi-Tawi Mufti Abdulwahid Inju (Division Coordinator on Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education of the Department of Education in the ARMM); Alim Abdul Majid Said from Cebu; Alim Ahmad Darping Nooh from Davao (president of the Filipino chapter of the Libya-based World Islamic People's Leadership); Dr. Abdussalam Disomimba from Lanao del Norte; Prof. Moner Bajunaid from General Santos City (chancellor of MSU-General Santos in 1995); *sharia* court Judge Aboali Cali from Marawi City (President of the ULP); Alim Jaafar Ali from Cotabato City (coordinator of the World Islamic Call Society Cotabato chapter); Alim Abdulhadi Daguit from Manila (vice-chairman for internal affairs of the National Halal Accreditation Board of the Philippines, Inc.); and Hassan Garcia (of the Balik Islam community).

April 2010 to support it. The MILF, however, dissociated itself from the supposition that its members were the authors of the *fatwah* and argued that its own policy was motivated by the refusal to participate in elections organized by the central government (MILF Central Committee on Information official website).

Government functionaries are directly involved in the support of religious groups, recognizing their role in supporting and establishing peace in Mindanao. Under the leadership of Maranao Secretary Bai Omera Dianalan-Lucman, the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (formerly Office on Muslim Affairs, OMA) recently supported religious representatives, recognizing their “potential source of unity and agents for social change within the Muslim society.” It sponsored a meeting of 32 *ulama* in Cebu City on February 18, 2011. During this First National Ulama Consultative Conference, issues like the peace process, *halal*, reproductive health, *madari* curricula, moon-sighting (Ramadan synchronization), *sharia* courts, and *zakat* (obligatory Islamic charity) were discussed. Among other things, the *ulama* requested that the Aquino government grant them a representative status at the MILF-GRP and MNLF-GRP peace talks (MILF Central Committee on Information official website; Jannaral 2011). The active role of Bai Lucman in this context may partly have been a reaction to the fact that the Maranao Hamid Barra, a member of the board of the newly founded NUCP, contested her position in court. This however does not diminish the recognition by the government of Muslim religious representatives as advisers in political affairs concerning Islam, further supporting a Islamization initiated by President Marcos.

Besides politically active *ulama* organizations and Islamic parties, Marawi City became a center for the conservative Tabligh,³³⁶ which, because of its high number of participants, influenced the social life and role of women more broadly than *ulama* organizations supported by the government. The organization was founded in British India in the 1930s (Azra 2006: 190) and came to the Philippines in the 1960s through immigrant workers from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India (Maruhom and Allian 2005: 140). It was introduced in Marawi City in the 1980s. By the end of this decade, about 20 *jama'ah* (teams) of Tablighi could be found in the whole of the Philippines. By 2000, about 20,000 members were in Basilan alone and even more in Lanao del Norte (Milligan 2005: 121). Milligan notes that the Tabligh movement redefined “Muslim Filipino identity as a rejection of integration with the Filipino mainstream in favor of integration

³³⁶ In 1997, the informal leader was Dr. Faisal Abdullah, “an unassuming *aleem* who graduated from Saudi Arabia” (Madale 1997: 106).

into the more fundamentalist manifestations of *dar-ul-Islam*” (2005: 122). He adds that one reason why the Tabligh movement is successful in Mindanao is the belief that if Muslims were pious, the Mindanao conflict could be solved (ibid.: 126). The Tabligh played a predominant role in the strengthening of gender segregation in Lanao. In the Tabligh, *pardah* is of importance and can be seen for example when practicing the annual and obligatory *kuruj* (journey from place to place to re-Islamize Muslims).³³⁷ There are cases of couples going together on *kuruj*, which might be for 3 days, 40 days, or four months. During the 3 day *kuruj*, the couple normally does not see each other and avoids physical contact. They are housed separately and no man can enter the women’s quarters. In case a private house is used as such, all men from this house have to move to the mosque, where they will stay. The husbands can briefly visit their wives (Madale 1997: 109).

Maranaos, especially those with a traditional or Islamic background, usually grow up in a sexually segregated environment (Fianza 2004: 14). Whereas unmarried boys can roam around more freely to visit public places, unmarried girls are more restricted by their parents, and later on by their husbands, and are mainly confined to the house.³³⁸ Boys thus get “more exposed to community affairs” (ibid.). Usodan-Sumagayan (1988) notes that there was a change for Maranao women from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1980s concerning larger possibilities regarding education but not concerning family and marriage. Both sexes are still advised not to mix with the other gender outside of the common rules. Traditionally, a man would be fined if he entered a house where a woman he was not closely related to was alone. Girls are advised not to converse or to be alone with a man outside of Islamic rules, which would be considered shameful for the girl since that would show that she is interested in marrying him (Disoma 1980: 65). If a girl and a boy are seen going to the movies without a chaperone, this can mean trouble for both of

³³⁷ In a paper based on research among female Tablighi in Southeast Asia, Féo (2009) writes: “According to the wishes of the founder Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944) and the rules established by his son Muhammad Yusuf (1917-1965), second leader of the movement, women are encouraged to get involved in da’wah. They started participating in the mission in the 60s . . . Including women in the da’wah process gives them a new role in society, an escape from the daily routine and domestic labour. Shorn of their daily burden, women obtain the responsibility for teaching, explaining, discussing, reading, and concentrating on intellectual and spiritual activities. They have learned how to preach to women, how to use gentle behaviour to convince the sisters to strengthen their faith. They are not only mothers and housewives, they spend their time in a more valued activity: preaching to other women to follow the path of Allah.” But women and men are not completely equal during the *kuruj*: women remain under the authority of men. Féo adds: “Nevertheless, women do not really get free from their husband, as they need their full supervision on *kuruj*. No woman can go outside by herself, she must be accompanied by a male relative. And for any wish expressed by a woman, a *mashwara* (male meeting) must be held to establish whether they can grant her satisfaction or not.” (Féo 2009).

³³⁸ The NGO Kapamagogopa Inc. is breaking with this convention by sending unmarried girls and boys as volunteers to Maranao and Christian communities.

them.³³⁹ Whereas in the traditional system penalties for the breaking of *purdah* norms (in the sense of gender segregation) are set for the boy/man as well as the girl/woman, the woman is thought to be mainly responsible for observing these norms. She is secluded from the public, advised not to roam around, and required to wear the veil. Sexual segregation cannot be found in the working place outside of a religious framework, and is not found at secular schools and universities, except in dormitories. In the market, women and men sell their products. However, gender segregation is found in community gatherings, celebrations, and such places as restaurants. Samira Ali Gutoc-Tomawis (2003) emphasizes that separate seating arrangements at weddings and bigger social gatherings are encouraged by “big religious movements (e.g., Tabligh) where the Islamic seminars have penetrated homes and school campuses” (p. 51). Muslim women activists, especially women elders whose field of action in public is wider than that of unmarried girls, are not generally against segregation, and consider it as part of their religion. Some emphasize that they enjoy life, sing, and dance, but only at home or among women. One Muslim feminist was more open to mixed-gendered public arrangements, justifying this on religious grounds by taking as a model the common prayer during the *hadj* in Mecca where women and men pray side by side without being separated from each other by a curtain or being seated upstairs, as it is common in Lanao mosques (see, on the mosque movement, Badran 2007: 40, 156; 2009: 335). She rejected, however, the idea of a woman leading a mixed-gendered congregational prayer, as the popular Muslim women’s activist and scholar Amina Wadud did (see Schröter 2008).³⁴⁰

³³⁹ The family of the girl can publicly penalize the boy. Several options exist: to demand that he puts up a *dowry* for marriage, to clothe him in white and parade him in public, or to penalize him with monetary compensation. In extreme cases where there is evidence of sex or the woman was impregnated, marriage is the most common alternative to avoid execution or public flogging.

³⁴⁰ Muslim women in Lanao are not allowed to lead a prayer in front of men. However, an *alima* can lead the women in prayer in case no man is available.



Picture 34: Groundbreaking Ceremony

Women and men are seated separated from each other at this public gathering and all women are veiled. Some wear the traditional *malong*; others wear Muslim dresses like those in Indonesia. The men in the picture wear an Islamic dress, which, however, is not dominant in Marawi where the majority of men wear Western-style dress, sometimes in combination with an Islamic (*kufi*) or traditional (*sangkok*) hat. Photo taken by the author, Marawi City, 2008.



Picture 35: Clan meeting.

Women and men are seated separated at this clan meeting in Poblacion, Poona Piagapo, Lanao del Norte.

Besides the introduction of a Muslim dress and moral code, the Islamic resurgence movement also played its part in improving the status and social mobility of women. There are, for example, religious seminars for women on proper female behavior in the Islamic context, like those organized by OMPIA or the Sabaab movements. The increasing number of *madaris* led to more employment possibilities for women. Bamgbose (2003) comments: “While women cannot lead prayers in mixed sex groups, they can lead Islamic seminars, and take a lead in the *madaris* The fact that it allows women time for social contact and support should not be underestimated” (p. 63). The access to a wider field of public action in a religious framework is however in many cases connected to *pardah* rules and, as in the case of the Tabligh, described by Féo, women acquired a new role as preachers and seminar leaders for other women, but they are under the authority of men. A rather interesting development can be observed in the organization of the NUCP, which has a mixed-gendered board, placing women and men side by side in decision-making. This organization is challenged by conservative Muslims as not being able to bring peace to Mindanao since it does not consider the wishes of the MILF. It is thus indirectly suspected to be linked to the politics of the national government.

B. Muslim Women Leaders and Muslim Feminism

1. Political Leadership between Re-traditionalization and Re-Islamization

In the 1950s and 1960s, Islamic missionaries from the Middle East increasingly came to Mindanao (Lacar 1992: 84) and the ongoing Westernization and Filipinization, initiated by the American colonial forces, were counteracted by an Islamic resurgence movement. Although Islamic narratives of justification were already important before this resurgence, the content of the narratives changed as knowledge about the religion increased.

The change of mode of dress remains one of the obvious effects on society. In the 1970s, women in Marawi City could be seen wearing mini-skirts (Siapno 1994: 195; 2002: 321). Since then the Islamic movement has succeeded in making the *hijab* more popular and (to a lesser degree) also the *niqab* (face-covering veil) and the *abaya* (an outer garment that covers the whole body). In case of political ascension to leadership positions, women in Lanao del Sur usually follow a minimal version of the Islamic dress code. However, this situation seems too liberal in the eyes of some religious conservatives who desire their exclusion from public offices. A female civil society leader explains the religious argument against the occupation of head offices by women, referring to the fact that a leader in the Islamic framework also has to be a religious

leader of men and women. This is a task that cannot be fulfilled by women since they are prohibited from leading mixed-gendered congregational prayers. To enable women to take such leadership positions is defined as non-Muslim, neglecting arguments within the Islamic framework for such an empowerment (see Brecht 2008):

And now the prevention of women from joining politics as top officials, it is because of some of their critical realities, what is expected of a top leader. Because in Islam you must not be a leader only, but you also lead the religious *ummah*. So that means you are a religious leader and a community leader as well. So you lead a prayer, like jack of all trades. And no excuses, if you are a leader . . . Even if you have a fever, because you have committed to say yes, to do something and to deliver, you really have to do this. But if you are a woman for instance, there are critical realities. Do not expect me to go to China if it is already my due [childbirth].

But for me, I understand this. I will not insist. But for some feminists because the context, the way they understand women empowerment, is the context of the Western world, which some other women cannot simply agree with. They want empowerment of women as sitting in for instance as head of the state, as the mayor. For me personally, I do not mind to be just a staff as long as my voice is heard. What will be the benefit of sitting there as a local executive if you are not [listened to]. I rather be a simple woman but [listened to]. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

The woman thus prefers the access to decision-making provided within the traditional framework in the form of unofficial power, agreeing with the conservative Islamic interpretation of women and leadership. Powerful clans, however, pay no attention to the Islamic critiques and campaign defiantly for their wives, sisters, and cousins to keep the political office within the family. Lacar (1997: 202) writes that such women simply ignore the animosity of some *ulama* towards female claims to leadership. This opposition between traditional politicians and religious conservatives is not based on religious issues, since Islam remains at the center of each side's argumentation and justification, as the following examples will show, but on political issues and, last but not least, on gender questions. In the traditional framework, women are even pushed by their relatives to join politics. Thus a board member of the ARMM, coming from a political family, reports that her relatives always wanted her to join politics,

although I am a bit limited because I am a woman. [Because in] Islam, they are not actually prohibited, but they shy away, because a woman is not to be exposed. But there is another saying in *hadith*, "If there is one woman who can do better than thousand men then it is better to appoint that woman who is working better than the other men."

I have also support from the *ulama*. Because before I filed I already consulted some *ulama* . . . they are not against [my candidacy]. Only those

extreme believers [are against women leaders in politics], who killed this woman leader [Benazir Bhutto] in Pakistan. Although we are not allowed to join in the highest positions, like the mayor, like governor. But vice-governor can. And also representatives, like us, board members, we are allowed. Or in the congress, to represent also women. Because we are already allowed to . . . Not in Saudi they are not allowed to be employed except in schools and hospitals where women and men are separated. (Interview, Marawi City, 2008)

The board member justifies her position through an Islamic narrative of justification, referring not only to religious authorities but also to a *hadith*. This position thus derives not, as Lacar argued, only from ignorance of the arguments of Muslim extremists and conservatives, but from a counter-argumentation based on Islam. The example thus highlights an intra-Islamic debate on the issue, which can also be found in other Muslim countries, like Indonesia and Pakistan (Brecht 2008). Tarhata Alonto Lucman also uses an argument for female leadership based on Islam:

In Islam, women are not so much allowed to participate in politics. But if a woman is 100 times better than man, she is accepted in politics. Like me, firstly I said I am a Muslim, I said I do not want to run because I might violate the rule of God. My brother [“Domocao” Alonto] said: “No, women are better than men if they are stronger and trusted, women are better than men.” . . . The *ulama* want women to be kept at home, but I said: “If women cannot do something for the community and to the people, they are right, keep them at home. But if she is better than anyone of you, she has to go!” I fight for the women. For their rights! (Interview, Manila, 2008)

Tarhata is referring to Islam in order to elevate the condition of women in society in general and in politics in particular. She, however, speaks on the basis of a traditional field of power, her descent lines status and family backing. This means that tradition and thus re-traditionalization have the potential, notwithstanding the political motivations, to reinforce the position of (certain) women — within and despite Islam. The following example illustrates how traditional conceptions, like *maratabat* and descent line status, can empower women in leadership positions. When Tarhata Alonto Lucman ran for governor in 1971, a male candidate campaigned against her, taking a misogynistic angle. This involved a blow of *maratabat* against Tarhata, which outraged many women in the province who, the following day, went out and campaigned for her. The opponent finally had to support Tarhata after she was elected.

Normallah Alonto Lucman: You know when she [Tarhata Alonto Lucman] ran, one point why she won over the opponents, was, because there was this board member and he spoke over the radio and he said: “Do not vote for women, because women are only good in bed!” And you know the following day all women in Lanao del Sur went out and were campaigning. That is what elected her . . .

Emily Marohombsar: The women were very angry about that. *Maratabat!*

Tarhata Alonto Lucman: When they were talking on the radio, I was going to the radio [and] I pushed the other man: “Don’t you know that I am the one running? You should respect me! You know my father, you know everybody in the family!” The vice-governor had to run to take me from the radio station. Because that was why there was no one fighting . . . Instead of going on fighting me, he has to support me. You have to be brave; otherwise, they will step on you. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

Tarhata presented her candidacy based on her descent line, giving her authority and providing her with a huge *maratabat*. When this was spoiled by the other candidate and she had the guts to confront him in public, an obvious conflict erupted in which people had to take sides. This mobilized female voters, who allied themselves with Tarhata.



Picture 36: Female Political Power

Former Governor Tarhata Alonto Lucman (seated to the left); her daughter, former Vice-Governor Normallah Alonto Lucman (standing); and former MSU President Emily Marohombsar. Photo taken by the author, Marawi City, Resort Hotel, 2007.

Normallah Alonto Lucman reports that she herself had to deal with critiques of her gender role when the OMPPIA Party was in power. She nevertheless won the election for vice-governor on the basis of her descent line status and the support of her family, applying a more liberal

Islamic definition of women in leadership. She regards the *ulama* who tried to prevent her from running as conservatives who are losing their ground because of a return of traditional politicians:

When I first ran [for vice-governor in 1995, when the OMPPIA Party was in power], there were these religious leaders, *ulama*, they said that I am a woman, so I am not supposed to shake hands with men, and my picture is not supposed to be shown everywhere. It is against Islam. I ask my uncle, Senator Alonto. And he said: “No, women are not prohibited from running.”

In fact, it was his idea for my mother to run. There are these kinds of Muslims, very strict, conservative. But now [2007] it is changing [referring to the fact that the Islamic parties lost the elections and the office of the governor and vice-governor went back to the traditional elites from her clan]. (Interview, Marawi City, 2007)

There is thus opposition between traditional politicians and Islamists concerning the participation of women in politics. Both, however, apply an Islamic narrative of justification, even though the former are accused by the latter of being un-Islamic.

Whereas tradition helps women to be successful in politics, when already in office, they might meet other challenges. Being the only female board member of the ARMM, a woman explained that she found that, as a consequence of isolation, subjects like polygamy were either not an issue to be discussed by the male majority, or her suggestions would be outvoted.³⁴¹ The question thus arises if the number of women in politics is of importance when women’s issues are being discussed. A study of female politicians in the Philippines found that women in public leadership do not necessarily become agents of change on gender issues. They enter politics by following the same rules than men, meaning party politics, which often do not include gender issues. Instead, women’s groups and organizations are the driving force behind proposals related to gender themes (Iwanaga and Loeskär 2009: 12). Although there are exceptions, such as the campaign for Muslim women’s rights led by the Tausug Senator Santanina Rasul, most bills concerning women’s issues in the Philippines are introduced by men (Roces 1998: 99). Above mentioned examples from Lanao confirm that some female politicians would like to include certain gender issues in politics, but they are hindered from doing so. The recent gender and development (GAD) bill concerning women in the ARMM was introduced by a man, even though it was in large parts prepared and initiated by women.³⁴² Roces rejects the conclusion that

³⁴¹ On the debate on evaluating the impact of a greater number of women in politics (with a focus on Asia) on a women’s specific policy agenda and the importance of a critical mass, see Fleschenberg (2009: 17); Iwanaga and Loeskär (2009).

³⁴² Notably by the Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women and the Regional Sub-Committee on Gender and Development.

women are thus powerless. On the contrary, she argues that the Western conception that political power is connected to office cannot be applied in the Philippines: men do not dominate political power even though they occupy most political positions. Instead, power is differentiated according to gender: men have official power via positions and women unofficial power via kinship relations and marriages to politicians (ibid: 7).³⁴³ She further argues that women would even lose their power when occupying a political office in a patriarchal system. Roces's critique of the Western conception that women without an office would be politically powerless should be taken into consideration. When unofficial power is defined as another possibility of exercising power, the fact that women occupy only few political offices then appears as not only the outcome of conservative (Islamic) rhetoric against women in political leadership positions but also as the outcome of a local gender conception, which already provides women with unofficial political power. This remains critical since there are cases when neither form of power changes the actual situation, as the example of polygamy shows.³⁴⁴ One alternative is the establishment of a critical mass (which is internationally often set at 30%) in the form of quotas. However, to rely on unofficial power, thus on women's organizations and open-minded men (and their wives) to include a proper women's agenda, may be as problematic as the view that a critical mass of women in official power positions would necessarily increase the chances for that agenda (see, e.g., Childs and Krook 2008).

The restless "no war, no peace" environment has to be borne in mind also. Gender in this region became a political issue connected to nationalism (see Moghadam 1994). This can be seen in the *da'wah* movement of the MILF (Abreu 2002) and in anti-Muslim polemics à la Locsin (see chapter one), which had the opposite effect and strengthened an Islamist agenda (Alojamiento 2004, 2007). In these circumstances, the introduction of quotas might be defined as "Western" and perceived with suspicion by conservative Muslims. So far, the issue of quotas has not been debated locally. In this situation, it might be important to recognize and strengthen the already existing but unofficial power of Muslim women, be they clan elders, relatives of politicians, or in the framework of NGOs, instead of enforcing laws (quotas), which may not lead to a needed general consciousness about gender issues but instead generate conflicts. Alojamiento's (2004) concerns about political campaigns against Islamic symbols and their possible effect on gender relations have in any case to be accounted for:

³⁴³ For example, Imelda Marcos had tremendous political influence by being the wife of President Marcos.

³⁴⁴ Besides female politicians, there are also local Muslim women's organizations which — so far fruitlessly — campaign against polygamy by following the example of the Indonesian activist Prof. Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia.

feminist critique about Islamic states' construction of women as repository of national-traditional values is becoming moot as the heightened campaigns against Islamic symbols has backfired. In Mindanao, it made many Moro women turn to the veil as an ultimate expression of solidarity with the assaulted Muslim world.

The support of unofficial power positions, however, poses the problem that, when looking at the literature on the region, it becomes apparent that apart from Islamic extremism, the biggest obstacles faced by women aspiring to leadership positions remain poverty and feudal structures (Abubakar 1998; Brecht forthcoming; Rasul 2003). Women activists who do not come from political families have few chances of getting into politics. Thus, the question arises as to whether women who do not belong to the traditional elite but still want to gain political influence lobby more strongly for Islamic influences in order to find a possible way out of the feudal structures. The authority of religion, where all people are said to be equal before God, is a factor that can potentially undermine the leadership claims of the traditional elite, which are based on heredity and wealth. Warina Sushil Jukuy illustrates how women apply Islamic values, in the sense that everyone is equal before Allah, to justify their participation in politics. As a Tausug who ran for the position of ARMM governor as an independent candidate in the Sulu region, she is a member of various organizations, such as the Jihad-al Akbar, that represent an Islamic point of view. Although she abstained from any political campaigning, giving as reasons her wish to leave the decision to God and her disapproval of vote buying, she received 836 votes in 2005.³⁴⁵ This is a relatively high number for a person who did not campaign but certainly it is almost nil in comparison to candidates being supported by their political families. Political Islam alone will hardly provide a sufficient ground for women to occupy political posts. However, it can give them a platform to become politically active despite their family background. A woman leader without connections to powerful political clans has few chances of gaining access to the circle of political power, given the dysfunctional democratic system that sustains it. It is clear that non-elite women leaders cannot avail themselves of the current system, as they would need the support of the traditional elites who usually prefer to patronize their own clan members. The female members of the leading clans are able to use the system for the advantage of their clan and family, as is expected in "patron-client" relationships. The use of it for the general purpose of promoting women's rights, however, is rather difficult.

³⁴⁵ The winner of the election, Zaldy Ampatuan from Lakas-CMD, received 549,480 votes (Commission on Elections, 2005).

It can be concluded that the Islamic resurgence movement is opposed by a traditional resurgence. The opposition is not about Islam as such but rather about how to define Islam. Generally, there is a tendency for the poor to be in favor of Islamization, giving them a platform for arguments against local hierarchies. The elites and their supporters who might also be poor instead prefer traditional family politics.

The confrontation between re-Islamization and re-traditionalization involves a social struggle, the poor against the elites; a national struggle, since the government supports traditionalists; and a gender struggle. Women have more chances of occupying and expressing official power in the traditional framework but for those who are excluded from a dominant position in clans and who have political ambitions, the main possibility of expressing their opinion is through Islam. Some women campaign using an Islamic angle; nevertheless they are not largely supported by other Muslims, including Islamists as well as those elites who refuse to support women who do not belong to their clan or family.

2. Muslim Women's Movements: Muslim Feminism

Women's organizations in the Philippines in the form of women's clubs already existed from the American period up until the late 1960s. They were involved in charity work, social and civil activities in which mainly the wives of government officials and the upper- and middle classes took part. Whereas a majority of the members were Christians, Muslim women from the aristocracy also participated (Angeles 1998: 214, 218). They were supported by and supportive of government programs.



Picture 37: Muslim Women's Association of the Philippines, Lanao Provincial Chapter, 1952
Photo kindly provided by Norodin Alonto Lucman.

In the 1970s, there were Muslim women associated with and organized within the framework of the national liberation movement. During the rebellion, women supported their male relatives mainly through spying, cooking, and giving first aid, but also in combat. Women were also officially integrated into the Central Committee with a chairwoman representing the women's committee (Siapno 1994: 192; Angeles 1998: 225, 1996). According to Siapno, the active participation of women in the struggle for independence was an exception; she asserts that "in reality most of the conventional ideas of patriarchal control have remained untouched" (Siapno 2002: 317), and that women returned to everyday life after the MNLF rebellion. As seen in other nationalist movements, women are welcomed to participate "for the larger good," but when the goal is achieved they are expected to return to the domestic sphere (Badran 2007: 109). As noticed by Angeles (1998), the MNLF however acted as an agent of change for Muslim women: "Membership in women's groups, as well as participation in the [MNLF] revolution, have politicized and raised the consciousness of [Moro] women and have given them the opportunity to rediscover and believe in themselves" (p. 228). Her argument is, among other things, based on the foundation (1986) and development of the BangsaMoro Women's Professional and Employment Association. During the war, the main goal of this organization,

which gathered together professional women, was to support financially and ideologically the national liberation. In the absence of combat, they started to debate about women's rights. Nur Misuari himself encouraged the women "to read the Qur'an and to learn about the rights of women as provided for in Islam" (Angeles 1998: 227, 225).

Besides these effects of the rebellion, the Islamic resurgence movement had its consequences on women's activism. In the 1980s, several women's organizations were founded to spread Islamic values. Their initial successes were due to their attempt to connect these values with activities like the foundation of an orphan's house. Also, the national movement against Marcos led many Muslim women to be more politically active, taking part in the protest movement of national women's organizations (Alojamiento 2004: 207). After the downfall of Marcos, a "democratic wave" overran the Philippines and in 1991 the government recognized the important role of NGOs in the Philippines (RA No. 7160) (Cagoco-Guiam 2002). Not all NGOs registered, especially not those occupied with *da'wah*, which constituted the majority in Lanao in 2002 (ibid.). Those that registered in Lanao del Sur were mainly funded by international Western sources and led by members of the *datu* class. One main point of the sponsored activities at the time of the study was gender programs, which according to Alojamiento had been popularized in Mindanao mainly through international donor agencies since the early 1990s (2004; 2007), as was also Islamic feminism, which campaigned for the empowerment of women by turning to Islam as a reference point.

To Badran (2008), gendered Islamism or Muslim secular feminism both seem to be Muslim women's movements arguing for a complementary empowerment of women. The latter is defined by Badran as the heir of early Muslim feminist movements, like those in Egypt in the late twentieth century. It was shaped together with compatriots from other religions before the 1970s, thus during a time when secularism was not yet defined by Islamists as "Western" or anti-Islamic (p. 29). Instead, it was predominantly connected with nationalistic movements for equality, no matter what race, gender, or religion. Secularism in this context is not the absence of religion from public space but the freedom of religions within a national collective space (Badran 2009: 328). Unlike gendered Islamism, secular feminism goes one step further and insists on full equality of the sexes in the public sphere, while maintaining acceptance of gender complementarity in the private sphere. It was only second wave Muslim secular feminists³⁴⁶,

³⁴⁶ The first wave of Muslim secular feminists followed the understanding of secularism as involving not the absence of religion but freedom of religion in the public sphere, including for patriarchal conceptions of Islam. The second

feminists active at a time when Islamists defined secularism as anti-Islamic, who started questioning the notion of the patriarchal family (Badran 2008: 33; 2009: 308). This movement went along with and merged with the development of what Badran defines as Islamic feminism. Among Islamic feminists,³⁴⁷ the concept of equality between men and women — in both the private and public spheres — is paramount. To justify this claim, these groups are particularly involved in the re-reading of the Qur'an from a woman's perspective and basing their arguments on Islamic sources (Badran 2009: 234).³⁴⁸

In Mindanao, all three concepts can be found; sometimes they merge or are not clearly developed. Whereas in most cases gender programs follow the conception of equity, the issue of gender equality in public and private spaces is also debated. However, the “no war, no peace” environment, which increased a certain sensitivity about gender conceptions, has to be considered when debating about local current Muslim women's movements. This is of particular importance in cases where gender programs are sponsored by international non-Muslim organizations. Two Muslim NGOs founded in 1997 and 1998, Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc. (AMDF) and Maranao People Development Center, Inc. (MARADECA), were among the most popular organizations in Marawi City around 2005, campaigning for women's rights within an Islamic framework. MARADECA has a gender focus, among other programs,³⁴⁹ and was initiated and financed by a British organization, Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)-Toscadar. Sponsored by the Asia Foundation and USAID, AMDF is a Maranao women's organization with the goal of raising consciousness about women's rights in an Islamic context. Both organizations have as one of their major goals gender equity, a concept that highlights the supposedly different natures of the sexes on which gender roles in society are based. MARADECA declared in its 2005 program it would support “gender equity with particular consideration to cultural background and [to empower] both women and men for decision-making in the community towards achieving lasting peace.” By doing so, the organization also follows the aim of the funding organization not to propagate Western values, which could lead, according to the Program Manager of VSO-Toscadar, “to a division of communities.” The British supervision is especially careful concerning

wave of Muslim secular feminists started questioning the utility of these conceptions in the public sphere, demanding equality of the sexes.

³⁴⁷ The label of Islamic feminism is one given from the outside; women being defined as such would partly not agree to this, preferring for example to be called believing woman. The reasons for such a rejection are manifold; as one of the main reasons the avoidance of a connection to “Western” feminism has to be mentioned (Barlas 2008).

³⁴⁸ For Muslim secular feminism, see Badran 2007: 36 167; 2009: 308; 2008: 28.

³⁴⁹ Programs by Maradeca in 2005 concerned such things as helping women and their families to become financially more independent (micro-credits), education, livelihood, and opposition to gambling.

gender issues “since gender is usually equated with Western culture and way of life” (Program Manager of VSO-Toscadar 2003). Members of Maradeca state their fear that a gender-profiling program that is initiated by a non-Maranao organization might not be accepted locally, “fearing a process of indoctrination, not a process of exploration, in rural Maranao communities” (Bangbose 2003: 109). The Islamic framework of an NGO is thus in many ways of advantage. It can more easily fit into the demands of the funding organization and of the local NGOs, as well as certain perceptions of the communities, which show a high degree of mistrust (ibid.: 56). A member of an NGO that was concerned with IDPs after the all-out war explains:

Religion in leading an NGO? I think it matters. Because for instance, even if you are so educated, but if they know that you do not have the faith they may regard you as educated but they may not give you that respect . . . In relation to the public acceptance of an NGO? It is very crucial. I know of some women leaders who are maybe very, very famous outside and effective also in ways. But may not be necessarily effective locally. She may be known outside doing a good, effective perception at the national level, even outside she is able to deliver. But if you go at the local level, they even fear her. They are even afraid of being linked or connected to her because of that lack of faith . . . she is rejecting . . .

Second, the orientation of the NGO where you are in is crucial to the community. You may not, even if your NGO is not able to deliver, but they still consider what NGO you are in, the goals and the background of the NGO. It is probably because the community has suffered so much. There is so much mistrust and because of the realities, they are going through . . . And speaking of religion also, your public acceptance, who you are, physical appearance to them. Not only on how you talk. Because for instance you keep talking, you are saying this is your message. But after talking they will look at you or even during your discussion, they will look at you. And if they do not see you in the Islamic lens, your discussion will be [in vain]. That is the Maranao culture, the Moro culture. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

Angeles (1998) writes that Moro women’s groups that are supported by the government and integrated into the National Council of Women of the Philippines are sometimes diplomatic regarding what they want to implement, in order not to lose male support. Gender programs funded through non-Muslim sources are thus more easily implemented when brought within an Islamic framework. Alojamiento (2004, 2007) explains that the “venue for political articulation” of those groups that campaign for an empowerment of Moro women outside of Islam “is very narrow, if at all available.” Conservatives in Lanao del Sur nevertheless reject some ideas presented by Islamic feminists, like those of Siti Musdah Mulia from Indonesia who campaigned against polygyny.³⁵⁰ When she was invited by a mixture of Christian and Muslim women’s

³⁵⁰ On the content of the campaign and the central role Musdah Mulia played in Indonesia as a women’s activist, see

organizations in Davao in 2008 to give a speech on her campaign, some male participants reminded the group of the Qur'anic verses allowing polygyny out of an understanding of the nature of men. This shows the internal Islamic debate taking place in Lanao: not everything will be accepted just because it is claimed to be Islamic.

That the gender issue has become a political issue in Mindanao has also affected relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations. Contacts are maintained, but in many cases, Muslim NGOs try to establish themselves independently. A Kapamagogopa, Inc. (KI) founding member tries to explain the reason why recent Muslim NGOs stayed predominantly Muslim. Her NGO was developed with the help of professors from MSU, *ulama*, and Christians, but the non-Maranaos left the organization to make it a pure Muslim one:

Actually, KI started after 9/11th when Muslims were always called terrorists and our youth were never spared from that stereotyping. So, why not prove to the world that we are not terrorists but that we are peace-loving people. But when we have Christians, we cannot prove this. But when we are a pure 100% Muslim organization and you do these things, these good things, you can prove something. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

KI's main issues are peace-building, sustainable agriculture, livelihood, health and literacy, gender, emotional recovery, capacity building, micro enterprises, and the environment. They train young adult Muslim professionals to become "peace weaver" volunteers. These volunteers have to be single, since the allowance is not enough for a family and because women traditionally cannot go out and travel without the permission of the husband. Thus, a married woman might be hindered in doing her work. Minors have to have parental permission to join KI, which organized a one-day workshop to convince parents of the importance of the work of the volunteers. The organization also demands a certain commitment to Islam:

It is stated on the requirements that [the volunteers] have a minimum knowledge on the fundamentals of Islam. And one way is that especially women, when they go outside they have to wear this minimum code of dress. If you are not going to subscribe this minimum way of dress, you are not going to be a volunteer. And also, you have to subscribe to pray for five times a day. How can you show that you are a good Muslim if you do not practice? This is how religion plays [a role] in our organization . . .

Actually, the parents are very happy about the volunteering because they saw the transformation of their children. Before they do not practice Islam and when they become volunteers, they practice, they subscribe to the Islamic values. Actually, we get several feedbacks from the parents. The first is change of behavior and attitude. Because like . . . happy go lucky. Then children are like, ok,

good to pray . . . And sometimes the ladies, they are not going to wear this one [veil] and go here in Iligan without wearing this one. But now it is like, oh, I have to wear this one . . . So it is like the program is appreciated by the parents. (Interview, Iligan City, 2007)

Non-Muslim funding organizations thus support a certain form of Islamization, which goes along with “peace weaving,” women's empowerment, and livelihood programs. The critiques presented in debates on post-secularism³⁵¹ lament the gap being created between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations (and feminisms). However, even though there are separate women's groups, relations and exchanges remain. Further, the religious approach of an organization provides more public social mobility and exchange between Christians and Muslims for unmarried girls (through the religious approach the organization receives support by the parents and the girls are assigned to non-Muslim communities where they are forced into contact with the Christian inhabitants) than in the traditional context in which they are under the supervision of their parents. However, the extended liberties of greater mobility are connected to a religious framework, restricting those women who would like to live outside this context.

The women's group Al-Mujadilah was co-founded by Yasmin Busran-Lao, who comes from a prominent clan. She ran under the Liberal Party for senator in the 2010 elections but lost. Formerly, she was a member of the national women's group PILIPINA. Motivated by the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 (Cruz 2005), Busran-Lao established her own women's group within the context of Islam in 1997. In an interview, she comments:

In Beijing, I was able to interact with Muslim women from other countries . . . I realized that much of the Islamic teachings we adhered to, particularly those pertaining to women, are not really what is in the Qur'an, but rather cultural interpretations of Islam. (ibid.)

Busran-Lao realized the main barrier with which women in Mindanao have to struggle with is not Islam as such but its cultural interpretation. Thus, she founded a women's organization within the Islamic framework in order to empower women. Its founding was also a “response to allegations that gender issues are Western issues that have no resonance in Muslim Moro communities” (ibid.). The vision of the organization follows common concepts being used by Muslim feminists worldwide since the 1990s: “an Islamized society operating within the principles of Tawhid [one-

³⁵¹ On the debate on post-secularism and feminism, see Braidotti (2008), who argues for the acceptance of the challenge to link subjectivity to religious agency and to disengage the debate about post-secular movements from oppositional consciousness and “critique defined as negativity” in order to be able to draw on the affirmative power of critical theory (p. 1).

ness of God] where women and men are accorded the status of *Khilafah* (God's vice-regents) to serve as moral agents towards the attainment of *Sakeena* (Tranquility or enduring peace) and human development." *Khilafah* is the trusteeship of God on earth, given to men and women alike, which cannot be "de-equalized". *Tawhid* states the uniqueness of God, who is the only one a human being has to obey. In a patriarchal society, women have to obey men; this is thus against the principle of *tawhid* (Badran 2007: 38).³⁵²

Besides the establishment of community-based health clinics and pharmacies and the construction of shelters for IDPs from the 2000 all-out-war, one project of AMDF, sponsored by USAID and the Asia Foundation, was to translate extracts from the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (CMPL) in 2005. It was made more public because it contains the rights and duties of Muslim women, which are not known by many Muslim Filipinos. Comprising family and civil laws on topics including personal status, marriage and divorce, paternity and filiations, paternal authority, succession and inheritance, support and maintenance, rights and obligations and property relations between husband and wife, it is enforced by *sharia* courts.³⁵³

The fact that the Code includes regulations that, when compared to *adat* law or the Civil Code of the Philippines, partly weaken women's position led to discussions among Moro women activists (Fianza 2004: 34-35), and the most progressive of them called for a revision of the CMPL (Rasul 2003)³⁵⁴ on legal succession. Article 112 of the CMPL states that the surviving wife together with a legitimate child or a child of the decedent's son shall be entitled to one-eighth of the hereditary estate. A husband who inherits from his deceased wife, according to Article 117, is entitled to one-fourth. In case there are no such descendants, he inherits one-half of the estate while the woman gets only one-fourth. According to *adat* law, men as well as women have a right to equal shares (Fianza 2004: 32). AMDF handled the situation by ignoring articles that state gender inequalities in relation to inheritance and only popularized Article 110, concerning legal succession, which lists the sharers without stating their particular share. However, other articles under critique, notably by the Pilipina Legal Resources Center (PLRC),

³⁵² For a further debate on the differences between an Islamic feminist and a patriarchal interpretation of the Qur'an, see Badran (2007: 39 *et. seq.*); Wadud (1999).

³⁵³ There are five special juridical districts in the southern Philippines, including also areas that are not in the ARMM. The provinces of Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, and the cities of Marawi and Iligan form one district which has a mandate on 12 *sharia* circuit courts, of which by 2003 eleven had been organized (Solamo-Antonio 2003: 14).

³⁵⁴ For a revision proposed by the PLRC, see Solamo-Antonio (2003: 63-65, appendix).

were published in their original version without reservations. Thus for example, Article 27 in both versions (“When is a husband allowed to have more than one wife?”) states:

By husband. Notwithstanding the rule of Islamic law permitting a Muslim to have more than one wife but not more than four at a time, no Muslim male can have more than one wife unless he can deal with them with equal companionship and just treatment as enjoined by Islamic law and only in exceptional cases.

The revised version of the PLRC suggests changing this Article to add several points:

By husband. Notwithstanding the rule of Islamic law permitting a Muslim to have more than one wife but not more than four at a time, no Muslim male can have more than one wife unless

- a) He can deal with them with equal companionship and just treatment as enjoined by Islamic law and only in exceptional cases;
- b) He has discussed the matter diligently with his current family/lies before serving notice to the court;
- c) The pre-nuptial agreement allows him; and
- d) The court finds him capable.

The broadcasting of an unrevised version of the CMPL by the AMDF shows the balancing act of the organization between local demands in a “no war, no peace” environment, in which the CMPL became a symbol of the success of a Muslim minority in the face of the state (see Barra 1993: 88). AMDF solved the conflict by joining the Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro confederation,³⁵⁵ which is part of a transnational Muslim women’s movement.³⁵⁶ Founded in 2007 by the Sisters in Islam, the Musawah group is composed of individuals and NGOs from about 50 countries around the world, advocating women’s rights in the context of Islam. Its specific goal is to advance equality in the family. Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro reports that amendments to the CMPL were already drafted by Muslim women and submitted to the Lower House of Congress in 2000, though the endeavor was not successful. The proposed amendments included: the requirement of pre-marriage counseling to emphasize the rights of women and the obligations of husbands; pre-nuptial agreements that can contain an option for monogamy; and an

³⁵⁵ Nisa Ul-Haqq fi Bangsamoro includes the following organizations: Alternative Legal Assistance Center, Bangsamoro Lawyers’ Network, Neighbors PopDev, Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc., Tarbilang Foundation, Inc., and Basilan Muslim Women’s Association.

³⁵⁶ Transnational feminist movements — meaning movements in which the citizens of different states collaborate, in opposition to international movements, in which the relations are between the states — are not a new phenomenon in the Islamic context. Moghadam (2005) reports about such activities in the 1980s (p. 143). These networks got a boost during the 1993 UN Human Rights Conference in which women’s rights were declared human rights. Moghadam describes movements including believing and non-believing women. The Sisters in Islam, constituting a group of believing women, were part of the transnational network Women Living under Muslim Laws, but formed their own transnational network, Musawah. Its main focus is to take Islam as the foundation for demanding equality in the family, stating that: “We, as Muslims and citizens, declare that equality and justice in the family are both necessary and possible. We hold the principles of Islam to be a source of justice and equality, fairness and dignity for all human beings. The time for realising these values in our laws and practices is now.” (Musawah homepage).

increase in the minimum age of marriage to 18 years (in the CMPL, it is 15). Recently, Nisa UI-Haqq fi Bangsamoro demanded that polygyny be discouraged, if not forbidden, on the basis of the Qur'anic verse An-Nisa 4:3, where it is written that a man should only marry more than one woman in case he can treat them justly, which should be read together with the verse An-Nisa 4:129, stating that it is impossible for a man to do perfect justice to several wives. Both should be understood within the context in which the Qur'an was revealed (historical understanding) and not taken in general terms, providing room for modern reinterpretations. By using this approach Nisa UI-Haqq fi Bangsamoro applied international discourses which are used by Islamic feminists. The proponents of the amendment of the CMPL continue their work by using different disciplines and approaches, including religious, rights-based, scientific, and even evidence-based research: "A research on early marriage is part of the building up of evidence-based advocacy, using lived realities of women in the ARMM" (Musawah, the Philippine Report 2010). The CMPL should further be amended on the basis of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee to the Philippines' 5th and 6th Country Reports are seen as a "good take-off for advocacy for gender equality among Muslim women," since:

In the Concluding Comments, Muslim women were among the identified sub-section of women who need intensified initiatives, including in the area of discriminatory provisions of the CMPL. This has made the issue of Muslim women visible to the Philippine government. However, there is a need to sensitize interventions that are only concerned with obligation compliance, without giving due regard to the peculiarities and nuances of the Muslim communities' context.

Some programs in the ARMM have tapped Muslim religious leaders . . . as a sector for advocacy, including that of women's rights. There is still a lot of resistance in this area, but some progressive interpretations of Islamic teachings have gained some headway, with the help of women's rights advocates. (Homepage of Musawah, the Philippine Report 2010)

On April 7-8, 2010, the Technical Working Group of the Regional Sub-committee on Gender and Development in the ARMM met to work on a draft on GAD.³⁵⁷ The task was to develop a regional translation of RA No. 9710 (Magna Carta of Women, MCW) which was signed into law on August 14, 2009. The MCW is considered by Filipino women's groups like the Gabriela Women's Party (GWP) and Isis as a national framework for the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations CEDAW. However, like many other very progressive laws in the

³⁵⁷ The GAD Budget Policy specifies that state institutions should utilize at least 5% of their annual total budget for GAD-related activities.

Philippines³⁵⁸ the law often lacks enforcement regarding “the rich and powerful, including political cronies and state functionaries, who commit crimes” (homepage of Gabriela Women’s Party). Further, members of the Gabriela Women’s Party criticized the use of the expression “ethical family planning” in the Magna Carta in relation to reproductive health (Section 17 (b) (3)); due to the pressure of a cardinal a more secular reproductive health bill remains pending in Congress. Besides approaches that were appreciated by the national NGOs, like the provision of equal access of Moro and indigenous female children to *madaris*,³⁵⁹ the GWP complained that the family law of the Philippines had not been revised and thus still contained certain loopholes, including the Code of Muslim Personal Laws which permits marriage of girls under 18 (men can marry at 15 and women with the consent of the *wali* at 12), polygamy, and arranged marriages.

The main goal of the Technical Working Group in the ARMM was to bring the MCW into alignment with the official position of the Muslim religious leaders in the ARMM. Like the MCW, the ARMM Gender and Development (GAD) Code affirms the role of women in nation-building and guarantees the substantive equality of gender, for young and old alike. It also promotes the empowerment of women, pursues equal opportunities for women and men, and boys and girls, and ensures equal access to resources, development results, and outcomes in the region. However, as observed by Tarhata Maglangit, Commissioner of the ARMM Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women for Maguindanao province, the meeting of the Technical Working Group was held with the goal of re-inventing initiatives and policies which are “suitable to our ‘Muslimness’ and to our region’s geographical configuration” (ARMM official homepage).³⁶⁰ Considering that the MCW left the CMPL untouched, it has yet to be seen what impact the GAD Code will have on gender relations and discrimination according to age in the area.

Conclusion

Lanao politics lay at the intersection of re-traditionalization, re-Islamization, and modern structures. Regarding religion, there are various influences of different forms of Islam, ranging

³⁵⁸ See the debate on the implementation of human rights in Castellino and Redondo (2006: 32).

³⁵⁹ This provision is in many cases obsolete since females often constitute the majority of Islamic school students at the primary level. Only at the higher levels do male students outnumber them (McKenna and Abdula 2009: 222).

³⁶⁰ Sponsored by Maguindanao 1st District Assemblyman Abdulradzak Tomawis (Shariff Kabunsuan, Lakas-CMD), and co-sponsored notably by the first woman ARMM Regional Legislative Assembly speaker, Reggie Sahali-Generale of Tawi-Tawi, Assemblyman Ziaur Rahman Alonto Adiong of the 1st District of Lanao del Sur, Cahar Ibay of the 1st District of Maguindanao, and speaker Datu Roonie Sinsuat, the Code was launched as Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act No. 280 on March 8, 2011 (*PIA*, 26 February 2011).

from extremist (MILF/MNLF/ASG) to conservative (traditional Islam and *da'wah* movements) and modern/liberal (secularists and Muslim feminists). Most religious politics are, even under the religious OMPIA Party, conservative but not extremist. When taking the high number of royal titles and sultanates as an indicator, it can be concluded that the traditional form of Islam remains influential against conservative impacts of the Tabligh movement and the like. Even though religious agents would opt against female titles, they remain and have increased since the 1960s. These titles and traditional *adat* laws have the potential to provide participation in public decision-making; however, it depends on the woman and her personal qualities, ambitions, and environment as to how far she can use this potential. In addition, hierarchical structures influence traditional women's empowerment. If a woman is not from the traditional elite, she will have difficulty in occupying a political position and relying on *adat* laws to give her priority over male candidates. In this context, Islam becomes in many cases the only platform for expressing her opinion, but in the conservative (religious) context this would restrict her to the unofficial power realm.

Maranao women have a variety of possibilities to strengthen their rights. *Adat* rights are strongly connected to Maranao identity. Traditionally, this includes the public praising of relatives, no matter which sex, or the support of female politicians. However, *ridos* and the threat of physical violence that they pose to women are also part of traditional settings. Several religious women emphasize that if Maranaos were real Muslims, they would not practice *ridos*. Thus, whereas women might feel the pressure of religious duties and some stated that women would “shy away” from politics — even though the number of female mayors has not dramatically decreased since the 1970s — they also feel the pressure of threatening clan feuds, a corrupt government, and a hierarchical and ethnocentric society. A religion in which all are presumed to be equal and which is perceived as peaceful is thus seen as one remedy to the maladies of present times. Furthermore, religion provides a certain kind of authority in the “no war, no peace” environment and it is more easily accepted by locals than “Western” feminism. Similar to what Karim (1992) described about Malaysia in the beginning of the 1990s, in Lanao traditional women refer to *adat* when claiming their rights. *Adat*, however, is based on the Qur'an and was partly modified when knowledge about Islam grew in the region. Gender became a political issue, strongly connected to nationalism and religion. On this basis, politicians and women's groups in the 2000s would rather claim their rights in an Islamic framework than in a traditional or non-religious one. The controversial academic debate on post-secular movements

neglecting Islam as a basis of female agency in this context is thus out of place in ignoring local realities. A more inclusive feminist approach in the context of a critical theory (Braidotti 2008) should be considered.

Conclusion

The definition of the Muslim Philippines as a conflict area has proven to be limited, but the notion of a “no war, no peace” environment has turned out to be useful in labeling the times in-between violent conflicts. This is of significance since these times are longer and in some areas more dominant than times of violent conflict between the AFP and rebel groups. The environment thus defined has characteristics of war but also of peace efforts. War and peace are the consequence of decisions made in this period. Daily life hence often becomes political, making the description of the “in-between” even more important.

A historical summary of the conflict and the “no war, no peace” situation in Mindanao has shown that the main question is the one of national sovereignty, which is still unresolved. Since the 2000s, the “war on terror” strategy that has increasingly been applied by the national government has strengthened already existing nationalisms based on cultural and religious identity, but could not bring about a solution, because the key source of the problem was perceived to be poverty and not self-determination. A divide-and-rule policy had already been applied since the Marcos years. Movements of re-traditionalization in the form of recognition of sultans were supported in order to nourish a counter-agency to the rebellion. Cooperating political families, mostly with a royal background, are supported by and support the national government. After a decade-long dominance of Islamic parties, they returned to power in the 2000s.

Several sultanate titles were acknowledged by the government, and President Arroyo finally recognized and funded the 16 Royal Houses as a tool to bring “peace and order” to the area. Interviews with local royalty, however, indicate that they follow their own agenda and form a potential opposition to the government, identifying themselves via ethnicity and religion rather than with a national Filipino identity. Muslim rebel movements and re-traditionalization are thus two sides of the same coin in their defense of ethnic identity. The former claims that the solution to the national question lies outside the state, while the second sees the possibility of their claims being met within the framework of the Republic of the Philippines.

Gender issues are debated in both models and are also connected to the question of national sovereignty and thus of nationalism. While violent conflicts on the national level have a destabilizing effect on traditional society, putting in question the hierarchical system, *ridos* have the opposite impact, serving to stabilize local orders within the prevailing *datu* system, which is

characterized by competitive equality. Both forms of violence serve as a basis to define gender relations in which men are the warriors and protectors of women, who are seen as the carriers of culture. This might be through the broadcast of an Islamic lifestyle or through the protection of lineage in a traditional context. The gender stereotypes are nonetheless abandoned in an emergency, when nationalism becomes more important than idealized conceptions. Women have the possibility to be trained and actively take part in combat for the “larger cause” and in this way to transgress gender norms. According to Vivienne Angeles, these transgressions in the framework of the MNLF have led to an empowerment of women, having given them the possibility to discover their leadership possibilities.

In the predominantly traditional Maranao society, national identity is interwoven with ethnicity and religion and strengthens a “Maranaoized” version of Islam. This syncretistic version of Islam has been confronted with the outcomes of an ongoing Islamic resurgence movement in the form of conservative interpretations of Islam but also recently with more liberal versions, as for example Islamic feminism. Women can develop fields of power on this basis, which are however connected with corresponding restrictions. Islam can serve as an argument against hierarchies and local violence (*ridos*), but the public playing field for women in the context of a conservative interpretation is limited as a result of gender segregation. In the framework of traditional syncretistic Islam, women are seen as counterparts of men in a form of symbolic equality which might be defined in the context of equity. They are present but in most cases remain in the background. Only outstanding female clan members having the requisite social network, funds, and personality demand their traditional rights based on lineage to participate in public decision-making. Political dynasties can even pressure their women to take leading positions in order to keep the position in the family. This tendency increased after the introduction of limited terms for public office.

Another source of possible restrictions in the syncretistic context is *maratabat*, which is deeply connected to *ridos*, resulting in frequent honor killings of people of both genders. The concept is explained by a hierarchical interpretation of Islam, giving priority to those lineages that are thought to be closely connected to the Prophet Mohammad. The pressure *maratabat* puts on women in case the strict limitations which are set on the female body are crossed can be defined as violence against women. In other circumstances, women gain prestige and can themselves pressure others based on *maratabat*. As a consequence, they are able to use the system to their own advantage, especially when they are from a high-ranking family or can

provide a gainful connection for the own lineage through their trespassing. The traditional bilateral lineage system provides women with fields of power, such as equal inheritance, royal titles, and prestige independent of their husbands and with the possibility of transferring rights to titles in the sultanate to their male and female children. Uxori- as well as neo-localities³⁶¹ provide the option to stay close to the matriline. It remains to be seen if conservative Islam will bring increasingly patrilineal structures. So far the *salsila* and also inheritance and residence are bilateral, with potential modifications in the one or the other direction, as the family sees fit.

As an outcome of the Islamic resurgence movement, which influenced the national movement by strengthening the already important religious identity, female royalty and also Islamic conservatives predominantly use an Islamic rhetoric. The latter may however be interpreted differently by both sides in order to serve their respective goals. For traditionalists being Maranao is already to be a Muslim. Conservative Muslims may define Islam based on movements like the Tabligh. The more liberal Islamic feminists who established themselves in the 1990s as part of a global movement argue against traditions, which according to them have misinterpreted Islamic creed, but also against Islamic conservatives, who favor polygyny and a general patriarchal interpretation of Islam. The political dimension of everyday life in the “no war, no peace” environment is connected to the question of sovereignty, which is based on ethnicity and (thus) religion. Therefore, Islamic narratives of justification became of crucial importance in the area, especially since they were influenced by the Islamic resurgence movement in the 1980s. This has given Islamic feminism an argumentative authority traditional women lack. The latter, in case they are from the elite, instead have the backup of their clan and family, which can push them into official or unofficial leadership as long as they abide by the will of the clan. In consequence, women achieving public leadership positions through the help of the clan are not necessarily precursors of general female emancipation or gender mainstreaming. The acquisition of leadership is a hierarchical matter. Islam, which claims that all human beings are equal before Allah, has an argument against such traditional features but not the means to enforce it. In general, the society is largely traditional in the sense of being based on clan and family arrangements. This feature, which is directly and indirectly supported by the national government, is characterized by the rule of political families. Additionally, strategic relationships between the traditional elites and the national government are crucial in order to counteract the

³⁶¹ A married couple lives either near the wife’s parents place (uxorilocality) or away from both the husband’s and the wife’s natal household (neolocality).

rebellion. This means that in Lanao del Sur Islamic feminism has the most convincing argumentative basis for the implementation of a gender equality. However, Islamic feminists are positioned between tradition and conservative Islam, both of which have their own gender politics. The national government will support either direction as long as it is within the boundaries of formal national politics, whether in the shape of traditional political families or an Islamic Party. An alliance between Islamic feminism and, since the 2000s, politically dominant traditionalists may turn out to be symbolic if the issue of family dynasties and feudalism is not solved at the same time. A follow-up study on the ARMM definition of the newly implemented GAD program might give further hints regarding this matter.

It can be concluded that re-traditionalization in the form of sultanates and traditional political elites being supported by the national government is, from an emic point of view, not a direct countermovement to political Islamization or the rebellion. In all these movements Islam remains one of the most authoritative source for narratives of justification but it is carried out by different agents with their respective goals. Local counter-hegemonic movements of female empowerment thus have to be analyzed critically in their historical and political settings, which are dominated by various forms of Islam. Anything defined as “Western” feminism cannot find a foothold in the area. This leads to a separation of gender movements into Muslim and non-Muslim ones, which may, nevertheless, cooperate. The gap thus created is not a sign of increased religious hostility but again points to the unsolved national question. Islam in this context serves as a vector for a national movement, which is predominantly connected to ethnic and cultural identity and not to Islamic resurgence as such. As a result, violence on the national level will remain until a proper solution is found. The government support of re-traditionalization has grown to be an additional problem since it seems rather unlikely that rebels will lay down their weapons and be overruled by traditionalists. However, the recent offer by the MILF to solve the conflict through a state-sub-state arrangement may have been an outcome of the re-traditionalization movement.

In the framework of tradition, women can become powerful mainly in the background or in public by abiding by the wishes of the clan. Governmental influences have not changed this, as can be seen in the recognition of the 16 Royal Houses where no formal arrangements were made to include *bai a labis*. On the level of NGOs, women are involved as representatives of the clan system. The gender issue in the peace talks is not solved yet. Only recently have some women, most of them Christian, demanded more participation of women in the decision-making process.

The MILF showed its good intentions by including for the first time female representatives, thus demonstrating their general line regarding the issue. Islamic feminists are a minority and have to struggle on two fronts: against conservative Islamists and conservative traditionalists. The gender issue is thus strongly connected to the national question and its resolution, there being no strong power base to enforce an alternative approach. Until then, it will remain subject to the debate between re-Islamization and re-traditionalization.

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Index of Names

A

ABDULLAH, Faisal · 360
ABDULRAHMAN, Ibrahim · 80
ABDULSALAM, Elias · 350
ABIRIN, Jul Asiri · 359
ABUBAKAR, Abdalbaki · 80
ADIONG, Ansaruddin-Abdulmalik 'Hooky' Alonto · 32, 34, 160, 224, 256, 349
ADIONG, Mamintal 'Bombit' Jr. Alonto · 34, 49, 129, 169, 224, 228, 229, 349, 352, 423
ADIONG, Mamintal 'Mike' Sr. · 125, 224, 228, 320, 349, 351, 423, 430, 432
ADIONG, Soraya Alonto · 224, 228, 229, 320
ADIONG, Ziaur Rahman Alonto · 223, 224, 381
AFABLE, Silvestre C. · 150, 420
AGUNG, Yang Dipertuan · 272
AKBAR, Jum M. · 129
AL SAUD, Faisal Abdul-Aziz · 80
ALANGADI, Bariga · 261
ALI, Ibrahim Miro-Ato · 307
ALI, Jaafar · 359
ALI, Lanang · 149, 150, 155
ALI, Zain · 350
AL-KHATAB, Omar · 91
ALLIAN, Fatima · 353
ALONTO, Abdul Gafur Madki · 80, 84, 205, 227, 229, 296, 317, 423
ALONTO, Abul Khayr · 80, 84, 85, 432
ALONTO, Ahmad 'Domocao' · 34, 58, 74, 75, 77, 80, 88, 202, 205, 224, 227, 229, 259, 260, 265, 296, 317, 320, 348, 366, 423, 431
ALONTO, Alauya Adiong · 54, 73, 74, 75, 202, 227, 228, 229, 260, 261
ALONTO, Alexander 'Boyet' Jr. · 223
ALONTO, Annessah · 230
ALONTO, Domocao Jr. · 34, 58, 74, 75, 77, 80, 88, 149, 150, 202, 205, 224, 227, 229, 259, 260, 265, 296, 317, 320, 348, 366, 423, 431
ALONTO, Jamela Malawani · 224
ALONTO, Maulana 'Bobby' · 142, 155, 229, 389, 404
AL-SAUD, Abdul Aziz · 83
AMANTE, Erlpe John M. · 129
AMBOLODITO, Nariman 'Ina' · 286
AMEROL, Abdul Matabalo · 350
AMILBANGSA, Ombra · 75, 77
AMIRULHAJ, Alpha · 149
AMPATUAN, Andal Jr. · 167
AMPATUAN, Andal Sr. · 31, 167
AMPATUAN, Zaldy · 32, 167, 168, 350, 370, 422
ANSANO, Majid · 256
AQUINO III, Benigno Simeon Cojuangco 'Noy' or 'P-Noy' · 61, 90, 141, 153, 169, 339, 350
AQUINO, Benigno 'Ninoy' Jr. · 78, 82, 87, 88
AQUINO, Corazon 'Cory' · 30, 88, 268, 419
ARAFAT, Yasser · 84

ARDO, Ray · 159
ARGUILLAS, Carolyn O. · 152
ARNADO, Mary Ann · 151, 414
ATAR, Abdul Hamidullah T. · 18, 201, 250, 251, 392
ATIENZA, Francisco de · 64
ATIENZA, Lito · 270, 339

B

BABIERA, Norris C. · 129
BACANI, Senen · 153
BADRODIN, Albaya · 358
BAJUNAID, Moner · 359
BALDWIN, Frank D. · 68
BALINDONG, Alber · 160
BALINDONG, Che Alonto · 223
BALINDONG, Hafsa Dimaporo · 224
BALINDONG, Pangalian · 169, 224
BALINDONG, Picong · 224
BALINDONG, Yasir Alonto · 223
BARRA, Hamid · 153, 358, 360
BASHIR, Ahmad · 348
BATENGA, Edgardo · 93
BATES, John · 66
BELMONTE, Vicente · 129, 318
BENEDICT XVI · 142, 390
BINAY, Jejomar · 141
BIRUAR, Gani · 230
BLANCO, Ramon · 65
BLISS, Tasker · 69
BUAT, Musib · 155
BUSH, George Walker · 95, 124, 126, 393, 420

C

CABAYA, Loreto · 127
CAGAS, Douglas · 129
CAJELO, Carlos · 138
CALI, Aboali · 359
CAMAMA, Ibrahim S. · 271
CAMLIAN, Abdullah · 142, 155
CANDAO, Zacaria · 89, 230, 256, 422
CAPAL GURO, Eilen · 273
CARPENTER, Frank C. · 70, 74
CAYONGCAT-MACARAYA, Baicon · 215
CERILLES, Aurora · 129
CLAUDIO, Gabby · 129
CLIMACO, Isabelle · 128
CORONEL-FERRER, Miriam · 151, 153
CORPUZ, Victor · 97
CRUZ, Lawrence Lluch · 112, 129, 153, 272
CRUZE, Angelo de la · 98

D

DAGUIT, Abdulhadi · 359
 DALIDIG, Abdullah · 162
 DALIDIG, Macmod L. · 49
 DAVIS, George W. · 67
 DE LEON, Ricardo F. · 18, 54, 115, 273
 DECAMPONG, Mandangan C. · 350
 DELES, Teresita · 153
 DIANALAN LUCMAN, Omera · 360
 DIANALAN, Omar · 34
 DIAZ, Patricio P. · 148
 DIMAPORO, Abdullah · 81, 425
 DIMAPORO, Imelda ‘Angging’ Quibranza · 81, 318, 426
 DIMAPORO, Mohamad Ali · 79, 81, 88, 168, 188, 205, 224, 227, 260, 266, 267, 268, 276, 318, 392, 423, 425, 426, 431
 DIMAPORO, Mohammad Khalid · 129
 DIMAPORO, Mohammad Naga · 204, 205, 224
 DISOMIMBA, Abdussalam · 359
 DISOMIMBA, Jan Jan Alangadi Pundato · 85, 318, 429
 DISOMIMBA, Topaan ‘Toni’ · 164, 169, 267, 268, 269, 270, 279, 318, 429
 DOMATO-SARIP, Amina · 217, 273
 DOMIGUEZ, Miguel · 129
 DRILON, Franklin · 97, 141, 143, 359, 389
 DUMARPA, Faisah · 53
 DUREZA, Jesus · 94, 97, 122, 130, 270

E

EBRAHIM, Murad · 99, 124, 126, 137, 420
 EDRIS, Basher Calauto · 350
 ERMITA, Eduardo · 141
 ESCUDERO, Francis · 141
 ESPERON, Hermogenes Jr. · 122, 129, 136
 ESTRADA, Joseph · 91, 93, 94, 97, 104, 110, 119, 120, 359, 419

F

FABIAN, Eric · 128
 FERRER, Reymundo · 127

G

GADDAFI, Muammar · 80, 84, 122
 GARCIA, Hassan · 359
 GARCIA, Rodolfo · 129, 140
 GARCILLANO, Virgilio · 169
 GASTON, Jesse · 34
 GATES, Robert M. · 125
 GORMAN, David · 147
 GUROALIM, Alimatar · 160
 GUROALIM, Rohamina ‘Nini’ R. · 160
 GUTOC, Candidato · 307
 GUTOC-TOMAWIS, Samira Ali · 18, 307, 362

H

HARRISON, Francis Burton · 70
 HASHIM, Asda Shariful · 70
 HATAMAN, Mujiv · 53
 HAZRI, Herizal · 147
 HELLYER, Hisham A. · 358
 HERBOLZHEIMER, Kristian · 147
 HOFER, George · 129
 HUSSIN, Parouk · 95, 270, 422

I

IBAY, Cahar · 381
 ILETO, Rafael · 87
 ILYAS, Muhammad · 361
 IMAM, Jasmine Tomindug Alip · 262
 INJU, Abdulwahid · 359
 IQBAL, Mohagher · 116, 126, 127, 145, 155
 ISNAJI, Alvarez · 106, 422

J

JAAFAR, Ghadzali · 127
 JAMILA, Inchi · 259
 JANJALANI, Abubakar Abdurazak · 89
 JAVIER, Alfonso · 93
 JIMENO-REBOLLOS, Grace · 151
 JOHN PAUL II · 96
 JUKUY, Warina Sushil A. · 370
 JULKARNAIN, Albi · 128

K

KABALU, Eid · 127
 KAMLIAN, Abdul Hamid · 80
 KAMLUN · 77
 KATO, Ameril Umbra · 131, 134, 135, 137, 140, 143, 148, 156, 408, 410
 KELLY, James A. · 126
 KENNEY, Kristie · 128, 140
 KHOMEINI, Ruhollah · 87
 KINOC, Antonio · 155
 KIRAM I, Muhammad Fuad Abdulla · 122, 123, 270
 KIRAM II, Jamalul · 66, 70
 KIRAM, Jamalul · 270
 KIRAM, Tarhata · 70
 KOBBE, William · 67

L

LABAWAN, Jimmy · 149
 LACSON, Panfilo · 141
 LADEN, Osama bin · 96
 LAO, Yasmin Busran · 377, 395
 LEGARDA, Loren · 141
 LEONEN, Marvic · 153

LIMA, Leila de · 358
 LLUCH, Salvador T. · 423
 LOBREGAT, Celso · 97, 127, 128, 153
 LOBREGAT, Maria Clara · 97
 LOCSIN, Teodoro · 130
 LUCES, Feliciano ‘Toothpick’ · 137
 LUCMAN, Normallah Alonto · 223, 228, 300, 366, 367, 430
 LUCMAN, Norodin ‘Noor’ Alonto · 18, 38, 48, 75, 80, 85, 87, 167, 221, 223, 243, 257, 266, 296, 297, 299, 309, 337, 347, 372, 402
 LUCMAN, Rashid · 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, 205, 227, 228, 229, 265, 266, 296, 299, 348, 431
 LUCMAN, Tarhata Alonto · 54, 83, 84, 88, 224, 227, 228, 229, 266, 296, 297, 298, 299, 317, 320, 366, 367, 391, 423, 430, 431

M

MACABANDING, Casan · 350
 MACABANDO, Mansing · 185, 212, 213
 MACABANGON, Monera Dimakuta · 344, 349, 423, 430
 MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, Gloria · 30, 60, 93, 95, 97, 98, 104, 115, 119, 122, 124, 128, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 144, 145, 146, 151, 153, 154, 156, 162, 167, 168, 169, 268, 269, 270, 274, 350, 391, 393, 420
 MACAPAR, Abdullah ‘Bravo’ · 131, 138
 MACARAMBON, Benasing O. Jr. · 169, 224
 MACARAMPAT, Rakiin · 261
 MACASERA, Victor Jr. · 107
 MAGLANGIT, Raida · 110
 MAGLANGIT, Tarhata · 381
 MAGUNDADATU, Esmael ‘Toto’ · 47, 129, 166, 168
 MALCAMPO, Jose · 65
 MANSOR-LINGGA, Abhoud Syed · 155
 MANTAWIL, Jun · 149, 150
 MARCOS, Ferdinand · 30, 34, 43, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 88, 89, 102, 104, 109, 116, 138, 144, 145, 168, 198, 200, 205, 227, 265, 266, 267, 268, 294, 312, 319, 348, 360, 369, 373, 394, 419, 426, 430, 431
 MARCOS, Imelda · 266, 369, 426
 MAROHOMBSAR, Abdul Gani · 319
 MAROHOMBSAR, Emily Nurlaylah Emily M. Marohombsar · 94, 113, 114, 148, 319, 366
 MAROHOMSALIC, Nasser · 358
 MARTELINO, Eduardo · 78
 MARUHOM, Norma · 353
 MASTURA, Michael · 155
 MATALAM, Udtog · 75, 79, 80
 MAUDUDI, Abu Ala · 76
 MERCED, Elvis dela · 129
 MINDALANO, Amer Rashid · 18, 184, 435
 MINDALANO, Kamar · 350
 MISUARI, Nur · 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 94, 122, 124, 148, 373, 399, 419, 420, 421, 422
 MOHAMMED, Mahathir · 95
 MORENO, Alma · 351
 MORENO, Oscar S. · 129
 MULIA, Musdah · 369, 375
 MULLEN, Mike · 125
 MUSA, Khaled · 93, 125, 141
 MUSLIM, Macapado A · 18, 106, 273

MUSLIMIN, Sema · 94, 95, 124, 154
 MUTILAN, Khadijah · 256, 357, 358
 MUTILAN, Mahid · 56, 61, 75, 80, 94, 95, 227, 228, 256, 257, 346, 348, 349, 350, 352, 354, 355, 357, 358, 422, 423, 428

N

NACUA, Sherwin · 106
 NAIM, Dianaton · 164, 192, 211, 252
 NANDO, Khalifa · 80
 NASEEF, Omar Abdullah · 348
 NASSER, Gamal Abdel · 75, 76, 80, 358, 389, 432

O

OBAMA, Barrack · 96, 125, 142, 145
 OCAMPOS, Loreta Leo S. · 129
 OKINLAY-PARAGUYA, Sylvia · 151
 OSMENA, Tomas · 272

P

PAISO, Marcelo T. · 74
 PANGALIAN, Solaiman · 131, 138, 143
 PANGANDAMAN, Lininding · 230, 422, 432
 PANGARUNGAN, Johayrah Diamond Ali Pacasum · 227, 426, 432
 PANGARUNGAN, Saidamen B. · 49, 227, 276, 432
 PENDATUN, Salipada · 75, 80, 83, 85
 PERSHING, John Joseph · 68, 70, 157
 PETRIGH, Cynthia · 147
 PIANG, Ramon Sr. · 153
 PINOL, Bernardo F. · 148
 PINOL, Emmanuel F. · 97, 127, 128, 148, 153
 PUNDATO, Dimas · 85

Q

QUEZON, Manuel · 73, 264
 QUIBRANZA, Arsenio · 81, 205, 426

R

RABARA, Manuel · 127
 RAHMAN, Tunku Abdul · 79, 81
 RAMOS, Fidel V. · 9, 84, 89, 90, 91, 93, 96, 100, 104, 110, 151, 153, 268, 319, 358, 401, 419
 RASUL, Amina · 122, 142, 156, 307
 RASUL, Santanina · 358, 368
 RAZAK, Othman Abdul · 121, 155
 REYES, Joel · 97, 129
 RICCIARDONE, Francis · 270
 RINABOR, Mangawan C. · 160
 RODRIGUEZ, Lolita · 107
 ROMUALDO, Jurdin Jesus · 129

ROOSEVELT, Franklin · 73

S

SACDALAN, Jesus · 128, 129, 153
SAEED, Abdullah · 358
SAHALI, Sadikul · 32
SAHALI-GENERALE, Reggie · 32, 381, 422
SAHIBBIL, Nurkarhati Salapuddin · 310
SAID, Abdul Majid · 359
SALAMAT, Hashim · 75, 76, 80, 85, 87, 88, 89, 93, 99,
126, 419, 420
SALAZAR, Marcelo P. · 18
SALIC, Fahad · 34, 106, 351
SAN PEDRO, Augustin de · 64
SANI, Asgar · 229, 268
SANTIAGO, Irene Morada · 94, 148, 151
SANTOS, Soliman · 53, 112, 137, 155
SARANGANI, Abu Mohammad · 256, 349
SARANGANI, Usman Jr. · 169
SARIP, Taha G. · 273
SEGUIS, Rafael · 140, 358
SINSUAT, Rooney · 381
SUGANOB, Chito · 160

T

TAFT, William Howard · 67
TALINO-MENDOZA, Emmylou J. · 153
TAMANO, Mamintal · 81, 83
TAN, Abdusakur · 129
TANODRA-ARMAMENTO, Leah · 151
TANOG, Cabib Alonto · 223
TANOG, Mohamad Haris · 350

TARASON, Abhoulkhair · 359
TARONGOY, Roberto · 140
TEODORO, Gilbert · 129, 169
TOBACAN, Nabila Bolawan · 300
TOMAWIS, Abdulradzak · 381
TORRE, Irene Dela · 343
TREKI, Ali Abdussalam · 82, 84
TUN, Mustapha · 79, 82, 83, 85

U

UL-AZAM, Jamal · 63

V

VENECIA, Jose de · 97
VILLAR, Manuel · 169

W

WADUD, Amina · 362
WEYLER, Valeriano · 64
WOOD, Leonard · 69, 157, 261

Y

YANO, Alexander · 127
YEBES, Rolando · 129
YOUSUF, Ramzi · 96

Appendix

1. Timeline of Conflict and Peace Pacts				
Presidency	Situation in Mindanao	Rebel Movements	“No war, no peace” environment	Violent Conflicts
Ferdinand Marcos 1965-1986	1979: Presidential Decree 1618 creating two autonomous governments including ten provinces and seven cities	1977: Split of leadership in the MNLF		1972-1975: War
			1975-1977: Tripoli Agreement	
		1984: MILF’s official founding under Hashim Salamat		1979: Guerrilla war in reaction to the fact that the autonomous government comprised only 10 Provinces and not 13 as the Tripoli Agreement demanded and that the implementation was connected to a referendum.
Corazon ‘Cory’ Aquino 1986-1992			1986: Ceasefire between MNLF and government	1986: Clashes between government and MNLF-RG, and between MNLF and MILF
	1989: Aquino’s bill granting autonomy to 13 provinces and 9 cities under the condition that those areas ratify it in a referendum. Four Provinces finally joined the ARMM in 1990.	End of 1980s: founding of ASG		1989: Guerrilla war by MNLF.
			1992: MNLF’s return to peace negotiations	1992: guerilla attacks by ASG and MILF.
Fidel Ramos 1992-1998		1996-2001: Nur Misuari’s ARMM governance and defection in MNLF’s ranks benefitting the MILF	9/2/1996: Final Peace Agreement between the MNLF and the GRP. Creation of a Special Zone for Peace and Development under the SPCPD.	
			1997: Ceasefire between MILF and government, despite military clashes	
Joseph Estrada 1998-2001			8/1998: General Framework of Agreement of Intent between GRP and MILF signed in Maguindanao	
			2/1999: Acknowledgment of main camps as development and peace zones signed in Maguindanao.	

The Influence of the National Question and the Revival of Tradition on Gender Issues among Maranaos

				2000: AFP's attacks against "criminals and terrorists" in the Muslim areas
				8/2000: All-out war and breakdown of peace talks
Gloria Macapagal Arroyo 2001-2010	3/31/2001: RA No. 9054 (amending RA No. 6734) to strengthen and expand the ARMM	2001.04: Nur Misuari made chairman emeritus by the 15 members of the MNLF Executive Council	3/24/2001: Agreement on the General Framework for the Resumption of Peace Talks between the GRP and MILF in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2001: All-out peace and back to peace negotiations (including OIC members)
	8/2/2001: Lanao del Norte municipalities of Baloi, Munai, Nunungan, Pantar, Tagoloan, and Tangkol vote for their inclusion in the ARMM.	10/29/2001: Unity talks between MILF and MNLF	6/22/2001: Agreement on peace between the government of the Republic of the Philippines and the MILF in Tripoli (consensus found on security and aid and development, issue of ancestral domain to be included in the BJE still in discussion)	
			10/12/2001: Memorandum Order No. 37 provided for a 14-pillar anti-terrorism policy.	
	8/14/2001: Plebiscite: Marawi City and Basilan join the ARMM	11/26/2001: Arrest of Nur Misuari for having led the rebellion after his ouster from MNLF leadership	11/20/2001: Joint statement by Presidents Arroyo and Bush reaffirming bilateral relations and the need for economic growth and development, since poverty is a contributing factor to terrorism	
	6/2/2002: Creation of the BDA	7/13/2003: Death of Hashim Salamat. Al-Hadji Murad Ebrahim becomes chairman of the MILF.	2002: Official suspension of peace talks by the government	2002-2003: 1,257 clashes between the MILF and the AFP
				2/11/2003: Buliok offensive by the AFP over the new headquarters of the MILF in North Cotabato. Ceasefire is enforced three weeks later.
			7/19/2003: Agreement to ceasefire and a mutual cessation of hostilities	4/2003: Davao bombings; government accuses MILF of involvement.
	1/18/2004: Creation of IMT based on the agreement of June 22, 2001		2-12/2005: Peace panels in Malaysia on the ancestral domain	2004-2008: 46 clashes between the MILF and the AFP
	2/6/2006: Founding of the BLMI		2/24-3/3/2006: State of emergency	1/2005: Guerrillas led by MILF chief Abdulrahman Bnago
			9/3/2006: Deadlock in peace talks about ancestral domain	
	2007: Resignation of Silvestre Afable from the		7/10/2007: Clashes between AFP and ASG,	

The Influence of the National Question and the Revival of Tradition on Gender Issues among Maranaos

			GRP peace panel in protest over the lack of support from the government	resulting in the displacement of up to 85,000 people
			12/15/2007: Peace talks over the issue of the scope of the Moros' ancestral domain	
	6/18/2008: The National Security Council approved the final agreement draft on the ancestral domain agenda, leading to the inclusion of about 600 Muslim-populated villages on top of the already existing ARMM area in the proposed homeland of the MILF.	4/25/2008: Release of MNLF leader Nur Misuari		6/25/2008: MILF "lost commands" attack in Maitum, Sarangani. Other attacks in North Cotabato and Maguindanao follow.
	7/21/2008: Resolution of the Provincial Board of North Cotabato in opposition to inclusion in the Moro territory	8/14/2008: Formal approval of the creation of the BSC by leaders of the MNLF and MILF	6/28/2008: Mass rallies in several cities in Mindanao organized by civil organizations in favor of peace negotiations 7/24/2008: peace talks between GRP and MILF in Kuala Lumpur	
	7/27/2008: Joint Communiqué stating that the MOA provides that about 700 villages in Mindanao will hold a referendum within 12 months to determine if they want to join the Muslim homeland			
	8/2008: Petitions from North Cotabato, Mindanao and Palawan, asking the Supreme Court to block the signing of the agreement between the GRP and the MILF. On June 5, the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order.		8/21/2008: Introduction by the government of the concept of negotiations based on DDR (demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration)	8/2008: Break of a five year ceasefire between AFP and MILF, leading to about 700,000 IDPs and 400 deaths
	11-12/2008: Departure of the IMT		9/3/2008: Dissolution of governmental peace panel	
	1/19/2009: Creation of the expanded ARMM		9/15/2009: Signature of a framework agreement on the formation of an ICG	7/2009: Announcement of government's SOMO and then of the MILF's SOMA
	2/2010: Return of the IMT members to Mindanao	5/23/2010: Constitution of a coordination committee between MILF and MNLF	12/8-9/2009: Restart of the negotiations in Kuala Lumpur	
Benigno Aquino III 2010				2/9-10/2011: new peace panels between GRP and MILF meets in Malaysia.

2. ARMM Administration					
	Governor			Vice-Governor	
1990-1993	Zacaria Candao	IPP	Maguindanao	Benjamin Loong	Tausug
1993-1996	Lininding Pangandaman		Maranao	Nabil Tan	Tausug
1996-2001	Nurallaj Misuari	MNLF	Tausug	Guimid P. Matalam	Maguindanao
2001	Alvarez Isnaji (acting)	Ex-MNLF	Tausug		
2001-2005	Parouk Hussin	MNLF	Tausug	Mahid M. Mutilan	Maranao
2005-2008	Zaldy Ampatuan	LAKAS-CMD	Maguindanao	Ansaruddin-Abdulmalik Alonto Adiong	Maranao
2008-2009			Maguindanao		Maranao
2009	Ansaruddin-Abdulmalik Alonto Adiong (acting)	LAKAS-CMD	Maranao	Reggie Sahali-Generale	Maguindanao

3. Lanao del Sur Governors		
1942-1945	Domocao Alonto	Japanese rule
1945-1949	Luis R. Marohombsar	Acting
1949-1954	Hadji Alawi Mandangan Dimakuta	Appointed
	Shiek Cosain Usman (1954)	Acting
	Jorge Sanchez (1954)	Appointed
1954-1959	Salvador T. Lluch	Appointed
1959-1963	Abdul Gafur Madki Alonto	Elected
1963-1967		
1968-1971	Linang D. Mandangan	Elected
1971-1975	Tarhata Alonto Lucman	Elected
1975-1976	Mamarinta B. Lao	Appointed
1976-1986	Mohamad Ali Dimaporo	Appointed Elected
1986-1987	Tarhata Alonto Lucman	Appointed
1988-1992	Saidamen B. Pangarungan	Appointed Elected (1988)
1992-1995	Mahid Mutilan	Elected
1995-1998		
1998-2001		
2001-2004	Mamintal "Mike" Adiong Senior	Elected
2004-2007	Mamintal "Mike" Adiong Senior	Elected
	Alim Basher 'Mustaqbal' Manalao (2004)	Acting
	Bae Monera Dimakuta Macabangon (2006)	Acting
2007-2010	Mamintal "Bombit" Alonto Adiong Junior	Elected

4. Maranao Women in Political Positions in Lanao				
		Lanao del Norte	Lanao del Sur	sum
Vice-Mayor	1998-2001	0	1	1
	2001-2004	1	2	3
	2004-2007	0	2	2
	2007-2010	1	5	6
	2010-2013	1	7	8
Total		3	17	20
Mayor	1983	1	0	1
	1985	0	1	1
	1998-2001	2	6	8
	2001-2004	4	9	13
	2004-2007	0	4	4
	2007-2010	3	4	7
	2010-2013	4	5	9
Total		14	29	43
Vice-Governor	1995-1998	0	1	1
	2004-2007	1	1 (acting)	2
	2007-2010	1	0	1
	2010-2013	1	0	1
Total		3	2	5
Governor	1971-1975	0	1	1
	1986-1987	0	1 (appointed)	1
	1998-2001	1 (non-Maranao)	0	1
	2001-2004	1 (non-Maranao)	0	1
	2004-2007	1 (non-Maranao)	0	1
Total		3	2	5
Provincial Board Member	1980s	0	1	1
	1992-1994	1	0	1
	1994-1997	1	0	1
	1997-2000	1	0	1
	2007-2010	0	1	1
Total		3	2	5
Congresswomen	2001-2004	0	1	1
	2004-2007	0	1	1
	2007-2010	0	1	1
	2010-2013	2 (1 non-Maranao)	0	2
Total		2	3	5
Assemblywomen	1978	1	0	1
	1993-1996	1	0	1
	1996	0	1	1
	2005-2008	0	2	2
	2008-2011	0	2	2
Total		2	5	7
Grand Total		30	60	90

5. Female Politicians in Lanao del Norte			
Term	Vice-Mayor	Place	
2001-2004	Sittie Aisha A. Palao	Tagoloan	
2007-2010	Muslima Pacalna Macol	Poona Piagapo	
2010-2013	Rocma Macatoman Maba	Poona Piagapo	
Term	Mayor	Place	
1983 1998-2001	Hadja Rasmia Monatao Ali Campong	Tagoloan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daughter of mayor of Tagoloan (1978-82). • Her brothers Palao and Dayangcorop Ali died early. • Pushed to run for mayor after her father's death. • Sister of the incumbent mayor of Baoi, Hanifa A. Ali.
1998-2001 2007-2010 2010-2013	Hanifa Ali	Baloi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First female mayor of the province. • Municipality ruled by the husband-and-wife team of Madid Elias Lope and Hanifa Ali. • Madid Elias served as three-term mayor (1988-1992; 1992-1995; 1995-1998). After his third term, Hanifa replaced him. In 2001, he took over again for two terms. • Madid Elias Ali's father, Hadji Gomampang Ali, also served as mayor for five terms from 1949 until 1971. He was replaced by his brother, Sheik Bzar Daud Ali (1971-1974; 1974-1978; 1982-1986).
2001-2004	Mohmina M. Usman	Poona Piagapo	
2001-2004	Raida L. Tawantawan	Salvador	
2001-2004	Sobaida A. Tamama-Balindong	Tagoloan	
2001-2004	Babai M. Daluma	Pantar	
2007-2010	Norlainie Mitmug Limbona	Pantar	
2007-2010 2010-2013	Eleanor Dimaporo Lantud	Pantao Ragat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First cousin of Representative Abdullah Dimaporo. • Niece of the late Muhammad Ali Dimaporo. • Mayor in 2007, replacing her husband (Lacson) who became vice-mayor after serving three terms as mayor before her. • Lacson is the son of Inorak Lantud, former mayor (1965-1987; 1990-1999). • On his mother's side, Lacson is related to Abdullah Mangotara, a gubernatorial rival of Dimaporo in the 1990s. • The Dimaporos are trying to unseat Eleanor and her husband because Lacson kept a private army. • In 2006, Martial Law was almost declared because of a <i>rido</i> between Lacson and his brother-in-law's relative who ran for mayor in 2004. Lacson's sister is married to the cousin of his political rival. Lacson with his "private army" attacked Walo a Datu, a <i>barangay</i> in Pantao Ragat where his sister and political rival live. Since Lacson's sister took the side of her husband's cousin, Lacson did not spare his sister as a target of revenge, but he failed to kill her. At one point, Lacson's army held a grenade intended for their enemy but the grenade exploded before they could throw it to the enemy, thus killing Lacson's army.

			This angered Lacson and the <i>rido</i> became intense until it was resolved in 2009.
2010-2013	Farhana Racmat Palawan	Poona Piagapo	
2010-2013	Aisha Diro Ambola Batingolo	Tangkal	
Vice-Governor			
2004-2013	Irma Umpa Ali		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial board member in Lanao del Norte (1991-2004). • Vice-governor (2004-2013). • Daughter of long-term Dimaporo ally Vice-Governor and Mayor Malamit Umpa.
Governor			
1998-2001 2001-2004 2004-2007	Imelda “Angging” Quibranza Dimaporo ³⁶²		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Maranao. • Representative of the 1st District of Lanao del Norte (2010-2013). • Wife of Abdullah Dimakuta Dimaporo, former three-term governor. • Her eldest son is Mohammad Khalid Quibranza Dimaporo, incumbent governor (2007-2013). • Her daughter Fatima Aliah Quibranza Dimaporo is the representative for the 2nd District in Lanao del Norte (2010-2013).
Representative/Congress			
2010-2013	Imelda “Angging” Quibranza Dimaporo	1 st District	
2010-2013	Fatima Aliah Quibranza Dimaporo	2 nd District	
Assemblywoman			
1978-1984	Porti Ali Pacasum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sectoral assemblywoman for Industrial Labor in Mindanao in the Interim Batasang Pambansa. • Bai a Labi a Gaus sa Baloi, sister of the Sultan sa Baloi. • Related to Dean Salam Pacasum Naga Pangadapun. • Graduate of Political Sciences in Manila and receiver of several “outstanding” awards.
1993-1996	Johayrah Diamond Ali Pacasum Pangarungan	ARMM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bai a Labi a Gaus sa Ranao. • Wife of Saidamen B. Pangarungan, governor of Lanao del Sur (1988-1992).

³⁶² The Christian Quibranzas and the Muslim Dimaporos are two families who claimed the governorship of Lanao del Norte. The political rivalry between Arsenio Quibranza and Mohamad Ali Dimaporo heightened Muslim-Christian tension in the 1970s. It ended when Malacañang brokered a settlement of the two warring clans capped by the marriage of their children, Imelda (after Imelda Marcos) and “Bobby.”

6. Female Politicians in Lanao del Sur			
Term	Vice-Mayor ³⁶³	Place	
1998-2001 2001-2004	Ara M. Mindalano Macabalang	Kapatagan	
2001-2004 2004-2007	Fatima A. Sultan	Bumbaran	
2004-2007 2007-2010	Minda Rasuman Bato Lamping	Lumba-Bayabao	
2007-2010	Isnaira Panandigan K. Al-Macaraya	Sultan Dumalondong	
2007-2010 2010-2013	Bai Noryasmen A. B. Calandada	Marawi City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scion of one of 12 <i>agama</i> clans. • Married to a prominent family in Marawi City • Cousin of Congressman Faysah Maniri Racman-Pimping Dumarpa.
2007-2010 2010-2013	Mary Ruth Catalan	Wao ³⁶⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mayor of Wao is Elvino Balicao, a Christian.
2010-2013	Anna Mahlyne A. Macarampat	Ditsaan-Ramain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously was municipal councilor.
2010-2013	Noraimah A. Hadji Ali	Kapai	
2010-2013	Minda B. Laming	Lumba-Bayabao (Maguing)	
2010-2013	Khalida A. Benito	Pagayawan	
Mayor			
1985	Pascum Naga Pangadapun	Marawi City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only child of Datu Cosain Naga, scion of the 12 <i>agama</i> clans, former mayor of Marawi City. • Public school teacher. • Wife of the late Judge Yusop Pangadapun (Alonto clan). • Belongs to the Baloi sultanate through the Ali and Pacasum clans. • First Maranao woman to be elected City Councillor (at the age of 17) in Marawi City in 1962. Awarded “Most Outstanding

³⁶³ There are 39 municipalities and one city in Lanao del Sur.

³⁶⁴ Muslims comprise 20% of the population of the municipality of Wao. The mixed community was established under the guidance of the Maranao Datu Busran Kalaw. Apart from problems in the 1970s, when there were conflicts between the Barracudas and the Ilagas, the community is said to live in peaceful co-existence (Madale 1997: 146). Wao was also not part of the attacks by the MILF on Christian villages in 2009 after the failure of the signing of the MOA-AD. As early as 2006, Wao was one of four local government units in the ARMM that showed an interest in GAD. The Local Governance Support Program in ARMM noted its potential and initiated the mainstreaming of gender equality at the municipal and *barangay* levels of governance.

			<p>City Councillor” in 1965 by the Lanao del Sur Professionals, “chosen for her significant contribution to the welfare of her community” (Asis in <i>Mindanao Art and Culture</i> 9:22).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Maranao woman to become a city mayor, succeeding Attorney Mahid Pimping (1984-1985). Awarded as “Most Outstanding Lady City Mayor.”³⁶⁵ • Chairwoman of the Philippine Muslim Women Professionals and Leaders, Manila Chapter (1981). • Chairwoman of the Philippine Muslim Women’s Association (1982). • Chairwoman of the Lanao del Sur Women's Association (1972). • Group leader in the yearly Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Awarded the “Most Outstanding Group Leader” by the Ministry of Muslim Affairs (1983). • Her son, Popoy Pangadapun, was a three-term elected vice-mayor of Marawi City.
1998-2001	Maimona Hadja Norhainie Muto S. Dungka	Ganassi	
1998-2001	Bai Omel Pesique Hasabando Basman	Marawi City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followed her husband Abbas Basman.
1998-2001 2001-2004	Bai Johaira “Marimar“ Abinal	Maguing ³⁶⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife of Johari Abinal.
1990s	Adelaida Arimao	Lumbayanague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife of a superintendent of schools. • She won against her male counterparts in a hotly-contested election which ended in violence. • Her success as elected mayor was due to her blood ties to a number of major clans in her town. • She served for three terms and her young son succeeded her as mayor.
1998-2001 2001-2004 2004-2007	Edna Ogka Benito	Balabagan ³⁶⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daughter of Datu Ogka Sampiano, former vice-mayor, and a Christian woman from Cebu. • Sister of Hadji Murad Sampiano, an incumbent mayor who was assassinated in 1992 by her opponents. • Elected after her clan decided to put her up as replacement to her fallen brother.
1998-2001	Fahida P. Balt	Tubaran	
2001-2004	Bai Raida Bansil Maglangit	Kapatagan	<p>Noted Koran reader, she was married to a prominent member of a clan in the town and won as mayor. She is known as a progressive mayor of one of the most violent towns in the province. After the all-out war in 2000 her community was declared a zone of peace, a project being pushed by leaders in the local government, military,</p>

³⁶⁵ In 1986, the attorney Abbas Basman succeeded her (appointed 1986-1987). He became mayor again after his victorious protest against Mahid Mutilan, who had been mayor from 1988 to 1992.

³⁶⁶ The current mayor (2001-2013) is Hakim P. Abinal.

³⁶⁷ The current mayor (2007-2010) is Hadji Amer Ragodotan Sampiano; the vice-mayor Quirino Ragodotan Sampiano.

2004-2007			and MILF, as well as peace advocates to follow the signing of a local security agreement. After that the government and NGOs helped to provide infrastructure like roads and buildings, livelihood, and basic services – “projects that were sorely lacking in this former no man’s land” (Uy 2008). Her husband served as mayor before her for three terms. In 2010 Nhazruddin B. Maglangit was elected as the new mayor.
2007-2010			
2001-2004 2004-2007	Hedjarah Lydia E. Manabilang	Bumbaran ³⁶⁸	
2001-2004	Rasmia Usman Salic Romato	Butig	
2001-2004	Salamona L. Asum	Lumbayanague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Followed by Mayor Jamal Langlang Asum (2007-2013). The vice-mayor was Simpan Asum Gunting.
1998-2001 2001-2004	Soraida M. Sarangani	Madalum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Followed by Usman Jr. Mindalano Sarangani (2007-2010).
2007-2010	Jan Jan Alangadi Pundato Disomimba	Tamparan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wife of Sultan Topaan “Toni” Disomimba, three-term mayor (1998-2007), then reelected (2010). Member of the Royal clan of Mala Bayabao. Wife of the former mayor. In 2010 after she finished her third term, her husband became mayor again.
2001-2004 2004-2007 2007-2010	Minda Pandapatan Dagalangit	Lumba-Bayabao ³⁶⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of the Uato royalty. Wife of Aminola Mangurun, a three-term mayor.
2001-2004	Bae Jalilah Umpa-Mindalano	Madamba ³⁷⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wife of former mayor (1992-2001)
2007-2010	Rasmia Bandrang-Macabago	Saguiaran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wife of Sabdullah Tempo Macabago, former mayor (1997-2007).
2010-2013	Raida Dimaporo Papandayan	Tubaran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wife of the previous mayor.
2010-2013	Raysalam M. Bagul-Mangondato	Balindong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sister of the previous mayor.
2010-2013	Umohanie M. Bato-Macatanong	Piagapo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wife of the previous mayor.
2010-2013	Omensalam S. Balindong	Malabang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wife of the previous mayor.
2010-2013	Raquemah A. Benito-Taha	Calanogas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daughter of the previous mayor.
ARMM Assembly ³⁷¹			
1996	Bai Zenaida P. Bubong	MNLF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of the Bangsa Moro Women's Committee. Veteran field official of the MNLF.

³⁶⁸ The current mayor (2010-2013) is Mastura C. Manabilang; the vice-mayor Jamal E. Manabilang.

³⁶⁹ The current mayor (2010-2013) is Gambai Rasuman Dagalangit.

³⁷⁰ The current mayor (2004-2007; 2010-2013) is Dagoroan Amol Mindalano.

³⁷¹ In the ARMM Assembly, there are six positions for assemblymen/women.

2005-2008			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife of Commander Narra, a legendary guerrilla chief who commanded one of the largest MNLF camps in mainland Mindanao. • Related to the Alontos.
2005-2008-2008-2011	Suhaylah Racman-Pimping Maniri Salic	1 st District LAKAS CMD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sister of Congresswoman Faysah Maniri Racman-Pimping Dumarpa.
2008-2011	<i>Bai Rasmia Salic</i> Romato	2 nd District LAKAS CMD ³⁷²	
Provincial Board Members ³⁷³			
	Hadja Fatima Masinger Guro		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First female Maranao provincial board member. • BA of Science in Elementary Education. • Wife of Director Itomama B. Guro. Wedding arranged by Mastura Guro, ex-mayor of Lumbatan.
2007-2010	Bai Aisha Dianalan Munder	1 st District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daughter of a political family. • Only female board member during her time.
Vice-Governor			
1995-1998	Normallah Alonto Lucman		
2004-2007	Bai Monera Dimakuta Macabangon		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial board member, promoted after Governor Mamintal “Mike” Adiong Senior’s death. • Vice-governors are expected to step up to the governorship. • Together with most of the provincial board members, she filed administrative and criminal cases against Governor Mostaqbal in 2006. • Acting governor after Mostaqbal’s suspension by the DILG (three months).
Governor			
1971-1975 1986-1987	Tarhata Alonto Lucman	Elected Appointed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resignation after President Marcos’ s accusation of abetting rebellion (1975). • Appointed governor of Lanao del Sur after the downfall of Marcos (1986). • In 1995, her daughter followed in her footsteps as vice-governor of Lanao del Sur.

³⁷² Other Salics currently holding a political position are Samer Umpar Makil Salic (2008, ARMM assemblyman) and Fahad Panarigan Umpar Salic, the recently (2010) re-elected mayor of Marawi City. Bai Noryasmen A. B. Calandada, the vice-mayor of Marawi City, is a scion of one of 12 Agama clans, married to a prominent family in Marawi City and a cousin of Congressman Faysah Maniri Racman-Pimping Dumarpa.

³⁷³ There are ten positions for board members.

7. Representatives of Lanao		
Situation after Second World War		
1946-1949	Datu Amer Manalao Mindalano	Member of the guerilla forces against the Japanese occupation, then elected congressman.
1949-1953	Mohamad Ali B. Dimaporo	War hero during Japanese occupation.
1954-1957	Domocao Alonto	Known to have defended principle of independence against American sovereignty.
1958-1961	Laurentino Ll. Badelles	
1962-1965	Rashid Lucman	Husband of Tarhata Alonto Lucman.
1966-1969		
1970-1972	Macacuna Dimaporo	Brother of Ali Dimaporo.
Martial Law under the Marcos regime		
1978-1984	Interim Batasang Pambansa	Regional Assemblymen of Region XII, Central Mindanao: Jesus P. Amparo, Anacleto D. Badoy, Jr., Tomas B. Baga, Jr., Abdullah D. Dimaporo, Ahdel S.T. Pangandaman, Ernesto F. Roldan, Datu Blah T. Sinsuat, Estanislao V. Valdez Sectoral assemblymen for Mindanao: Industrial Labor: Princess Porti A. Pacasum Agricultural Labor: Jiamil Ismael Dianalan
1984-1986	Regular Batasang Pambansa	Members of the Parliament for Lanao del Sur: Omar M. Dianalan, Macacuna B. Dimaporo
Since the division of Lanao ³⁷⁴		
	1 st District	2 nd District
1987-1992	Sultan Omar M. Dianalan	Mohamad Ali B. Dimaporo
1992-1995	Mamintal M. Adiong	
1995-1998		
1998-2001		
2001-2004	Faysah Maniri-Racman Dumarpa	Benasing O. Macarambon, Jr.
2004-2007		
2007-2010		
2010-2013	Salic B.Dumarpa	Pangalian M. Balindong

³⁷⁴ Lanao del Sur is divided into two congressional districts: the 1st District, representing Basak, and the 2nd District, representing the Unayan region.

Congresswoman Faysah Maniri Racman Pimping Dumarpa from Lakas-CMD is an example of a political family dynasty becoming very successful through a woman. She is a relative of the late attorney Mahadi “Dante” P. Pimping, former Marawi City mayor (1984-1985) and vice-mayor (1980-1984). Promoted schoolteacher at the Pangarungan Islamic College in Marawi City, she worked as Cultural Research Writer and Information Officer at MSU Marawi. In 1990, she served as Undersecretary at the Department of Social Welfare and Development until her election to the ARMM Legislative Assembly (1993-2001).

She was the second Maranao woman elected to this office, besides Princess Johayrah Diamond Ali Pacasum Pangarungan. She became Congresswoman when Congressman Mamintal “Mike” Adiong ran as governor of Lanao del Sur. She won in the 1st congressional district over male candidates in a hotly-contested election. She sponsored bills focusing on the establishment of a Moro Cultural Heritage Center, the expansion of the Shari’ah Court System in the ARMM and the prohibition of religious and radical profiling of indigenous cultural communities (Gutoc 2008a).

In the first congressional district, Rep. Faysah Dumarpa ended her three terms in office in 2010. Her husband Salic Biston, a commissioner assigned to a government-owned agency, Dumarpa (Nacionalista Party, NP), ran for her post against Abul Khayr Alonto (Independent), Salic Ayo Munder (Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino, Forces of the Filipino Masses, PMP), Mohammed Hussein Pacasum Pangandaman (Luntiang Kabataan, LK) and Princess Johayra Diamond Pacasum Pangarungan (Independent). Pangandaman is the son of Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pagandaman and the grandson of former ARMM Governor Lininding Pangandaman, while Diamond is the wife of former Lanao del Sur Governor Saidamen Pangarungan. Salic Biston Dumarpa lost against an Adiong ally, Hussein Pangandaman³⁷⁵.

³⁷⁵ The final results of the elections were partly delayed in Lanao del Sur and elections had to be repeated in several *barangays*, especially in the 1st District. Shortly after, the son of a Comelec commissioner was abducted with the demand to nullify election results in the towns of Taraka, Masiu (1st District), and Malabang and Picong (2nd District). Leading politicians accused the Dumarpas of having masterminded the kidnapping in order not to lose their congressional seat to Hussein Pangandaman. By that time, complete election results had not yet been published, but according to unofficial results Salic Dumarpa had a head start over Pangandaman in the contest for representative of the 1st District (71,007 votes over 66,038).

8. How Umpas and Sandab got to Mindanao: A Story Related by the Masiricampo sa Butig

It is about a bullfight. The Sultan [of Johor] is the eldest. Umpas is the daughter [and] Sandab is the youngest. The Sultan of Johor was the master of all traits. He was telling that he has this carabao who won all the fights. And Sandab thought that it was a joke. He told him: “Oh! Sultan has not met my carabao yet!” “You have a carabao? If you want, they could fight.” Sandab said: “Ok.”

But Sandab did not have a carabao. And the sultan said to him: “Just make sure you do not make a fool out of me. Do not make me lie to people. If I tell the people that there will be a bullfight and there will be none . . .” Sandab asked some people to look for a small carabao (we call it *nati*): “You have to get it from its mother. Look for one!” So the people said: “Ok.”

Then he asks the ladies to make armor for the young carabao. It is like a coat. So . . . he asks someone to go to confirm the fight, the sultan and Sandab informed his own people with the *agong* [brass gong] that the fight will push through. And he asks them to accompany him and the *nati*. Along the way, he asks his people to gather around the *nati* so that it could not see anything.

When they arrived in the place the sultan asked Sandab: “Sandab where is your carabao?” He said: “It is there. Who will go first to present his carabao?” And the sultan said: “It is you: you go first.” Sandab said: “No, I suggest you go first, because if my carabao will beat your carabao you might say that because my carabao went first, it had a good position.” “Ok,” said the sultan, “ok.”

So the carabao of the sultan went first and he was looking for his opponent; he was rotating, but he could not see it. The sultan shouted: “Sandab, where is your carabao?” “Ok, ok.”

But the young carabao was very hungry because it had not eaten for a long time. So instead of fighting, the carabao went under the big carabao to look for milk. Instead of fighting, it was looking for milk. So they went around, not fighting, just going under. So Sandab shouted: “All the people will be the judge, who is the winner, the one who is chasing or the one who is being chased?”

And then the sultan really got mad: “If I only knew that he would do this, he should have just asked me for money rather to destroy my carabao and humiliate me in front of my people. From now on, I do not want to see your face.” And Sandab answered: “Ok, but you know, Sultan, I ask you for one thing, we are brothers, we have the same mother and the same father.” “Ok, you can ask me for anything except for my throne.” “I ask for my sister, I cannot imagine to live without my sister, because I love her so much. I should see her once in a while.” And the sultan said: “Ok, why not?” Umpas was hurt, because it was so easy for him to give away his sister. She even suggested her brother: “You should have scolded our brother but not expelled him.” And now he gave her away.

So they went in a small boat. And they did not know where to go. So they arrived in Maguindanao. It was called Iranon [land] then, the whole Mindanao was Iranon. And they arrived and everyone was talking about those two. And then Dimasangkay [a Adil sa Maguindanao] was informed that there was such a beautiful woman . . .

Dimasangkay Adil had 39 wives but when he married Umpas, he stopped visiting the others. The other wives agreed this had to change.³⁷⁶ If this was not going to change, they would have to kill Umpas. When they were talking, the brother from Umpas, Sandab, was with her. And

³⁷⁶ Noron is the name of the favorite wife of Dimasangkay a Adil sa Maguindanao before he married Umpas. She was the one who started the plan to assassinate Umpas by convincing the other wives of Dimasangkay, because since he married Umpas, he had very little time for them.

he told his sister: “You have to be careful because they are planning to kill you.” So she asked: “What is your plan?” And he said: “I ask you to leave.”

So they went to Liamin.³⁷⁷ They had a small house there. And the Punduma went there to hunt and he was asking his boy to look for water so they could eat their lunch. And the boy was looking for water and he saw the little house where a very beautiful lady was sitting beside the window. They talked and he told Umpas that his boss was looking for water. Then Umpas gave him *k'ndi* [kettle], and he brought it to Punduma. And he asks: “Where did you get this?” And the boy told him about this beautiful lady. “We eat later and we go to the lady.”

And Punduma asked: “Why are you here?” because they were not Maranaos. And they explained why. And he said: “You come with me to my place. Because there are no people in Lanao, it is a hunting place.” So the brother asks Punduma: “Can you take the anger of Dimasangkay? Because they are still married.” And the Punduma said: “Make it ten times, I can still protect you.”

They went to Butig . . . In Pagalongan Umpas asked her women to rest some time so she could wash her face in the river. Punduma said from this time on this river should be called Pagalongan [mirror] because her beauty [was shown there]. On their way, Punduma asked his boy to go ahead “and when you arrive in our place, you use my *agong* to inform the people.” He told him: “If they will ask why, you tell them that I found a girl,” because he was the leader but did not have a wife yet. The boy did so and the people from Ragayan were running to meet them and said: “Punduma is marrying and we almost live along the way.”

And the people from Timbab, they ran, stumbled, and hit their heads to make sure that when the people from Malalis announced the arrival of Punduma, they got to play the native drums to welcome him before they proceeded to Dolangan. And then they had to meet the Punduma and so they prepared food in Dolangan, sweet food, and they ask the people ahead of them, in Malalis: “If you see the Punduma, shout so we can prepare.”

But before they reached Butig, they passed through Macadar, the place of the uncle of the Punduma (the brother of his mother). The uncle would not allow the Punduma to continue unless they proved to Umpas that the Punduma is their friend, so they should not worry, because the guy who found her was the leader. So they continued to Butig, when they arrived they had kind of an engagement party.

And the people in the place told him about what happened, he said: “You people from Ragayan, you were there, you were running very fast; your place should be called Ragayan [running in a rush]. People from Timbab, you stumbled and you hit your head; your place should be called Timbab. The place where you prepared the food shall be called Dolangan [native tray]. And the people ahead of me who were shouting when I was arriving should be called Malalis, because in Maranao *lalis* is shouting.” So the people asked him: “From now on, you are confirming that we have these places; what power do we have?” “The one who will be sultan here in Unayan has to pass through you; [you] should be the one . . . to check with the applicants [for] sultan . . . who is in line.”

There was no sultanate yet, Punduma was the leader. So they asked him: “You have to become *panoroganan*.” He asked his uncle who escorted him from Makada to Butig if it was ok with him: “I want to be the sultan.” Some of them [his uncles] said no, because, what about their children? Punduma explained: “I am different from your children, because your race and my race are the same from my mother’s side. But your children do not have the race of my father, who came from Sharief Alawi.” So they agreed to enthrone him as the sultan, the first *panoroganan*. Out of pride, Dalangit went to Poona Bayabao and Mamintal went to Lumba Bayabao and [they]

³⁷⁷ Liamin was part of Malabang District, now it is located in between the municipalities of Malabang and Picong.

started their own sultanates. But it all started from Butig. Then the others followed . . .

When Sandab left Brunei, they ask for a *salsila*: “So that we can trace us, back here when we marry people over there.” So he got a *salsila*. Eventually when they arrived in Butig and Umpas married Punduma, Sandab felt very lonely. He was very sad, because he has no wife. So Punduma suggested that he should marry his sister. So Umpas married Punduma and Sandab married his sister. And he [Punduma] was saying that the descendants of Umpas and Sandab now are the ones who occupy the title of Sultan sa Butig. (Interview given in two parts by the Masiricampo sa Butig, later modified by the translator Amer Rashid Mindalano, further modified by the author, Marawi City, 2008)

9. Lineage involving Arab Ancestors of the Sultanate of Butig

Abdul Hasim is the basis of our Arab lineage. Abdul Mutalib is the son of Abdul Hasim. Abdul Mutalib begot his son Abu Talib, the uncle of Prophet Mohammad, and Abdullah, the father of our Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him). Our Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) is the father of Fatima Sohra, who was married to Baguinda Ali; that is how our parents called him . . . Ali and Fatima Sohra begot two sons, namely Amer Hassan and Amer Hussain. Amer Hussain's great-great-grandchild was Sharief Ali Saenal Abidin. Sharief Ali Sainal Abidin begot a child, Sharief Mohammad Baker, whose descendants include Sharief Japar Sedik. The latter begot a child named Sharief Morsal Khan, who begot a son, Sharief Ali Riban, who begot a son named Sharief Muhammad del Awwal, who begot a son Sarip Aliol Hoda, who begot a son Sheik Ali Hassan, who begot a son Hassanol Mohdil, who begot a child Sheik Ya Hassan, who begot a child named Sharief Ahmad, who begot a son, Sharief Muhammad Akil, who begot a son Sharief Alawi, whose descendants include Sharief Muhammad Sharifuden, who was identified as having written the *salsila* or genealogy. Sharief Muhammad Sharifuden had two sons, namely Sharief Ali Zainal Abedin (named after his ancestors) and Abdul Rahman.

Sharief Ali Zainal Abedin begot seven sons known as the Shariefs. The first was Sharief Kabonsuan, who landed in Maguindanao. He stayed in Maguindanao and the four principalities of Lanao where he had his offspring. The second was Sharief Alauya, who stayed in Tagoloan. Tagoloan comprises Kapai and extends up to Cagayan de Oro City. The third was Sharief Alioden, who resided in Jolo. Maranaos call it Solog. The fourth was Sharief Alnao, who stayed in Tampasok. The fifth was Sharief Maguinando, who stayed in Maloko. He was the one who remained in Malaysia. Sharief Bong stayed in Brunei. Sharief Mangindar stayed in Maladao. These are the Shariefs who went to the east for the purpose of preaching Islam and they were the ones who introduced the sultanate system of leadership.³⁷⁸

The second son of Sharief Muhammad Sharifuden, who wrote the genealogy, was Abdul Rahman, who begot a son named Radia Bandar, who stayed in Johore. Radia Bandar begot Sultan sa Johore, Sandab, and Umpas. Sandab and Umpas lived and stayed in Lanao.

One line of genealogy is that of Umpas. She was married to Datu Punduma sa Butig. Umpas was first married to Dimasangkay a Adil of Maguindanao. During that time, the rulers were on equal footing, when there was no sultanate. Dimasangkay a Adil sa Maguindanao ruled the entire region of Maguindanao, which was later divided into five provinces. Umpas came to Lanao from Johor with her brother Sandab. When Umpas divorced her first husband, she was married to Punduma of Butig. Punduma sa Butig was the first *panoroganan* [literally “decision maker,” also translated as “executive” and later as Royal House] in Lanao, whose power was respected, during the time when there was no sultanate yet in the four principalities of Lanao, because the Shariefs had not introduced yet the sultanate leadership.

When Punduma married Umpas, leadership started, but during this time, their leadership was not sultanate but *datu*. The legislature supporting the leadership of Punduma were his uncles. (Speech given by the Sultan sa Butig in 2008, Marawi City, translated by Montia Jamilah D. Sarip, translation modified)

³⁷⁸ Mednick writes that the seven Shariefs went to the following places: one each to Brunei (Borneo), Sulu, Menado (Sulawesi), Makassar (Sulawesi), and Luzon; and two to Mindanao, Sharief Ali [Alawi?], who landed near Cagayan de Oro and Sharief Kabungsoan, who landed near Cotabato (1965: 97).

10. A Murder Case Related to the Author by a Bai a Labi, 2008

There is a specific case, which is actually murder. Its background is that:

A man and a woman [are] loving each other for some time. The woman is a pure Muslim (Maranao), belonging to a big family or clan. The man has Maranao blood on his father[’s] side, but his mother is a pure Christian. After being engaged for some time, the woman invited the man to go with her to her hometown, which is actually not accepted in the Maranao culture. The man being not a full-blooded Maranao did not know much about the culture. He thought all the while that they were mere sweethearts, and that they were just enjoying. The man was actually taken by the relatives and parents of the woman. He was tied up with a rope for 3 days while the woman was placed and locked up in a room. The woman's relatives were asking him many questions. He speaks a minimal Maranao language but he could not [explain] to the relatives of the woman who are his relatives in Lanao. Had he mentioned names from prominent citizens in Lanao, he would have been saved. But without any relations, the relatives of the woman concluded that he was not a real Maranao.

Four days after, the father of the man went to the place with some military men. The father suspected that his son had been killed already. So, he opted to seek the help of relatives. The relatives went to see the leaders/*datus* of the community to seek their help to locate the man and perhaps the dead body. Making the story short, it was a day later the man was killed by the family of the woman. While the negotiations were made, the leaders of the place said that the man was already dead. The sultan of the place did not allow the man's relatives to enter the community and fully identify who are the actual people concerned. The sultan was playing safe, it would not be good for him to directly say, there are the people, because his life too would be at risk. Much more that he is doing his mandate as a sultan; he has to protect his life. The last thing requested by the man's relative was to get the dead body. It was dismay that it was not given. It was a very serious case. It touches the *maratabat* (pride) of all the relatives. Much so [sic], that the relatives knew that the women's family thought that the man was not a Muslim.

Few days after the man’s relatives accepted that he was already dead. The woman ran away, she went to the man's family. She spoke on television, that she was married to that man. Then there was a negotiation done. A woman known to be a highly [high ranking] professional, negotiated . . . According to her, their family is really peace loving and they are all professionals. She was trying to clear this connection to one person who had participated in killing the man. He is a distant relative known to be very notorious and they do not want to be a part of the dispute. The female professional had negotiated with another woman, a titled woman, who is also a professional like her. The titled woman [the *bai a labi* telling the story] had a hard time because she was actually close to the professional woman who was a former superior of her[s]. On this basis, the titled woman thought about refusing.

The first step done by the titled woman is to talk to an uncle who served as head of the family. She made a series of visits to relatives which [sic] were influential in the family. Another step was to convince the bereaved family about the fault of the man in going to the place of the woman where all her relatives stay and live. In the Maranao culture, illegal stay with a woman is definitely punishable by death. After they are convinced and accepted the fault of their son, they seem to agree. It took some time to convince them because they had contacted some policemen to do revenge. The female negotiator asked them not to do revenge later because if they do, it is useless for her to have amicable settlement. The bereaved family accepted that he is already dead, and whatever action they would do, he will not be alive again.

Finally, they have subscribed to the settlement the negotiator took responsible of the man’s family, and the professional woman committed to take charge of the other family. Both

families agreed to have a *kandori* [food offering], there was food preparation and a certain amount (PHP 100,000) was given as *kandori* on a scheduled date. The professional lady requested the titled woman that it would be at her residence. They feel safe if it will be at her residence because they are somehow related to the husband [they feel safe from being subject to the revenge of the bereaved family when they are at the house of a relative]. Much that it is her pleasure that the settlement will be held in her residence, she [the titled woman] explained that it would be better if it will be at the residence of her brother, who is a military man. It would also be easier for the bereaved family to come. (In the Maranao culture, entering the house of the family whom you made a mistake [sic], even if it is murder, there is a very big possibility of making a pardon. It is because it is a principal requirement, because you surrender more or less. Thus, it has to be honored, especially if a woman with high rank in the society [meaning the female family leader] will enter. If the killer himself would surrender to the house of the family of the bereaved, he must be covered with white cloth. This means complete surrender. But he should not enter the house unless both parties agreed for his presence.) Much that the *bai a labi* is honored in the family, she wants also to honor her brother. This is a part of the implementation of the *taritib*, which is honoring elders, honoring a male member of the family by the female member. Finally, time came when all the brothers and sisters of the professional woman came and for the bereaved family, that is something that they would honor. There were several speeches, it was emphasized that the presence of the women and men are so valuable. It was well acknowledged and so there was agreement from both sides. (Written statement, Marawi City, 2008)