



THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN
MINDANAO: ROOT CAUSES AND
PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

BY

MARJANIE SALIC MACASALONG

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts in Islamic and
Other Civilization

International Institute of Islamic Thought and
Civilization
International Islamic University
Malaysia

FEBRUARY 2013

ABSTRACT

This research has been undertaken to revisit the historical causes of the conflict of the Moros with the ruling authorities and to examine how and why the Moros resorted to an armed-struggle through various liberation movements in Mindanao. To carry out this study, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A historical-analytical method was also used because the conflict was very much anchored to its history. The data for this study was collected both from primary and secondary sources such as books, articles, journals, newspapers, government reports, non-governmental organization's reports, policy statements, press releases, and signed-agreements. The researcher carried out interviews with key figures of the liberation movements and distributed questionnaires to hundred of individuals from different places and walks of life in order to get primary feedbacks from the masses. Towards this end, the researcher highlighted that peace could only be attained if both the Philippine government and the Muslim groups compromise on their original stand. The former should recognize the legitimate rights of the Moros for self-determination and religious practices in its entirety, and the latter should also respect the territorial integrity of the country. The researcher discovered from the interviews and the questionnaires that Muslims want self-determination and Islamic *Sharī'ah* to be implemented in all aspects of their life. It is believed that the government of the Philippines is willing to accommodate the demand of the Muslims, as long as the latter respects the territorial integrity of the country.

ملخص البحث

اجريت هذه الدراسة لاعادة النظر في الاسباب التاريخية للصراع بين الموروس (اسم يطلق على المسلمين في الفلبين) والسلطات الحاكمة ولدراسة كيف ولماذا لجأ الموروس الى الكفاح المسلح من خلال مختلف حركات التحرر في مينداناو. للاضطلاع بهذه الدراسة، استخدم الباحث كلا النهجين الكمي والنوعي . كما استخدم نهج التحليل التاريخي لان الصراع يتركز الى حد كبير على سياقه التاريخي . جمعت بيانات هذه الدراسة من المصادر الاولية والثانوية مثل الكتب، المقالات، الصحف والمجلات، التقارير الحكومية، تقارير المنظمات غير الحكومية، البيانات السياسية، النشرات الصحفية، والاتفاقيات . اجرى الباحث مقابلات مع شخصيات رئيسية في حركات التحرر كما وزّع الاستبيانات على مئات من الافراد من اماكن متعددة ومن مختلف مناحي الحياة لاجل الحصول على تقييم اولي من الجماهير. تحقيقا لغاية البحث، ابرز الباحث انه لايمكن تحقيق السلام الا اذا تم ايجاد حل وسط بين كل من الحكومة الفلبينية والجماعات الاسلامية بناء على مواقفهم الاصلية. ينبغي ان تعترف الحكومة بالحق المشروع للموروس في تقرير المصير والممارسه الدينيه في مجملها وعلى الحكومة ايضا الحفاظ على وحدة اراضي البلاد . وجد الباحث من خلال المقابلات والاستبيانات بان المسلمين يريدون حق تقرير المصير وإقرار الشريعة الاسلاميه التي يتعين تنفيذها في كل جوانب حياتهم. يعتقد الباحث بان الحكومة الفلبينية على استعداد لاستيعاب مطالب المسلمين في حال احترامهم لسلامة ووحدة اراضي البلاد.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Islamic and Other Civilization.

.....
Abdullah Al-Ahsan
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Islamic and Other Civilization.

.....
Mohamed Ajmal Bin Abdul Razak
Al-Aidrus
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Islamic and Other Civilization.

.....
Ismawi Haji Zen
Dean, International Institute of
Islamic Thought and Civilization

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Marjanie Salic Macasalong

Signature.....

Date.....

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION
OF FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

Copyright © 2013 by Marjanie Salic Macasalong. All rights reserved.

**THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN MINDANAO: ROOT CAUSES AND
PROSPECTS FOR PEACE**

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below.

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

Affirmed by Marjanie Salic Macasalong

.....
Signature

.....
Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely wish to express my everlasting gratitude to the Almighty Allah for permitting me to finish this research. With His incessant guidance, I had managed to overcome the various challenges that cropped up along the way.

My deepest appreciation goes to my supervisor Prof. Abdullah Al-Ahsan and my examiner Prof. Mohamed Ajmal Bin Abdul Razak Al-Aidrus for patiently reading and re-reading my drafts. Their invaluable suggestions and corrections made this work possible. To all ISTACians, especially Fahm for reading my literature review and helping me all throughout, thank you for all your constructive recommendations.

My sincerest gratefulness likewise goes to the Chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Al-Haj Murad Ibrahim, the late Vice-Chairman Aleem Abdul Aziz Mimbantas, Cadre Officers Bravo, Mujahid, Lotfi, Jannati, Oshama bin Ali, Malic Saif, and Jovi for graciously giving some of their time to be interviewed. The same recognition also goes to Commander Narra, the deputy chief of staff of the Moro National Liberation Front, and the members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, for their straightforward remarks and detailed informations.

Prof. Hamid Barra, the president of the Philippine Usrah Foundation and a current member of the Government Peace-Negotiating Panel, and Prof. Abhoud Syed Lingga, member of the MILF Peace-Negotiating Panel, thank you very much for providing significant documents about the on-going negotiation between the Government of the Philippines and the MILF. I would also like to thank Ustaz Abdulwahab Amerol for giving me the original photocopy of the “Dansalan Declaration” which was retrieved from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, USA.

To my family, most especially to my Omie, wife and daughter, my indebtedness goes to all of you. I would not have reached this far without your indefatigable supports and constant prayers. Certainly, Izzahkulay has ever since been my source of strength. Special mention goes to my cousin Haji Naem (Mitch) for courageously defying the challenges to be at my side in the lair of the ASG in Basilan. Indeed, he had helped a lot by accompanying me to different parts of Mindanao – from Marawi City all the way to Zamboanga, down to Basilan, Cotabato and Lanao del Norte, just to carry out my interviews and distribute my questionnaires. Similar appreciation should also be given to Rocky for accompanying me to Camp Darapanan and made all the special arrangement to interview Chairman Murad; and Mahdi and Jovi’s daughter for guiding us to the mountainous camp of Commander Bravo.

To those Youth Groups from the cities of Zamboanga, Isabela, Iligan, Cotabato, and Marawi, with special mention to brother Saidali, my earnest thanks to all of you for the unconditional help in distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

Finally, to Ustaz N, Tan Sri Z and Datuk K – all don’t want to be named in order to gain the highest reward of Allah – my perpetual admiration is a must to all of you for the wholehearted financial support. This does not only cater my basic needs but also provides me a living in which my parents’ income could never afford. Indeed, words would never be sufficient to express my gratefulness for your compassion. Only Allah’s reward can ultimately compensate all your kindness. My supplication and extreme gratitude are due to all of you.

To all individuals who have directly or indirectly contributed to the making of this research, my ardent acknowledgement is heartily extended to you all.

I would have been more jovial if the one whom I dedicated this endeavor could at least browse this work. But indeed Allah (swt) decides everything and made life as such that even the one who temporarily owns the life has no ability to delay the time of death, even for slightest moment. Once the angel of death knocks our door, the most we could hope to do is to utter the shahadatayn.

A father who had devoted all his entire life to make the Word of Allah supreme, any child would be extremely honored to have him. It is true that we can no longer see your good stature, nor feel your sweet caress and adoring jokes, but we still enjoy the kindness of others all because of your name. The most consoling part of me is to think that at least I have started my journey of life with you.

For me to think that circumstances did not allow me to be at your side during your last farewell leaves my heart broken. How I wish I had had the chance to whisper to you these six words – THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR EVERYTHING – from giving my whims to molding me as I am today. Nevertheless, I hope this dedication will do to show how grateful I am to you.

*No matter how little it is, this endeavor is nostalgically dedicated to you-
ABIEKULAY.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------|
| Abstract | ii |
| Abstract in Arabic | iii |
| Approval Page | iv |
| Declaration Page | v |
| Copyright Page..... | vi |
| Acknowledgement | vii |
| Dedication | viii |
| | |
| CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Statement of the Problem | 3 |
| Research Objectives | 4 |
| Significance of the Study | 4 |
| Scope and Limitation | 6 |
| Literature Review | 7 |
| Methodology | 32 |
| | |
| CHAPTER II: RISE OF THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS | 33 |
| Historical Background | 33 |
| The Sultanate Era | 33 |
| Hostilities and Government Policies..... | 43 |
| The Spanish Era | 43 |
| The American Era | 51 |
| | |
| CHAPTER III: CONTEMPORARY CAUSES OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS | 62 |
| Alteration of Demography | 62 |
| Land Acts | 63 |
| Settlement Projects | 64 |
| Population Shift | 72 |
| Political Power Shift | 76 |
| Landholding Shift | 84 |
| Marginalization | 92 |
| Massacres | 97 |
| Jabidah Massacre | 97 |
| ILAGA-related massacres | 100 |
| | |
| CHAPTER IV: THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN MINDANAO | 109 |
| Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) | 109 |
| Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) | 111 |
| Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) | 120 |
| Islamization | 124 |
| Strengthening Organization | 131 |
| Military Build-Up | 133 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Self Reliance | 136 |
| Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) | 139 |
| CHAPTER V: PROSPECTS FOR PEACE | 147 |
| Negotiation with the Involvement of the OIC members | 148 |
| Impact of Militancy in the Liberation Movements | 155 |
| | |
| CONCLUSION | 178 |
| | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 187 |
| | |
| APPENDIX A: Survey Questions | 198 |
| APPENDIX B: List of Acronyms | 201 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Desire for peace is common in every society; yet history has been marked with conflicts from time immemorial. This paradox is the result of human weaknesses, such as the desire for greed and power, domination over others by force and other similar factors. Major landmarks in history, like the Treaty of Westphalia, the creations of the Congress of Vienna, League of Nations, and United Nations have laid foundations to develop international agreements that recognize the concepts of human dignity and self-determination.

Currently, the United Nations' Charter promulgates the idea of 'self-determination' with the aim of achieving peace if a particular nation is given the right to form a state and manage its own affairs without external interference. Looking at the heterogeneity of the world's population, however, having about 8,000 recognizably separate identities and cultures in almost 200 independent states, conflicts and violence – rather than unity and peace – are likely to be the relationships between “nations” and “states.”¹

Moros² in the southern part of the Philippines are one of the numerous examples. They have been fighting for self-determination and their identity for more than four hundred years. Beginning in the 16th century, when the Spanish colonial

¹ Rizal G. Buendia, “A Re-Examination of Ethnicity and Secessionist Movements in the Philippines and Indonesia: The Moros and Acehnese,” *Philippine Political Science Journal*, vol.23, Issue no.46 (2002): 4-5.

² Muslims in the Philippines.

domination had first set afoot in what is now known as the Philippines³, the Moros fought to defend their legitimate rights as an independent nation. They pride over the fact that they did not succumb to the colonial powers -- as the Northern part of the country did -- , never accepting the Christianization of the invading powers, but rather fought against them in their entirety.

When the Philippines gained complete independence from the United States, it inherited the long-standing grievances of the Moros. Never tired of fighting for their rights, the Moros employed armed-struggle in order to regain their self-determination, freedom and dignity. This resulted to more vigorous fighting that involved the whole population of the Philippines. The conflict is not merely about the Manila government and Moro rebel groups, rather it is a complex, deep-rooted and multifaceted one that began during Spanish colonization.

As a result of this long period of conflict, tens of thousands of lives and billions of dollars have been lost and wasted. Calculating only from the early 1970s, the World Bank had estimated that between 60,000 to 80,000 civilians, mostly Moros, were killed.⁴ According to one report, as many as 1 million Moros became homeless or displaced, and about 200,000 to 300,000 Moro refugees fled to Sabah, and until now, with the exception of few, have not returned to their various villages.⁵ Even more casualties and damages were claimed; the Moros objecting that there were more than 200,000 who were killed, nearly 8,000 women raped and sexually abused, 500

³ The term 'Philippines' did not exist before the Spaniards came because there was no unified state then in these islands; only independent chiefdoms or sultanates. The term 'Philippines' only came when Spaniards effectively conquered some part of the Islands and collectively called as such in honor to the king of Spain, King Philip II.

⁴ Salvatore Schiavo-Campo & Mary Judd, "The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend", *Social Development Papers - Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction*, No. 24 (February 2005): 1.

⁵ Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 156.

mosques burned, more than 300 Islamic schools destroyed, and countless houses and communities devastated.⁶ On the other hand, despite the fact that the Philippine government assigned 80% of its military might to Mindanao, the Moro fighters had managed to kill as many as 10,000 to 11,000 Philippine soldiers.⁷

Therefore, the conflict needs urgent and genuine solution to prevent more bloodshed. One logical step for this is to revisit the historical root causes of the conflict and attempt other means for peace. This study is conducted for these purposes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

As the Mindanao conflict is one of the worlds' longest, it is imperative to know the root causes in order to comprehensively understand the problem. The researcher formulates a number of questions to guide him throughout this study. The compelling questions that need to address are "What were the objectives of the invading powers and why did they come to Mindanao?"; "Why Mindanao conflict has been persisting for more than four hundred years?"; "What are the problems that need to be addressed?"; "What are the solutions that the Moros have been demanding?"; "What are the solutions that the government had already offered?"; Finally, "Why government's offer did not pacify the Moros?"

The questions above are interrelated. Finding a precise answer to these questions is not easy nor can it be ascertained quickly. It is, therefore, the intention of the researcher to present fact-based incidents, government policies and religious inclinations to partly explain why liberation movements in Mindanao became

⁶ Abdul Aziz Mimbantas, *Miyasayana so Tao na Tiyaawi so Ingd* [a Pitiful People in a Disserted Homeland], (Mindanao: Bangsamoro Homeland, 2012), 19.

⁷ Macapado Abaton Muslim, *The Moro Armed Struggle in the Philippines: The Nonviolent Autonomy Alternative*, (Mindanao State University: University Press and Information Office, 1994), 2.

prevalent. Upon identifying the root causes, the researcher will devote much to analyzing why liberation movements continue despite factions within the ranks, and to some extent, why the so-called breakaway groups are becoming more popular and stronger. In the last part of this research, prospects for peace are equally given extensive analysis. Aside from the continuation of negotiation between the Moro Liberation Movement and the government of the Philippines, the researcher also looks through the important role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Mindanao conflict. Furthermore, the researcher fosters the idea of self-reliance, both financially and militarily, as part of the prospects for peace.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Present different perspectives from already published/unpublished materials that focus on the issue of the liberation movements in Mindanao.
2. Investigate incidents and government policies, i.e. land settlements and massacres, to explain why the liberation movements persist.
3. Examine how Islām serves as a uniting force for the liberation movements.
4. Explore the role of the OIC in the Mindanao conflict by studying its resolutions.
5. Finally, offer candid suggestions on how to address the conflict.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study would be useful for the following:

Members of the Peace Panel. The government would find this study relevant to the on-going peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) which are currently engaged in finding a solution to the conflict. The members of the Peace Panels would find the study useful in exploring some alternative solutions to the Mindanao conflict. The Panel members would be aware of the root causes of the conflict and may explore the possibility of approaching the root causes through further discussion.

Members of the liberation movements. The members of the liberation movements may use the results of this study to heighten their awareness on the root causes of the conflict. Since knowing the causes of the conflict is a way to its solution, the members of the movements may appreciate more an atmosphere of peace than an atmosphere of conflict in Mindanao.

Government military forces. The findings of this study may influence the military to be aware of the importance of peaceful negotiations, rather than use military operations to solve the conflict.

Mindanao people, especially the civilians. Any end of the Mindanao conflict is a welcome development by all people in Mindanao; both Christians and Muslims. This study may contribute towards that end.

Peace advocates. This study is a modest contribution towards peaceful solutions to the conflict. For peace advocates, a modest contribution to peace in Mindanao is a welcome development.

Other researchers. Researchers studying the Mindanao conflict resolutions would find the results of this study useful and as a basis for further studies on the peace process.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION:

This research focuses on the following:

The root causes of the liberation movements in Mindanao. The researcher will devote one-half of the research identifying the root causes of the conflict in Mindanao that eventually led to the formation of various liberation movements. These root causes will trace back to the history of the Spanish and American eras to the present government of the Philippines. Looking back to the historical background of four hundred years ago will surely be an enormous task. The researcher, however, will only identify some of the most significant incidents that provide a comprehensive understanding for the readers. For example, the researcher will apportion one chapter for the Sultanate Era in order to establish the fact that Islām was the first religion and civilization that came to the Islands. Further, under the same chapter, the researcher will also discuss Spanish and American colonial government and how those invading powers initiated their invasions and exploited the economy.

Nevertheless, the researcher will not go into detail on how those governments formulated their policies in the Philippines as a whole. With regard to the Filipino Christians, how they responded to the colonial powers and how they successfully gained their independence, it would be another endeavor to research.

Various liberation movements in Mindanao. Upon identifying the root causes of the conflict, the researcher will also give a substantive analysis on how the Moros formed various liberation movements in Mindanao as a response to the neo-colonial government. There are numerous organizations that sprang up since the independence of the Philippines. The researcher, however, will focus only on the four organizations, namely the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and

the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). The reason behind this is that only these four movements appear to have clear objectives for liberating Mindanao from the Philippines. Besides, these movements were the only ones that employed armed-struggle as an instrument to achieve the said objective.

Nevertheless, this research will only tackle the main issues that unite the Moros. For example, the researcher will identify “Islām” or “Islamic state” or “Implementing *Sharī‘ah*” as a main force for the liberation movements in Mindanao. However, the researcher will not go into details on how these four movements interpret “Islām” or “Islamic state” or “Islamic *Sharī‘ah*” and how they are going to implement it should independence or autonomy be achieved. This kind of topic will be undertaken in another study. It is only the intention of this research to establish that the Moros are united for the sake of an “Islamic state”.

Prospect for peace. Towards the end of this study, the researcher will look at the role of the OIC in bringing the Moros and the government into negotiations. However, this research does not address the reasons why some members of the OIC helped the Moros while others did not. We believe such questions should be addressed separately.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is undertaken primarily because it has not been touched upon thoroughly. Though there are some writings about Moros in the region and “rebellion” in Mindanao, the scope of this research will be different.

The following books are considered as comprehensive, relevant and having contributed to this research:

History of the Philippine Islands: From their discovery by Magellan in 1521 to the beginning of the XVII Century; with descriptions of Japan, China and adjacent countries (1907) by Dr. Antonio de Morga (translated by E. H. Blair and J. A. Robertson) is a noteworthy book for two reasons: firstly, the author of the book, Antonio de Morga, was a lawyer, historian and a high-ranking colonial official who participated in decisions and policy making in the Philippines. The author also served as a commander in one of the naval battles that had taken place in the Philippines in 1600. This particular position allowed the author to get access to classified and confidential government documents. Secondly, the book itself is imperative as it is among the first written and published on the early history of Spanish colonization of the Philippines in the 16th century. It illustrates the practical everyday affairs in the Islands and the various policies of the colonial government. It also discusses the political, social and economic levels of life, both among the natives and the conquerors. Furthermore, it touches upon the futility of the Spanish policies in making external expeditions, and its consequent neglect of internal affairs; the great Chinese question; missionary movements from the islands to surrounding countries; and the jealous and envious opposition of the Portuguese. In other words, this book is very important because the author and the sources are both primary.

Nevertheless, Morga's book suffers one major restraint as far as understanding the conflict in Mindanao is concerned. The book is very much inclined towards the Spanish perspective and ignores the Moros' point of view. The discussion involves the colonial government policies but does not discuss how the Moro Sultanates resisted. Further, the book fails to acknowledge that the Moro Sultanates in the southern part of the Islands had been established for centuries – having their own political system, bureaucratic system, economic system, civilization, and cultures – thus any incursion

by external forces would be resisted. The author also fails to analyze in detail how the Moros were sensitive about religious conversion. Due to the fact that the Spanish government wanted to Christianize the Muslim Moros, this resulted into more than a century-old bloodshed.

Muslims in the Philippines (1973) by Cesar Adib Majul is the most authoritative source as far as Islām in the Philippines is concerned. I consider as such because it talks in great detail how those different Arab missionaries came to the Islands of Sulu and Mindanao; how they spread the religion to the other parts of the Islands, including Manila; and how those native inhabitants embraced the religion. The book also talks about how the different localities, headed by different datu, eventually evolved into a bigger Sultanate. Majul was so successful in discussing with great enthusiasm how Sulu and Mindanao were politically independent and how they were both active in trade, both nearby principalities like Borneo and the Malay world, and to such a far distance, like the Arab world, India and China. The resourceful book allocates hundreds of pages discussing the “Moro Wars,” a devastating war between the Moros and the Spanish colonial power for more than three hundred years. It discusses in detail how the two forces used different strategies against each other. Spain, being the invading force, cleverly built garrisons in every strategic place, and exploited the newly-Christianized Filipinos to come to their aid. On the other hand, the Moros, being the victims of invasion, successfully resisted the mighty invaders by stepping up their resistance from merely defensive to an offensive one. They attacked the Spaniards and its allies in their different settlements and their logistic supplies. Lastly, the book gives equal importance in discussing the decline of the Sultanates in the latter part of the 19th century.

However, as the book tackles only about the advent of Islām in the Philippines and how the local inhabitants were subdued, it does not contain any of the other causes of the current liberation movements in Mindanao. All those other causes, like the assertion of the American authority and sovereignty over Mindanao, the short occupation of the Japanese forces in some Muslim areas, and the inclusion of Mindanao to the newly independent Philippines, were not included in the book. The author seemed to presume that other causes would be tackled and discussed by other books and researches.

Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos 1899-1920 (1977) by Peter Gordon Gowing is also a classical book that talks about the root causes of the Mindanao conflict. It is one of the earliest and most valuable works as far as the historical background of the Moros under American rule is concerned. The book is solely devoted to the American era, starting from 1899, when Spain ceded the Philippines to the Americans under the Treaty of Paris, to 1920. The book contains the details of how the American government ran its affairs in the Philippines – ranging from the mandate of the American congress about the presence of American troops in the Islands, to the idea of gradually giving back the affairs of the country to the Filipino people. It also details the American policies towards the Filipino people and the Moros in Sulu and Mindanao. Additionally, the encounters and skirmishes between the American forces and the Moros were discussed thoroughly. Towards the end, the book documents the grievances and concerns of the Moros upon knowing that the American government was about to give full independence to the Philippines with the inclusion of Sulu and Mindanao. It further notes the different ways how the Moro leaders expressed their grievances – some through peaceful means by writing letters to the American President and Congress, and others through their swords and spears.

Lastly, the book thrives on comparing the official policies of the Spanish and the American governments towards the Moros, especially in regards to sensitive issues like religion and cultural institutions. For example, while the Spanish's official policy towards the Moros was to convert them to Christianity, the American official policy was merely to spread secular civilization with emphasis on respecting other religious beliefs. It was for this very reason that the latter comparably succeeded in pacifying the Moros compared to the former.

However, the book has also its own limitation as far as the contemporary liberation movements are concerned. The book – as the title implies – discusses only the presence of the American government in the Islands from 1899 to 1920. The former year represents the beginning of the American presence in the Islands, while the latter year signifies the readiness of the American government to grant independence to the Philippines. Other causes of liberation movements – such as the inclusion of Mindanao in the soon-to-be independent Philippines, the rapid resettlement programs in Mindanao and the various Massacres – were all not discussed. Further, numerous incidents have taken place that gave fresh impetus for the Moros to continuously fight the government.

Muslim Filipinos – Heritage and Horizon (1979) by Peter Gordon Gowing explores two significant points. Firstly, the diversity of the Muslim cultures from different ethnic backgrounds was surveyed. The book distinguishes the distinct cultural backgrounds of the various Moro ethnic groups in the Philippines. It further discusses about the Moro political and social institution, the lifeways and mores, foods, dresses, houses, amusements, pastimes, fiestas, literatures, music, dances, decorations and ornaments, and even industrial arts.

Secondly, the book also compares thoroughly the idea of ‘integration to’ and ‘secession from’ the Philippines. The author convincingly gives analysis and historical facts about the failure of integration and at the same time the futility of the idea of complete secession. According to him, promoting either of the two sides are hazardous to the country because both devotees of each side will be more than willing to sacrifice their lives just to win their cause. As indicated throughout history, the Moros have been sacrificing their lives and everything they have in order to defend their own religion and identity. On the other hand, the Manila government, with the backing of the Christians, will do anything – including wide-ranging civil war – in order to prevent the disintegration and fragmentation of the country. Hence, the author concludes his writing with recommendations on how the two opposing sides can come to an agreement by not invoking complete integration nor complete secession. He suggested that genuine autonomy for the Moros while territorial integrity of the Philippines stays intact could be the viable solution to the conflict.

Nevertheless, these extensive discussions about the Moro cultures and the well-constructed analyses about the “integration to” and “secession from” the Philippines are not sufficient to understand the whole conflict in Mindanao. Other causes of the conflict, most especially the massive resettlement programs in Mindanao that resulted to demographical shift – making the Moros the minority instead of the majority – would be tantamount in understanding the conflict. Further, there were triggering incidents after the post Philippine independence, like the Jabidah Massacre and the ILAGA-related massacres, which invoked the anger of the Moros and eventually led them to form various liberation movements.

Revolt in Mindanao: The Rise of Islam in Philippine Politics (1980) by T. J. S. George is very significant in two ways: Firstly, the book was written by a non-Filipino

author who studied the Mindanao conflict thoroughly. George is an Indian who studies conflicts around the world, including the Philippines. This distinctive merit gives the readers a critical and impartial analysis on how certain conflicts began and how those people sustained their causes despite all the hardships they encountered. Furthermore, this book gave readers a new perspective in understanding the conflict in Mindanao.

Secondly, the book gives credit to the role of Islām and Christianity why both Moros and Filipinos have preserved their identity. The followers of both religions are not homogenous in nature, rather heterogeneous. They come from different ethnic groups and the only factor that unites them is their religion. For example, the Tagalogs, Cebuanos and Ilocanos are three distinct groups in the Philippines, but they are all united under the banner of Christianity. Similarly, the Tausug, Maranaos and Maguindanaos are three distinct principal ethnic groups in Mindanao, but they are also all united under the banner of Islām. In addition to this, the book also gives weight to the two religions why Moros and Filipinos had sustained their long wars against the colonial governments. For the Muslims, they believe that it is their religious duty to resist invasion. Similarly, the Filipino people also believed that fighting an “enemy” is their religious duty. Thus, the book coins the notion of “Prevalence of God”, insinuating that both Muslims and Christians are guided by their respected religion.

Nevertheless, as it was published in 1980, the book does not contain other incidents that took place more than thirty years ago. The development of MILF as the strongest movement in Mindanao, the emergence of the ASG, and the peace process between the government and the MILF that started in 1997 are indeed very significant incidents that need to be studied. Additionally, although the book presents a very

plausible history and background of the conflict, it does not present a critical analysis on how to achieve peace in Mindanao.

The Contemporary Muslim Movement in the Philippines (1985) by Cesar Adib Majul discusses the different Muslim ethnic groups, their languages, cultures and ways of life. Most importantly, the book discusses the reasons why Moros formed various current liberation movements. Muslims perceive themselves as a different nation from the Filipino people. Among those reasons are the imposition of national laws upon the Muslims, the imposition of a national public school system and the government settlement projects in Mindanao. These three reasons are vital issues as far as the Muslims in Mindanao are concerned. Since the coming of Spanish colonization until today, Moros have been consistent in demanding their rights to have Islamic *Shari'ah*, to preserve their own education system and most especially to secure their ancestral land. These three reasons are interrelated and very much attached to the general identity of the Muslims in Mindanao. Upon the diminution of these, there probably wouldn't be what we would call a 'Muslim identity' in Mindanao.

Another essential point in this book is the disclosure of rivalry among Muslim leaders. Supported with evidences, the book reveals that the Muslim leaders are not really free from disagreement over major issues, such as ideology and strategy. For example, during the height of weapon shipments from Libya and Malaysia, Salipada Pendatun and Rashid Luqman, the leaders of the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), had rift with the MNLF chairman Nur Misuari with regard to who should keep the shipments. Each side claimed to be the rightful possessor because of having more followers than the other. Another example is the case of Nur Misuari and Salamat Hashim. It is already public knowledge that Hashim, the then vice-chairman of the MNLF, disagreed with chairman Nur Misuri in terms of ideology