

Human Development, Economic and Social Costs, and Spillovers of Conflict: The Case of the Province of Lanao del Sur

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“The social cost of war, particularly the threat to human security, is greater than its economic cost. In the case of Muslim Mindanao, amidst the rhetorics of government policies and multi-donor interventions on peace and development, the reality is that the war dealt a severe blow right into the core of the Moros’ existence. It has degraded their sense of being and identity, thereby inflicting deep wounds into their body, mind and soul, as a people.”

I. Introduction

The Moro² struggle is not just about a conflict between the Philippine government and Moro rebel groups nor a religious conflict between the Muslims and Christians in Mindanao. Rather it is a complex, deep-rooted and multifaceted one spanning several centuries starting from the Spanish and American colonial times up to the present.

No single cause can sufficiently explain the Moro problem. Despite the many literature on the conflict, much is still to be told, learned and understood regarding the causes and consequences of the conflict that the Moros believe to be their holocaust.

Much of what has been written about the conflict in Mindanao focused mainly on its economic cost and partially on its social cost. Most of these accounts failed to expose the wounds and sufferings that are deeply entrenched in the Moro psyche that continuously shape and influence the Moro’s attitude towards the Philippine government and the rest of the majority Christian Filipinos. Since no respite was given for the wounds to heal, they are continuously aggravated by the protracted war and the elusive peaceful resolution of the problem.

This is one of the main reasons why the various attempts at resolving the conflict by the government either through pacification or military might were considered failure because of their inability to address the problem appropriately. This paper then is an attempt at truth telling - to bring into public consciousness and discourse a more accurate account of what really happened to the Moros, particularly the period from 1970-1992 when hell broke loose in the Provinces of Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Bukidnon and Zamboanga del Sur. Such episode was considered to have started the so-called Muslim-Christian conflict the impact of which became deeply rooted (seemingly have touched base with that part of the Filipino psyche that is related to the centuries-old unresolved colonialists instigated Moro-Indio conflict) and still shape and influence the communal relationship between the two, particularly in relation to the on-going GRP-MILF peace process. My accounting of the incidents that happened within this period may seem to be providing a religious dimension in the conflict and open up wounds that might further polarize the Muslims and the Christians in these areas. However, confronting the reality that the incidents really happened with religious fervor though orchestrated by national and local politicians, I believe is necessary if we want to start the process of closure and healing. The acknowledgement and acceptance of what really happened is for me very crucial in the attainment of genuine and lasting peace in Muslim Mindanao.

The province of Lanao del Sur was chosen as the subject for this case study for several reasons. First is that several writers on the Moro conflict traced the beginning of the present Moro struggle to the rebellion on October 21, 1972 in Marawi City, the capital city of Lanao del Sur,. Second is that the formation of Christian vigilante groups and their attacks on certain Muslim

² The term “Moro” refers to the indigenous people of Southern Philippines who embraced Islam prior to the coming of the Spaniards . The term “Bangsamoro” refers to the Moro homeland.

communities in Mindanao in the second half of 1970 up to the middle part of 1972, just few months before the declaration of Martial Law by former President Marcos, is considered by some as one of the main trigger points in the Moro armed struggle. The people of Lanao del Sur were one of those who suffered intensely from the atrocities brought about by the Ilaga, the most notorious Christian vigilante group at that time, and some units of the military. The trauma of this period still haunts up to this day those who were affected by it. Most of the children of this period who are now already in their 40s or 50s still tremble and break down into tears whenever they are asked to recount the incidents. This particular experience is shared by the Muslims in the municipalities of the then two Cotabato provinces (North Cotabato and South Cotabato), Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon and Zamboanga del Sur. And lastly, I am a child of this conflict and a personal witness to some of these atrocities. As such, I carry the wound within me same as that of the millions of my Moro sisters and brothers. And I can personally say that the rhetorics on peace and development by the government (particularly Executive Order No. 3 “Defining Policy and Administrative Structures For Government’s Comprehensive Peace Efforts”) and the multi-donor community have still a long, long way to go unless a political will is mustered that will sincerely translated these rhetorics into actions.

In order for us to appreciate the impact of the armed conflict in the province of Lanao del Sur, I tried to provide a comparison between the social, economic and political situation of Lanao del Sur and its capital city, Marawi City, in the 60’s, which was before the conflict, and it’s current situation now. However, in the course of the study, it was found out that the impact of armed conflict in the province of Lanao del Sur is largely undocumented. The provincial government and the municipalities affected do not have data on this. Secondary data was then primarily sourced from the library of Dansalan College in Marawi City, from the National Statistics Office (NSO), from the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA), and from the Executive Agenda and Capacity Building Plan of the Province of Lanao del Sur (2001-2004). In addition, interviews were also conducted from certain individuals, M’ranao, Christian and Chinese traders, medical practitioners, students, police and military personnel, MNLF and MILF rebel commanders, government officials, teachers, and displaced and diaspora individuals who recounted their memories of Marawi City before the conflict, during the conflict and the present. Of the other categories not found in the above sources, I made use of some Mindanao and ARMM data and let the reader understand that though the data is not province disaggregated what is reflected there also holds true in Lanao del Sur itself being a part ARMM and a conflict-affected area in Mindanao. I have also made use of the governance situation in the province where I would like the readers to note that the very poor governance condition of the province as reflected by the assessment is a result of the protracted war. The province was created in 1959 and its capital city, Marawi City, was created in 1940, older than its neighboring cities of Iligan and Cagayan de Oro. Prior to 1970, the city was the center of commerce where traders come not only from its neighboring communities but even from Manila and Cebu. We had foreigners residing at the area at that time (Indians, Chinese, Americans). The emergence of the Ilaga, the most notorious Christian vigilante group supported by some units of the military, and the Marawi rebellion in the early 70s seemed to have sucked out the soul of the area. As I have said, I am a child of this conflict and a personal witness to the gradual decaying and death of this once stunning, vibrant and melting pot of diverse cultural community in Mindanao.

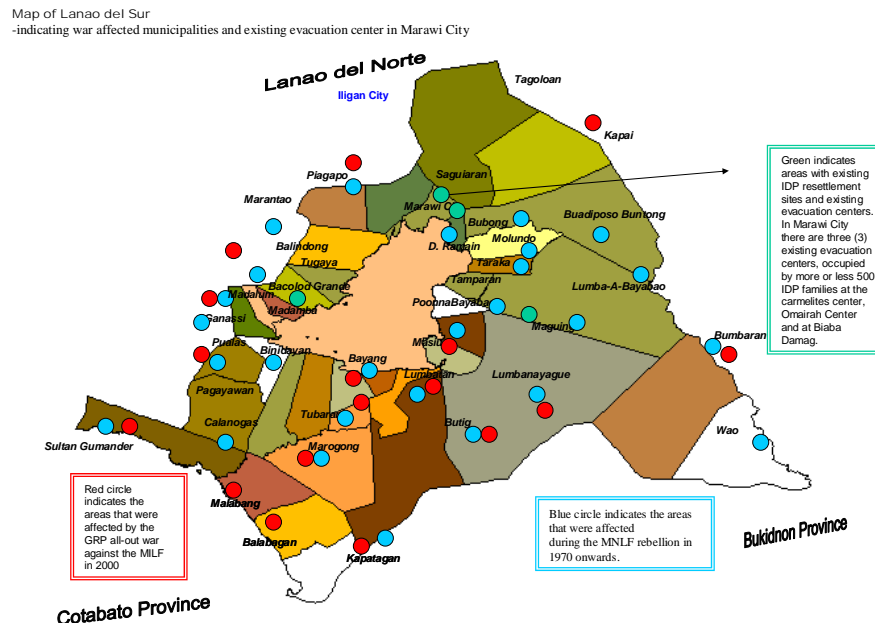
On the social cost, particularly human security aspect of the circa 1970s conflict, I would like also to make it known that I have quoted profusely from the work of Dr. Macapado A. Muslim for a comprehensive, precise and graphic account of the atrocities committed by the Ilaga and some units of the military against the Muslims in the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Cotabato, Bukidnon and Zamboanga del Sur. I did this to provide the readers an appreciation of the kind of wound that was inflicted to the victims, their families, and

communities and why this is considered by some scholars as one of the main factors that triggered the contemporary Moro struggle.

Lastly, I would like to tell the readers that as a participant-observer and a stakeholder in the conflict, I processed the data as objectively as I can. This is no easy job for me because it made me relive the most painful experience of my life. However, it also made me realize that despite all of this, I still have profound reason to celebrate life. And this I see in the resilience of my people, the Moro, to survive against all odds, and the open loving arms of our Christian and non-Moro sisters and brothers who accompany us in our journey towards healing and enduring, everlasting peace.

II. The Province of Lanao del Sur and the City of Marawi

Figure 1. Map of Lanao del Sur Indicating Conflict Affected Areas



A. Brief Description

Lanao comes from the word *ranao*, meaning "lake". Lanao centers around the basin of Lake Lanao: thus, it is the land of the Maranaos, the "people of the lake". Lanao del Sur forms the western portion of the extensive plateau of Northern Mindanao. Adjoining Illana Bay on the southwest are a narrow coastal plain and rolling hills that give way to mountain ranges along the boundary with Cotabato and lowlands going east to the boundary with Bukidnon. Lake Lanao, around which most of the province's towns are located, is the second largest lake in the country. It covers 357 sq kilometers and is 700 meter above the sea level. Agus River is the lake's outlet that flows for 30 kilometer into Iligan Bay. The province has a cool and pleasant climate because of its elevation. Summertime, as it is known elsewhere in the country, is not quite distinct here. Rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year.

When the Spaniards first explored Lanao in 1689, they found a well-settled community named Dansalan at the lake's northern end. Dansalan became a municipality in 1907 and the capital of Lanao in 1914. In 1940, it became a chartered city and was inaugurated as such only in 1950 due to the outbreak of WW II. In 1956, the name Dansalan was changed to Marawi, from the word "ravi", referring to the reclining lilies in the Agus River.

When Lanao was divided into two provinces in 1959, Marawi was made the capital of Lanao del Sur. In 1980, the city was renamed the Islamic City of Marawi. It is now the only chartered city in the country with a predominantly Muslim population. Through a plebiscite held in 1989, Lanao del Sur voted "yes" to join the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao but Marawi voted "no". Under Executive Order dated October 12, 1990, Marawi was placed in Western Mindanao Region

The predominant Muslim population in the province and city are Maranaos who, together with the Maguindanaons and the Tausugs, are the three major Muslim groups in the Philippines. The Maranaos are located mostly around the lake basin and in the interior away from the coast except in the southern part of the province where there are Maranao settlement along the coastal of Malabang to Zamboanga, also from Malabang in the direction of Cotabato. The Maranaos are among the most devout and most traditional of the Muslim groups. They are sensitive to *maratabat*, the controlling factor of their social actions which is intricately linked to family honor and is manifested in the extravagant display of wealth and in exacting violent revenge. They are very conscious of their status; the province boasts of numerous *sultans*.

Maranaos are basically agriculturists, fishers and traders. They also known for their artistry: from artifacts and tools in brass, gold and silver adorned with *okir* (carvings) and *nagas* (serpent figures) to boats, and to mat and malong weavings of brilliant colors. The Maranao dialect is commonly used.

1. Lanao del Sur: Pre-1970 or Martial Law conflict

Lanao has a varied history of interethnic relations. Table 1 shows the population proportions by religions in the Lanao Region from 1918-1975 (Bentley, the evolution: 129).

Table 1 Population proportions by religion, Lanao Region, 1918-1975

Year	Christian	Muslim	Other
1918	7.41%	90.74%	1.85%
1939	32.59%	66.81%	.60%
1948	30.32%	68.97%	.70%
1960	35.86%	63.53%	.61%
1970	37.34%	61.72%	.94%
1975	35.20%	64.25%	.55%

In 1932, Lanao population comprises of *Maranao* 151,150; *Christians* 34,402, *Maguindanaons* 2,772; *Monteseos* (Pagans) 1,386; *Chinese* 185; *Americans* 64; *2 Turks*; *2 Syrians* and 41 others.

The Christian settlers, many whom came from the Visayas and Luzon, were concentrated along the north coast, up Panguil bay, in Dansalan and in Malabang. They are engaged in farming, mercantile business, and saw milling and some are fishing.

There were also sprinkling of foreigners like Americans, Chinese and Japanese. This small minority together with their Christians counterparts controlled much of the economy of the province before the war. (DANSALAN QUARTERLY Vol. III/3 (1982) - Vol. VI, No, 1984)

According to some scholars, Dansalan (Marawi) was the meeting place of Muslims and Christians, thus the old and the new have met. The old in Filipino customs and traditions in their undefiled state and the new western culture brought by Americans and Christian Filipinos. Here the what-once-were hostile enemies (during colonial times) clasped with friendly hands to build up progress.

The City is the distributing center of Maranao goods. On market days, traders from all directions came to display their products at the public market adjacent to beautiful lake Lanao on which painted and decorated Moro boats sail like fluvial parade. The Market Days are sight to visitors and newcomers.

Among those who settled first in the town proper, aside from the natives, were about a dozen Americans, a dozen Chinese, some Japanese, and about 20 Christian Filipinos- some of whom came as early 1903 when captain John J. Pershing captured the Lanao Cotas.

On the eve of its inauguration (June 16, 1956), Dansalan (Marawi) became a city with no sights of kotas and kris-armed juramentados. It is a community of peaceful and progressive Maranao and Christians who are ever ready to welcome and extend hospitality to settlers and visitors who might contribute to the task of building up and make it the Shangri-la of tourism in Moroland (Dansalan: Future Mecca of Tourism- Mamitua Saber, City Secretary)

According to a veteran in 1942, Muslims and Christians lived harmoniously in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City. He recalls that both Muslims and Christians both joined the guerilla to fight against the Japanese imperialism. A Platoon Sergeant in 1972 at the Mindanao State University (MSU) remember that before the declaration of Martial Law, there were night classes in the university and two other colleges in Marawi City. The teachers were mostly Christians coming from Luzon. There were many Christian and Chinese merchants in the city and that the economic activities such as trading and agriculture were good.

The following are some accounts by non-Muslims (Christians and Chinese) of their experience in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City prior to the conflict:

“ The relationship between Muslims and Christians was so close. We coexisted peacefully. Our neighbors were all Maranaos. It did not matter then. We also spoke Maranao. My playmates and friends were all Maranao during my childhood.”

“ I was born in Maguing (a Municipality of Lanao del Sur). All of us seven siblings were born there. We call the “hilot” who helped our mother during her deliveries as *Ina* (Maranao term for mother), the same way we call our mother also as Ina. Then we

transferred to Marawi where we all spent our childhood and adolescence, with Maranao playmates, classmates, and friends”.

“ I remember the girls we grew up with did not wear any veil. We treat each other in the neighborhood like brothers and sisters. The families exchange/ gave each other bowls of soup during meal time ”.

“ Marawi City was very beautiful before, my memories of Marawi is a pretty picture – of colorful big dahlias and daisies. Of big acacia trees whose leaves close in the afternoon”.

“ The Marawi I remembered in my youth was a place where we walk to school – long walks, no tricycle then. But what I enjoyed most are the after school activities I had with my Maranao friends: either we get corn, grill them and eat them right in the corn fields, or we do some swimming by the lake or do fishing. Or we play sipa takraw or volleyball.”

“ I remember very well when I was young, when my friends and I went caroling at night during Christmas to both Christian and Muslim houses and during Ramadhan we also fasted. The same excitement was in the air during Valentines Day. We were not conscious of these two occasions as an exclusive religious practices.”

III. Historical Roots of the Moro Struggle: The Lanao del Sur Context

The Maranaos of Lanao del Sur and Marawi City share the same collective psyche with the rest of the Moros in Mindanao regarding their experience of what they believe as historical injustice or holocaust inflicted on them the Spanish and American colonialists and the Philippine Republic.

A. Pre-Colonial

Scholars of Philippine history are unanimous in their account of the Moro people being the most dominant and advanced groups all over the Philippine archipelago before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers. They dominated both local and international economy, particularly trade, and also possessed the most advanced technology of that period which enabled them to produce surplus and engaged in foreign trades. In politics, they had the most organized and centralized form of government, albeit feudal. The Sultanates as a political organization was already in existence as early as 1450 A.D.

Furthermore, two Bangsamoro “nation-states” already existed before the coming of the colonizers into the archipelago. The Sulu and the Maguindanao Sultanates had, by the time of Spaniard’s arrival, already perfected the requisites of nationhood, namely, territory, people, government and sovereignty. And in the history of the Bangsamoro Sultanate, the Moro citizens included the non-Moro

B. Colonial Period in the Lanao Province

1. Spanish Colonial Period (1567-1898)

The Spanish invasion of the Lanao region started with a recollect mission at Bayug, near present day at Iligan City in 1637. From this location they launched an

invasion of the lake basin in 1639 but when they failed to subjugate the Moros, they retreated and built a fort to block Muslim fighters to the bay of panguil (now Iligan bay) (Majul, 1973:140-142). Because the Spaniards were aided by their Christian Filipino (Indio) allies, the campaign solidified a deadly Muslim Christian antagonism in the region, and established the Christian “indios” as representatives of the colonial invaders.

For two hundred years, the Lanao Muslim kept on resisting the Spaniards even there was a disintegration of Muslim power elsewhere in Mindanao. There was a little interactions across the boundary between the Muslims and Christians groups, and the small number of transactions which did take place were usually facilitated by third parties, normally by the Chinese. The Spaniards finally succeed in building and holding a fort in the lake area only after heavy campaigning in 1851-1895 under Governor General Weyler and Blanco. Even then the Muslim kept the fort under constant desultory siege (Majul, 1973:312-14)

2. American Colonial (1898-1946)

According to Peter Gowing (1977:84), the initial American policies in Lanao closely paralleled those of the late Spanish regime, although American officials were more concerned with impressing the Maranao with their concern for the “personal welfare and material prosperity’ of the indigenes. The policies pursued by the Americans reflected a marriage of objectives, military control and a pacificatory policy of attraction. Along with the military subjugation of the area roads were opened on the coast to entice Maranao in contact with the pacified Christian population (Philippine Commision, 1901:36). While administrative separation of the Muslim and Christian spheres was maintained, the territorial boundary between the two groups was breached.

3. Commonwealth Government

Among the Muslim in the Philippines, The Maranaos were the most critical of the commonwealth government. They complained of the government’s emphasis on the development of Mindanao for the benefit of the country. They also complained of officials assigned in the province who had no experience with or sufficient knowledge of Maranao culture. They likewise opposed the Military Training Act which required of each province a quota of young men to undergo military training outside of their province, especially if they had to serve under Christian Filipino officers, Moreover, they were hostile to the government campaigns to collect taxes, and many were indifferent to the incentives given in order to increase school attendance. The increasing number of Christian settlers who farmed their traditional lands, held offices, and dominated the educational system infuriated the Maranao who felt their ancient legacies were being undermined. As a result of the dissatisfaction, several confrontations with government forces occurred. Those refused to abide by the new laws sought sanctuary in cottas, and the constabulary had to be sent to flush them out. (Dansalan Quarterly Vol. III/3 (1982); Vol. VI, 1984)

The most dramatic and crucial impact, however, of the colonization and settlement of Christian settlers in Mindanao was the political and economic dislocation of the Muslims. The commonwealth period up to the post-war witnessed the influx of thousands of migrant’s families especially in the Cotabato and Lanao areas. The Kapatagan basin in the western part of what is today Lanao Del Norte is a case point. In

1941, the number of Christian families increased to 8,000; and by 1960 there were some 93, 0000 Christians- some of whom come under the EDCOR. The growth of Christian population in this part of Lanao greatly outnumbered the 7,000 Maranaos still living in the area, resulting to the political division of the Lanao Province into two provinces (Lanao del Norte predominantly Christians, and Lanao del Sur by Muslims) in 1959. The Maranao found themselves a minority in the areas which they were once a majority. (See table 2 below)

Table 2. Populations Proportions in the Lanao Regions, by year, sub region, and religious classifications

	1918	1939	1960	1970	1975
Iligan Coast					
Muslims	64.2%	17.5%	6.9%	5.9%	1.1%
Christians	35.1%	81.6%	91.6%	91.8%	98.5%
Others	.7%	.8%	1.5%	2.3%	.4%
Lanao Plateau					
Muslims	97.4	95.3	98.4	96.2	98.3
Christians	1.8	4.6	1.6	3.7	1.3
Others	.9	.1	.6	.2.3	.4
Ilana Coast					
Muslims	82.4	78.0	61.6	63.1	70.3
Christians	14.6	21.3	37.7	36.4	28.0
Others	3.0	.7	.6	.5	1.7
Intermediate Zones					
Muslims	93.8	71.9	59.8	67.4	76.3
Christians	.3	26.2	39.4	31.8	22.9
Others	5.9	1.9	.8	.9	.8

The table shows that in some part of Iligan Coast, Ilana and in Intermediate zone, Muslim population decreases while Christian population increases.

4. Philippine Republic (1946-1980)

This particular period marked the significant point in the resettlement of Mindanao, particularly in the Cotabato and Lanao areas. While the influx of Christian settlers to Mindanao were coming a thousands even during the commonwealth era, it was during the post war decade that the dramatic influx of thousands of migrant affected large part of Muslim areas in Cotabato and lanao.

The Muslim Mindanao resented the loss of their lands, including those which had gone unused but which formed part of their traditional community. This resentment grew as Muslims increasingly witnessed the usurpation and occupation by Christian's settlers of vast tract of prime lands. The Muslim also realized the prospect that at the rate their traditional communities are being settled in by outsiders, soon they will have no sufficient space for their descendants.

Against the backdrop of the migrations and settlement of Mindanao through the initiatives of the Spaniards, Americans and Filipinos as well, the Muslims indeed

gradually lost what was otherwise their lands which they communally-owned. Moreover, their neighborhood relations with the Christians Filipinos renewed historical enmity between the two groups. The alienation of Muslim lands ignited disputes between them and the Christians settlers. The question on land ownership and land disputes between Muslims and Christians were crucial during the post-war period. Journalists T.J.S George describes the intensity of such disputes, thus:

..Virtually every incident sprouted from land disputes, religions only lending intensity to them. After migration gained momentum, the disputes multiplied in thousand. In one month in 1962, commission on National Integration listed cases involving 20,000 hectares valued at P20 million...More often than not, these cases went against Muslim as they were decided under Philippine laws. (Dansalan Quarterly Vol. III/3 (1982); Vol. VI, 1984)

5. World War II and the Pre-Martial Law Republic

The Japanese invasion of the Philippines in December 1941 disrupted the existing balance of power, interest, and alliance in Lanao. With the surrender of Filipino - American forces in Mindanao on May 10, 1942, the structure of accommodation and governance built during the American and commonwealth regime ceased to exist. Moreover, the Japanese were unsuccessful in establishing an effective alternative system of governance (Thomas, 1971:292; 1977). Disorder was also encouraged by the arming of dissident Maranao with American captured arms in the hope that they could inflict damage on the Japanese's occupation forces. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities the constabulary had successfully argued against arming the Maranao, but after the war broke out pacification was abandoned in the interest of mobilizing the Maranao military in pursuit of tactical objectives.

With the breakdown in civil authority and the rapid rearmament of the Maranao, interethnic incidents began to occur. However, it is hard to estimate the degree to which Muslim-Christian encounters at this time. They were a random component of general disorder. Immediately after the cessation of civil government in Lanao the equilibrium world church (Moncado) colony in Dansalan (Marawi today) was looted (NM, interview 20 March 1979). At the same time, however, numerous Americans and Christians Filipinos were aided in their escape, and hidden for long periods of time by sympathetic Maranaos (Kuder, 1943 quoted in Thomas, 1971; LS, interview, 26 March 1979). On the side of violence, it was reported that interethnic violence significantly increased. In the absence of authority, bands of outlaws and hill Maranao struck isolated communities of Christian settlers around Malabang, in the Kapatagan Valley, and on the north coast. They killed many, looted their properties, and carried off men, women, and children to be used as slaves. These lawless elements also kidnapped some Moros and pagans from as far as Pagadian (Thomas, 1971:292-93).

In response to the raids, Christian settlers moved to larger settlements and organized home guards. Foreshadowing its subsequent proclivities, the constabulary responded to Maranao raids in kind, "killing, raping, and kidnapping in several lowland Maranao communities in the Kapatagan Valley" (Thomas, 1971:293). However, it should not be assumed from these events that the majority of the violence was interethnic. Fighting as often involved competing Maranao factions, and Christians were aided more often than victimized by Maranaos.

If the Japanese occupation signaled reemergence of interethnic violence, it also occasioned cooperation among Christian and Muslim in opposition to the Japanese. Christian and Muslim both served as officers and troops in joint guerilla units operated in parallel, rather than emerging, the theme was cooperation against the common Japanese enemy.

C. Contemporary: Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

According to Dr. Macapado A. Muslim, there are three major events which many believed to have triggered the Bangsamoro armed struggle and further aggravated the marginalization, impoverishment and unrest that characterized the Muslim communities in the 1960s. These events are the following:

1. The so-called Jabidah or Corregidor massacre on March 17, 1968.

This involved the merciless killing of at least 28 young Muslim recruits in the Philippine Army (PA) by their Christian superiors in the island of Corregidor. This incident caused much furor at the local, national and international levels. Malaysia saw the incident as an indication of the strong determination of the Philippine government to annex the state of Sabah, over which the Marcos' predecessor ex- President Diosdado Macapagal, filed a claim in 1962. (According to some reports, this was the reason why Malaysia allegedly supported the training and formation of the MNLF).

The Moros, were most outraged by the incident, especially their leaders and the increasingly intellectualized youth sector. This led to the formation of several groups aimed at protecting and advancing the Moro interests. Among the politically awakened Moro youth, especially those at the universities in Metro Manila such as Nur Misuari, the incident became a watershed in their political careers, which led later on to the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). To many Moros, the acquittal of all the accused military officers involved in the massacre was an additional sign of the government's low regard for Muslim lives.

2. The subsequent series of massacres of Muslims and the burning of their homes and mosques by Christian armed groups, particularly the Ilaga, and by some units of the military.

The Ilaga, the most notorious among the Christian vigilante groups, was reported to have been organized by seven local Christian politicians ("Magnificent Seven") who were bent upon preserving their respective power and expanding them further by infiltrating and dominating areas traditionally controlled by Muslims. It was reported also that the Ilaga was supported by some influential Christian capitalists and logging magnates. The Ilaga group was the most feared to many Muslims primarily because of what its members did to their victims, like carving out ears, slashing nipples, plucking out eyes, and marking bodies with cross.

Ilaga atrocities against the Muslims started in the second half of 1970 up to the middle part of 1972. It started in the various Muslim villages in the municipalities of the then two Cotabato provinces (North Cotabato and South Cotabato), then to the province of Lanao del Sur, particularly the municipalities of the then two Cotabato provinces

(North Cotabato and South Cotabato), then to the province of Lanao del Sur, particularly the municipality of Wao, one of the centers of Christian Filipino migration, and then spread to several Muslim towns in Lanao del Norte , Bukidnon and Zamboanga del Sur. For a period of two years, practically all the Muslim areas in Mindanao were under siege by the Ilaga.

Ilaga atrocities include the massacre of seventy (70) Muslims and wounding of seventeen others inside a mosque and a nearby school in the barrio of Manili in Carmen, North Cotabato on June 19, 1971. There were several more incidents like the Manili massacre, many of which were not reported and for which the government did not do anything to stop the atrocities nor arrest the perpetrators. This indifference of the government to the massacres led many Muslims (including some officials in the government) to believe that the military was involved. In fact, many Muslims believed that the Ilaga members were actually government soldiers made to appear as Christian civilian armed elements.

Occurring simultaneously with the reported Ilaga atrocities until the middle part of 1972 were the series of massacres of Muslims reportedly by units of the Philippine Constabulary (PC) and the Philippine Army(PA). The incidents of this category were comparable to those incidents blamed against the Ilaga in terms of number of persons killed and the brutalities involved. They also happened in many areas where the Ilaga operated like the Muslim towns in Cotabato and Lanao del Norte. These include the massacre of some 73 Muslims by the PC soldiers in the Municipality of Alamada, North Cotabato on January 19, 1971; and the massacre of some 37 Muslims by PA soldiers in Barrio Tacub, Municipality of Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte on November 22,1971. In the second incident also, some 22 Muslims were wounded, and another 140 were reported missing.

However, like the Ilaga atrocities and the Jabidah massacre, the Philippine government did nothing to give the victims' relatives the justice they deserve by giving the uniformed culprits the penalties prescribed by the law.

These atrocities against the Muslims by the Ilaga and the military had converted several Muslim areas as "killing fields," while the rest as evacuation centers. Naturally the Muslims in these areas and those of the neighboring towns were forced to leave their farms and homes, many of which were subsequently looted and occupied by Christians.

In a memorandum submitted by the Muslim lawyer-delegates to the 1971 Philippine Constitutional Convention contained a graphic presentation of vacated Muslim areas occupied or to be occupied by incoming Christian settlers:

- a. BAGUMBAYAN – The Muslims in this town are totally displaced by Christians. Muslim evacuated to Maganoy and Datu Piang municipalities. Their houses and mosques were burned and effects looted.
- b. AMPATUAN AND ISULAN – Muslims in these municipalities have been driven either to Buluan, Maganoy or Datu Piang; their houses and mosques burned and effects looted.

- c. ALAMADA – Muslims were driven to neighboring towns of Buldon, Sultan Kudarat and some to Lanao del Sur; their houses and mosques burned and effects looted.
- d. COLOMBIO – Muslims were driven to Alep and Buluan, their houses, mosques and effects meeting the same fate.
- e. UPI – Muslims were driven to the poblacion, to Cotabato City and Dinaig; houses, mosques and effects meeting the same fate.
- f. PALEMBANG – Muslims were driven to Lebak, Cotabato City, Sultan Kudarat and Parang, their houses and mosques burned and effects looted.
- g. LANA DEL SUR – Muslims in Wao municipality were driven to the interior of Lanao del Sur, their houses burned and effects looted.
- h. LANA DEL NORTE – All Muslims along the national highway from one end to the other, a distance of over 100 kilometers were driven to the interior of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur, their houses and mosques burned and their effects looted.
- i. ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR – All Muslims living in several municipalities along the National Highway and in several small villages along the seacoast were driven to Basilan and Sulu islands, their houses and mosques burned and effects looted.
- j. BUKIDNON – All Muslims living in several municipalities in Bukidnon were driven to Lanao del Sur, their houses and mosques burned and their effects looted.

The above discussed Ilaga and military atrocities against the Muslims had a strong radicalizing effect on the Moro masses than the Jabidah massacre. This time, some form of mass mobilization among the various sectors of the Moro society occurred, including those Muslim areas where the Ilaga had not operated, like Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi. This was due to the fact that practically almost all Muslim areas felt the intensity of the incidents. Even the Muslim residents in areas outside the centers of atrocities felt the gravity of the situation as thousands and thousands of evacuees flooded their areas. Many of the evacuees have not returned to their respective communities until now for various reasons, which include the occupation of their lands by some Christian individuals and companies and certainly, fear for their lives.

The unabated atrocities against Muslim communities and the Muslims' realization that the government was doing nothing to stop them when it had the capability to do so led the Muslims to start making preparations to defend their respective communities. And as more and more atrocities plagued the Muslim areas in 1971 (especially in the few months preceding the November 1971 election), then village-level self-defense units started to develop spontaneously in many areas, especially in Mainland Mindanao where the Ilaga depredations were spreading.

Indicative of how the brutalities of the Ilaga and military attacks against the Muslims emotionally touched many Muslims was the case of an interviewee of Dr.

Muslim in Cotabato. He traced the beginning of his involvement in the contemporary struggle to the massacre of some 70 Muslims in Manili, Carmen, North Cotabato on June 19, 1971. He was then a government employee. When he heard of the incident, he went to the area where he saw the dead bodies of the victims, mostly old men, women, and children. But he related that what touched him most was when he saw a little girl who was among the few who survived sucking the breast of her dead mother. He was so emotionally moved that right there, he made the decision that he would help in the fight against the Ilaga and the government. So that after helping in hauling the dead bodies, before going home, he passed by the public market and bought big quantities of rice, salt and other basic food items which he thought would be enough for the needs of his family (including some small children) for some time since he would have to be out of home. When he returned, he organized some of his able-bodied relatives and that started his engagement with the movement. He and his relatives were among the small and isolated armed groups that gave resistance to the Ilaga and the military in Cotabato in the pre-martial law period. And as the violence escalated into a large-scale war after the declaration of martial law, he joined the then fledging MNLF which grew out of some of the small, isolated and uncoordinated armed groups. Until now, he is a mujahideen.

But it must be noted that this mujahideen did not have relatives among the the Manili massacre victims. But if he was moved, how much more for the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and fathers of the victims. The same can be expected of the relatives of the thousands of victims in other similar incidents. And the compunction to join the movement was certainly greater to the survivors of some of the said depredations, but had lost some of their ears, eyes, arms and feet. This is one reason why the MNLF did not find difficulty in recruiting men and women when it began to assume leadership of the Moro resistance.

3. Another factor believed by many to have triggered the Moro struggle is the declaration of Martial Law on September 21, 1972.

Accompanying the enforcement of Martial Law was the crackdown on so-called “subversive” elements like the communists and Moro secessionists. Another thrust of the Martial Law government then was the confiscation of firearms in civilian hands that the military tried to enforce to the hilt, especially in the Muslim areas.

Already extremely terrified by their experiences with the Ilaga and some units of the military for two years and the further threats made by the Ilagas that they would continue their atrocities even to the areas they had not then reached like Sulu, the news about the declaration of Martial Law was certainly daunting to many Muslims. To make the Muslims surrender their guns at the time when many of them had developed the fear of a possible plan for their collective extermination and at the time when the very military that they had increasingly distrusted or suspected would assume control of major aspects of public governance in their areas was certainly unthinkable.

But being civilians not authorized to carry firearms, by definition they were outlaws who should be subjected to the heavy hands of the law. The closing of legal avenues or channels for expressing dissent and grievances had led many Muslims (including student leaders) involved in articulating the interests of the Muslims to go underground.

An incident that many scholars thought to have been unleashed by the declaration of Martial Law was the so-called rebellion in Marawi City on October 21, 1972 where Muslim armed groups attacked the PC headquarters at Camp Kiethley in Marawi and the PC detachment in the neighboring municipality of Saguiaran. Also, an allied group of students took over the government-owned radio station at the main campus of Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi where some of them appealed to the people for support for their revolution. Several writers on the Moro conflict traced the beginning of the present Moro armed struggle to this incident.

The violence brought by the Martial Law regime polarized the region, with Marawi and Iligan staging a mutual boycott, and mass migrations of refugees fleeing from areas where they were in the minority had swelled the populations of both the major Lanao cities. The “pocket rebellion” as it has come to be called, finished the job of polarizing the Lanao regions. Ethnic population shifts can be seen by comparing the figures for 1970 and 1975 in Table 2. Since that time, ethnic conflict has been constant.

A Christian Platoon Sergeant in MSU in 1972 has this to say about the conflict:

“ The division of Lanao into two province is one of the reasons why the Lanao conflict arose. The Black Shirts was formed (a Moro rebel group), and the Ilaga (Christian vigilante group) and the Barracuda (Muslim vigilante group) were organized by two political leaders, the Quibranza (for the Ilaga) and the Dimaporo (for the Barracuda). Two opposite culture and intentions intensified the conflict and proliferated the gap between Maranaos and Christians. This is one of the reasons why Martial Law was declared. In Marawi, non-Muslims like the Christians and the Chinese businessmen sold their properties and vacated the city because they were afraid of the retaliation of Muslims that were affected by the conflict.”

Contrary to the popular belief that the Moros are savages, headhunters and warlike, they, like most human beings, are generally averse to the use of violence and to war. Certainly they do not like the current war in Mindanao.

One explanation is the fact their cherished faith – Islam – prohibits all forms of violence and war. The only instance that Islam allows resort to use of violence is for self-defense, i.e., when subjected to intolerable oppression. A second is their awareness of the adverse costs of war to themselves. A third explanation lies in the ties of friendship that many of them have with many Christian Filipinos.

This aversion to violence and war was demonstrated by the persistent emphasis of several Moro leaders on the use of peaceful methods of protest in articulating Muslim interests and grievances before the war began. Despite many previous experiences where they were not given the justice they thought they deserve as in the Jabidah massacre, Moro leaders still persisted in their undying adherence to the rule of law. As more atrocities afflicted Muslim communities beginning in 1970, Muslim political and youth leaders held peaceful rallies and demonstrations, and submitted position papers and manifestos urging the government to stop the atrocities.

One of these is the manifesto signed by Muslim political leaders (including those in the then ruling party and the opposition), religious leaders, youth leaders, academicians

and professionals in their meeting on July 21, 1971 where they discussed the then worsening plight of the Muslim Filipinos due principally to the Ilaga depredations. In this manifesto where they also declared their unity, Muslim leaders urged those individuals involved in the Ilaga group to stop their depredations against Muslims; and asked the Christian religious hierarchies and their followers to help stop the turmoil to prevent the disintegration of the nation. They stated:

If the government shall fail or refuse to perform its fundamental duty to give equal protection to all citizens, whether Muslim or Christian, if it fails to stop the criminal depredations in Muslim areas that are brazenly and openly committed with the very presence of the military and if we shall not get justice for our people thru peaceful and legal means – we hereby pledge today before God, that despite our personal and political positions, we shall do our utmost to preserve our community and land. Toward this end, we are willing and ready to sacrifice our worldly possessions and even our lives as our forebears have done before us in defense of freedom and Islam.

One important thing that must be noted about this manifesto is the fact that the signatories cut across the various sectors of the Moro society, including some political rivals. And interestingly, one of them is the incumbent Chairman of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, who was then an instructor at the University of the Philippines. But throughout the meeting, there was never a talk about secession!

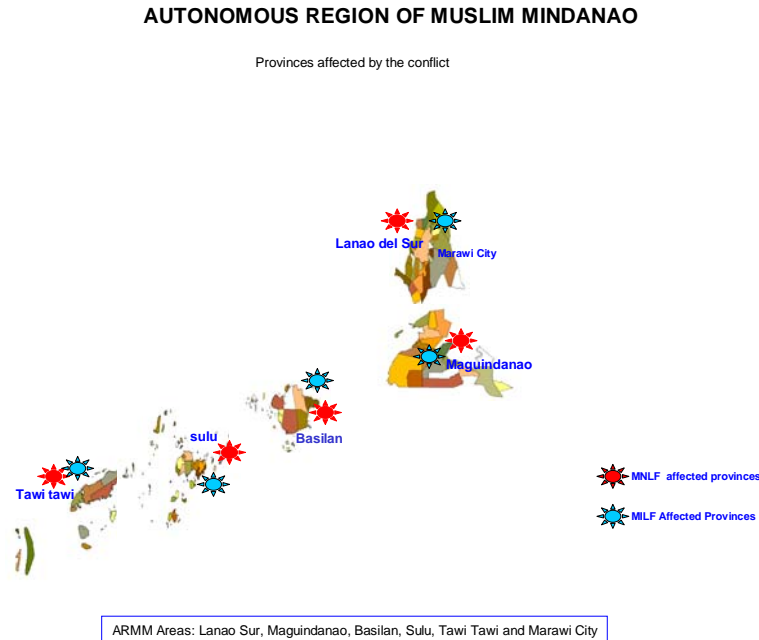
Like the manifestoes, position papers and protest rallies and demonstration by Muslim individuals and groups in the past, this manifesto fell on deaf ears. In fact, it was reported that some of the government officials who were among the signatories were scolded by President Marcos.

The Philippine initiated several “peace-making” efforts to address the Bangsamoro problem. Pres. Ferdinand Marcos signed the Tripoli Agreement in December 1976. In August 1989, Pres. Cory Aquino signed into law Republic Act 6734 (Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao). In September 2, 1996, Pres. Fidel Ramos and MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari signed the Final Agreement between the GRP and the MNLF.

However, despite the “granting” of “political independence” to the Bangsamoro, their struggle still persisted for such “political independence” did not bring about a genuine social transformation responsive to the needs of the Bangsamoro people. In 1977, a breakaway group from the MNLF, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was formed under the leadership of Salamat Hashim. The MILF refused to accept the political settlement embedded in the GRP-MNLF final Peace Agreement and continue to wage war against the Philippine government up to the present.

IV. Human Development, Social and Economic Costs of Conflict in the ARMM

Figure 2. Map of Conflict Affected Areas in the ARMM



A. GRP-MNLF Conflict

According to the former Presidential Adviser on the Peace process (OPAPP) Eduardo Ermita, citing data from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, more than 100,000 persons were killed in Mindanao over a period of 26 years since 1970. Thirty percent of this is government casualties, 50 percent rebels and 20 percent civilians. He further said that 55,000 persons were injured, not counting those from the rebel side and that from 1970 to 1976 alone, an average of 18 people were killed everyday. For the period of 26 years, the AFP spent P73 billion or an average of 40 percent of its annual budget.

B. GRP-MILF

Between 1992-1996, the government spent no less than P60 million in negotiating peace with the MILF. This is according to Rudy Rodil, a former member of the government peace panel.

Former National Security Roilo Golez said that at least P6 million was spent on the 2000 “all-out-war” waged by the Estrada administration against the MILF, a billion peso higher than what the government spends on building schools nationwide. In the same year, the cost of 105 mm howitzer was P7,300 according to an official of the Army’s 6th Infantry Division in Maguindanao.

According to a UNICEF estimate, the cost of a table and chair for Grades 1 and 2 students is P200 each. According to Fr. Robert Layson, a parish priest in Pikit town in North Cotabato, the military have fired at least a hundred howitzers towards Buliok from February-March, 2003. The hundred howitzers cost P730, 000 in the year 2000. This amount is equivalent to 1,123 bags of certified rice seeds at P650 per bag.

The damage to agriculture in the conflict-affected areas has reached P46.18M according to former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo. The local government units asked for immediate rehabilitation intervention amounting to P30.68 million.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman said that the military siege of Buliok in February cost the government P16 million for relief assistance to evacuees. Again, based on UNICEF's estimate, the P16 million can provide measles vaccines to immunize 2.228 million children or provide multi-level workbooks for 320,000 pupils in a multi-grade level class, which they can use for Grades 1-6.

In April, 2002, Paul Dominguez, the then Presidential Assistant for Regional Development, quoting from a "very preliminary" findings from a then ongoing World Bank Study, said that "the present value of the economic cost of a never-ending conflict would be at least US \$ 2 billion over the next ten years." If this amount is to be computed at P54 to a US dollar, this would be a staggering P108 billion for ten years or P10.8 billion a year, or P900 million a month or P30 million a day.

According to reports, the military offensive in Pikit, North Cotabato in February, 2003 happened when Mindanao's economy was just starting to recover from the "all-out-war" of former Pres. Estrada and when many conflict-affected communities in South and Central Mindanao were still awaiting for the supposed "post-2000 war" rehabilitation. The war came not only at a time of uncertainty worldwide because of the impending war in Iraq, but also came just as Mindanao's share in the national budget has dropped to a measly 10.55 percent.

The national budget, after the 2000 war, rose from P725 billion in 2001 to P780.79 billion in 2002 and P804.2 billion in 2003. But Mindanao's share continued to drop from P100.7 billion or 13.90 percent of the national budget in 2001 to P92.93 billion or 11.90 percent in 2002 and further down to P84.86 billion or 10.55 percent of the national budget in 2003.

In a 2003 study by World Bank it showed that the Philippine GDP against Mindanao's GRDP (Gross Regional Domestic Product) from 1981 to 2000, the index of conflict intensity in Southwestern Mindanao, where 75% of the population are Muslims, from 1968-2000; the gross value added in agriculture and how rice production in other parts of the country doubled in metric tons between 1970 and 1999 but did not in Southwestern Mindanao.

The study also showed the economic cost of the conflict in Southwestern Mindanao from 1970 to 1982, where the economic cost of the conflict was an average of 1% of the per capita GDP; from 1997 to 2001, the average of 0.5% For the same period in 1970 to 1982, the economic cost of the conflict to the Philippines was an average of 0.4 of 1% of the per capita GDP; and from 1997 to 2001, the average of 0.20 of 1% of the growth rate of per capita GDP.

The “hidden costs” of the conflict were also cited in the study among which are: that profits made from investments in Southern Mindanao “have been reinvested or spent in other areas, or even abroad;” that defense budgets have been reallocated towards mobilization to address the conflicts instead of modernization; and social services have been interrupted repeatedly due to violence”.

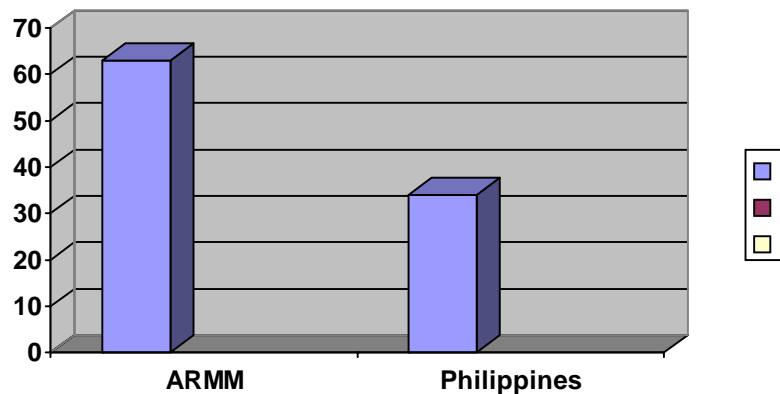
According to Carolyn Arguilas of MindaNews, while the economists worry over the cost of conflict in terms of pesos and dollars, the cost of war that has been ignored which is immeasurable has been largely ignored. This refers to the effects of the cultural and structural violence spawned by the many wars in Mindanao, which cannot be measured by assessing physical damage, death and destruction alone.

C. Factors Contributing to the HD Lags in the ARMM

According to the World Bank Report (2003), three critical factors can be considered as the major antecedents why ARMM lags behind the rest of the country in terms of the human development index: **extreme poverty, conflict and historical disadvantage**.

Figure 3 below portrays the disparity in terms of poverty level between ARMM, in particular and the whole country, in general.

Figure 3. Incidence of poverty, by population 2000 (%)



The long history of conflict among Muslim communities has put considerable strain on the delivery of basic social services, such as health, education, and social services.

Moreover, religious and cultural differences as well as their long standing struggle for self-determination has put the various Muslim groups in precarious situation vis-à-vis the rest of the country. Centuries of neglect by the government have left the Muslims suffering in multiple disadvantages; leaving behind scars that are too deep to be easily forgotten.

It is the interplay of these factors that markedly placed the Bangsa Moro at the pits when compared with the rest of the other 15 regions along the various indicators of human development.

1. Consolidated Public Sector Expenditures for HD

Data from various sources indicate that government expenditures were at its minimum in the ARMM. Specifically, the World Bank accounted that per capita public spending for ARMM is placed only at two-thirds with that of the rest of the country.

Table 3. Consolidated public sector expenditures in human development in ARMM and non-ARMM areas, 2001 PhP millions)

	Education	Health	Social Welfare	Total	Share of total human dev't	Per Capita Expenditure
ARMM Areas						
Nat'l Govt Line Depts	0	0	88.1	88.1	2.6	36.52
ARMM Reg'l Gov't	2,755.30	404.4	63.4	3,223.10	95.9	1,336.19
LGUs	7.7	20.8	21	49.5	1.5	20.52
Total	2,763.00	425.2	172.5	3,360.70	100.0	1,393.23
Per Capita Expenditure (PhP)	1,145.45	176.26	71.52	1,393.23		
Non-ARMM Areas						
Nat'l Govt Line Depts	97,580.30	8,304	1,973.70	107,858.00	71.1	1,455.84
LGUs	15,495.10	23,348.60	43,844.00	43,844.00	28.9	591.79
Total	113,075.40	31,652.60	151,702.00	151,702.00	100.0	2,047.63
Per Capita Expenditure (PhP)	1,526.26	427.24	2,047.63	2,047.63		

Source: WB (2003) Human Development for Peace and Prosperity in Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The World Bank Group.

Sadly, such inequitable allocation and distribution of funds results to dismal state of affairs, particularly in terms of health, education and social protection services. When the amount available for government spending is just barely enough to pay for personal services (salaries and wages of personnel) in the respective government offices, consequently there is nothing much left to meaningfully finance programs or projects to help improve quality of life in the region.

To emphasize such situation, Table 2 below presents various indicators of human development contrasting ARMM data with that of the whole country.

Table 4. Indicators of human development in ARMM

Indicators	ARMM	Philippines	Rank among 16 Regions ^a
Incidence of poverty by population, 2000 (%)	62.9	34.0	16
Average household income, 2000 (PhP)	81,519	144,039	15
Life expectancy among women, 2000 (years)	59.3	71.6	15 ^b
Life expectancy among men, 2000 (years)	55.5	66.3	15 ^b
Maternal mortality, 1995 (per 100,000 live births)	320	180	15 ^b

Infant mortality, 1995 (per 1000 births)	63	49	14 ^b
Net enrolment rate in primary education, 2001 (%)	82.0	96.4	15 ^b
Net enrolment rate in secondary education, 2001 (%)	39.2	72.2	15 ^b

- a. A rank of 1 indicates the most desirable outcome
- b. Shows rank among 15 regions; no available for Region XIII

Source: World Bank (2003) Human Development for Peace and Prosperity in Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The World Bank Group.

a. The Health System

The health situation in the ARMM is the worst in the entire country. We are in the 21st century, yet the health indicators in the region depicts where the other regions were half a century ago. Simply said, health statistics in the region in terms of access to medicines and medical care, utilization of health services, availability of doctors and nurses and other health care personnel lags far behind the rest of the country.

Ironically, because of poverty, people from the grassroots particularly peasant women and children, often easily get sick due to malnutrition and vulnerability to communicable diseases. Yet the health sector cannot be responsive to their needs because of lack of funds, lack of personnel, or simply unavailability of facilities in the area. In Lanao del Sur alone, many municipalities do not have a Rural Health Unit (RHU). Thus, it is easy to surmise that, unlike in non-Muslim areas where public health care services are normally available and accessible, majority of the Muslims do not have access to free immunization, nutritional supplements, and maternal and/or prenatal care as well as family planning services.

Majority of the Muslims have to contend with traditional healing practices which to some extent are quite effective in dealing with some ailments but often insufficient to treat more serious cases of ill-health and disease.

In terms of life expectancy, both women and men in ARMM seem to die younger compared to other men in the other areas of the country, by approximately 12 and 11 years, respectively. Such a staggering life span differences alone can bring us to all unimaginable strains and stress our people have to go through in their lives.

b. The Educational System

With free elementary education offered in the public schools all over the country, the children from Muslim communities have the chance to enter school. In terms of enrolment trends, the gap from the rest of the regions in the country is not so wide. However, it is apparently noted that in terms of cohorts, there is difficulty for the Muslim youth to staying longer in school. Only very few of those who entered Grade 1 can expect to graduate in the elementary, much less to continue in high school.

Recent data from the Department of Education as presented during the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) Membership Meeting at the Marco Polo in Davao City last October 22, 2004 reveal that only 1 out of 10 children who enrolled in Grade 1 gets to complete high school. Growing up in a poor family, with no resources, and not much financial capacity to support school-related expenses, even with free tuition, amidst conflict situation, the odds of graduating in secondary school is simply against the Muslim youth.

Armed conflict has forced many families to flee from their homes and evacuate. Such displacements further aggravate difficulties in getting education for the children in the conflict-affected areas. Their families have to worry about safety and daily needs that schooling is relegated to the background. For those who managed to continue do so under extreme challenging conditions: poor learning environment where school, classroom and laboratory facilities, if at all available, are often below standard, where teachers also cannot focus on their teaching activities due to fear of their own safety and that of their own families. The students lack uniforms, have no shoes, no money for school supplies, worse, sometimes food is so little or worse, sometimes not available on time.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that many young Muslims marry young. They are out of school, not much prospect to wait for, either in terms of schooling or employment opportunities. So they get married earlier compared to their non-Muslim counterparts. Young and lacking the life skills, they begin the journey for intergenerational poverty (Berowa, 1996).

V. Impact of Conflict on Lanao del Sur and Marawi City

A. On the People

The following were some accounts of Christians about the Martial Law conflict in Lanao del Sur:

“I could remember the fear in my mother’s eyes. She wanted us to leave right away. My father assured her that our neighbors promised to help and keep us safe”.

“ There were horrendous stories of fighting and killings. Many people already evacuated. Then our Maranao friends told us we had to leave for our own safety. They could not give us any assurance. Things were not normal anymore”.

“ There were bombing, attacks. We could not sleep peacefully at night. Big buildings were destroyed. I saw the flames at night. I can still remember how we trembled at the sound of mortar. We dug foxhole under the house and slept there at night. Then things became difficult. We had to leave “.

“ We left because business was bad anyway. We felt so unsafe and insecure. They burned many houses and buildings”.

“ It seems all those years of being so close together suddenly turned to mistrust, and hatred. It was explained to us that it was no longer safe to stay”.

“ Endless threats, insecurity. So unsafe for Christians to stay at that time”.

“I could still remember during the Martial Law years the dead bodies of men floating at Barra Riverside who were victims of salvage cases. Those salvage victims both came from the Muslim and Christian groups. The whole family has also experienced living in Jolo and the Tausugs are as good as the Maranaos. It was the government side of which we have bitter experience especially when our “lantsa” or fishing boat was bombarded with gunshots because it was mistakenly

identified as a boat with rebel passengers. It was our only means of livelihood at that time”.

From an 85 year-old Maranao woman:” The conflict in the 1970’s was very hard, depressing and difficult. All men and women were required to get a cedula. Too much militarization and the military created fear to many civilians. Military that time was very bad. They captured women as for their mistresses, and almost all men were tortured. Military conducted raids of civilian houses and confiscated all the properties they liked. Maranao women were forced to marry just to be saved from the military. There were many disappearances of men and women”.

From a Maranao government official:” I remember during the pre-Martial Law period when 100 males were cordoned in the marketplace of Marawi City but because there was no single evidence found, they were immediately released by the military. There was one incident in which the municipality of Lumba Bayabao experienced a chemical bomb. There were lots of casualties, even prolonged effect of the bomb. Out of the incident, the residents of the said municipality as well as the neighboring areas are still complaining about skin diseases or itchiness up to the present time”.

The following are some accounts of Muslim victims of the GRP-MILF conflict:

From a 10 year-old evacuee: “ I was 7 years old in 2000 when we evacuated from Koliya, Salvador, Lanao del Norte to the Carmelites compound in Marawi City. We walked on foot through the forests in reaching Marawi. I was carrying a chicken and my younger sister was carried by my father. We saw some rebels and military people shooting at each other. The war wrecked our home. My father abandoned us in the evacuation center. My mother worked in the market as tobacco vendor. My eldest brother was forced to work hard labor and then as street vendor in Manila”.

From a 70 year-old widow: “ Afraid to experience again the bombings in our community by the military during the Martial Law years, we vacated our places and hiked through the forest together with our kids, pregnant women and sick persons to look for a secure place. We lost our properties like our houses, farm animals and harvest from our farm field. We lost some family members who were not given proper burial due to the displacement”.

“ The conflict forced our young children to work as domestic helpers abroad to earn for the family”.

“ We got separated from our siblings, lost our childhood life, peace of mind, peaceful life, economic stability, cultural attachment, psychological stability, happy family, and education”.

Below is the preliminary population of Lanao del Sur and Marawi City by religious grouping as of May 1975:

Table 5. Population based on Religious Affiliation and Groupings in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City (1975)

	Religious Sect	Population
Lanao Del Sur	1. Muslim	487,992
	2. Christian	45,005
	3. Buddhist	189
	4. Others	841
	5. None	26
Marawi City	1. Muslim	54,781
	2. Christian	14,711
	3. Buddhist	43
	4. Others	354
	5. None	3

Table 6. Household Population by Religious Affiliation in Lanao del Sur (2000)

	Religious Sect	Population
Lanao Del Sur	1. Muslim	620,910
	2. Christian	44,547
	3. Buddhist	253
	4. Others	567
	5. None	129

A serious look at the difference of figures between 1975 and 2000 bears some implications. The Muslim population has considerably increased by approximately 27%. It is tempting to conclude that this could not be explained by birth rate alone. Probably, some of the diaspora individuals have decided to come back along with their families. On the other hand, the non-Muslims only have a little more than 500 aggregate increase for the 25-year period which could not even account for normal increase due to birth rate. It is thus safe to assume that some of these non-Muslims left the area for one reason or another. For those who stayed, mostly have converged in the predominantly Christian municipalities of Lanao del Sur such as Wao. Somehow there is convergence along ethnic and religious lines (NSO, 2000).

B. Education

The Province has been fortunate with the presence of the Mindanao State University located in Marawi City which offers various field of educational interest not only for the service to its populace but have expanded to even accommodate students coming from different regions of the country. The university have established 11 community high schools to some municipalities, 1 Integrated Laboratory School and 1 Science Training Center for secondary level both located in Marawi City.

However, all these are not enough to cater to the educational needs of the young Maranaos. Many of them still have to walk long distances to reach the nearest school. Their schools are way below the standards of schools availed of by their non-Muslim counterparts. Consequently, thus, the truth of the matter is that many Maranao youth could not even get into the Mindanao State University System which is located right in their midst because they could not pass its entrance, qualifying examinations. The university is constrained to devise remedial, bridging programs such as the College Bound Project (CBP) and the College Preparatory Course (CPC) if only to open

opportunities and provide access to the Maranao youth (and other Muslims and Lumad, as well) for quality, affordable higher education. It should be emphasized that the Maranaos fail to compete with their Non-Muslim peers in terms of admission to MSU to avail of state-subsidized education not because of inferior IQ but because of poor educational background (Berowa, 1988).

With regards to Higher Education Institutions (HEI), the Province has the following:

- AMPC -Adiong Memorial Polytechnic College
- BMMCF - Bubong Marzok Memorial College Foundation
- MMC -Mapandi Memorial College
- MSU - Mindanao State University
- Ninoy Aquino Memorial College Foundation
- JPI - Jamiatu Philippine Al-Islamia
- JMIF - Jamiatu Marawi Al-Islamia Foundation
- JMM - Jamiatu Muslim Mindanao -
- LNCAT -Lanao National College of Arts and Trades
- MCCF - Marawi Capitol College Foundation

Table 7. Higher Education Institutions in Lanao del Sur (2004)

Category	F	Classification	
		University	College
Government	3	1	2
Private	7	0	7

Of these, 3 institutions are offering BS Nursing, Diploma in Midwifery, one offers Med Tech. In all of them Education and Business Administration courses are likewise offered. They also offer complete basic elementary and secondary courses.

Not all are accredited, although all institutions claimed to be CHED- recognized. From available data gathered, it could not be ascertained if all are authorized for the courses they are currently offering.

Observations through ocular inspection reveal that majority of these institutions have buildings definitely below accreditation standards, including the government-subsidized HEIs.

C. Health Related Information

Below is a comparison of the health services and facilities available in the Province and City in 1976 and in 2004.

Table 8. Marawi City Health Services and Facilities, 1976

Name of Hospitals and Clinics	Services Offered	Hospital Facilities
1. Lanao Hospital, Marawi City	Output Patient treatment, child delivery, surgery, social disease	Operating room, delivery, X-ray facilities, laboratory facilities, Morgue, Pharmacy
2. Mapandi Medical Clinic	Output Patient treatment, child	X-ray Facilities, Pharmacy

	delivery, Internal Medicine	
3. Marawi City Health Center	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
4. Marawi City Chest Clinic	Output Patient treatment	Delivery
5. Dansalan College Clinic	Output Patient treatment	Delivery
6. Dansalan Family Planning	Output Patient treatment	
7. Garcias Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
8. Marinaut Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
9. Benitez Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
10. Marawi Medical Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
11. Dansalan Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
12. Acosta's Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
13. Vargara's Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
14. Magayoong Clinic	Output Patient treatment, child delivery, surgery, social disease	
15. Pudalan's Clinic	Output Patient treatment, EENT, Internal Medicine	
16. Fatimah's Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
17. Tamano's Clinic	Output Patient treatment, Internal Medicine	
18. Aragon's Dental Clinic	Output Patient treatment	

Table 9. Profile of Health Care Centers/Hospitals (2004)

Category	Classification		
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Government	1	0	1
Private	3	3	3

Of the 11 health care facilities recently visited, majority are not Philhealth accredited. In other words, they have not reached the basic minimum requirements for standard quality care, both in terms of services available and equipment in use.

The province has one medical center, the Amai Pakpak Medical Center located at Marawi City with 75-bed capacity. Four district hospitals operate in the municipalities of Malabang, Tamparan, Binidiyan and Wao with 10-bed capacity of 85. One municipal hospital operates in Balindong with 10-bed capacity. In Lanao del Sur, the hospital bed population ratio is 1:3,364 in 1998 while Marawi City is 1:915 bed population ratios.

D. Commerce and Industry

There are five commerce and trade centers in the province. Within Marawi City are two public markets. Town public markets also exist in Malabang and other trade centers are

in the municipalities of Ganassi, Lumbatan and Tamparan. The DTI recorded 31 kind of business operating in the province and a total of 494 with general kind of merchandise.

Industry is not quite appreciated in the province with the exception of those that are contributory to agriculture such as rice milling and corn sheller. Other small-scale industry like brass making in the municipality of Tugaya produces brass products of various attractive design and motif and reaches the market as Metro Manila. Loam and mat weaving are also popular in the province but done mostly by women. Although these products are attractive and colorful yet is far from being competitive unless modern technology is introduced, thus these calls for the support of the government and other groups who may have interests in the development and promotion of these small scale industries.

The province and city are wanting of consumer services. To name a few, there are no franchises of common national food and consumer goods companies in the area such as Jollibee, Mcdonald, Dunkin Donuts, Mercury Drugstore, etc. There air no courier services as well except for Aboitiz and only 1 telecommunication center which is RCPI located at the MSU campus and none in the city. The city doesn't have big shopping malls and department stores like Shoemart or Gaisano, etc. Even the access to Internet services is quite difficult.

To some, the absence of big brand of consumer goods and services is perceived to be good for the local industry. People are patronizing local business establishments and also a good check against consumerism and materialism. To others, this means a big, big lag in economic development of the province and thus fostering poverty and underdevelopment.

Table 10a. Comparison in terms of socio-economic profile between Marawi City and some neighboring cities (NSO, 2000)

	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2002	2002
	Income per capita	Expenditure per capita	Poverty incidence ¹	Poverty depth	Poverty severity	% College grad	% of workers in Agri
City	FIES	FIES	FIES	FIES	FIES	APIS	APIS
Marawi City	16,289	11,776	45.9	12.9	4.7	34.7	21.6
Zamboanga City	25,289	20,183	17.3	2.9	0.7	20.6	11.7
Cagayan de Oro City	33,210	24,874	6.7	1.5	0.5	27.9	4.1
Tagum	25,282	22,027	6.7	1.5	0.4	17.5	20.9
Davao City	29,417	23,840	13.2	2.4	0.7	18.2	15.9
Gen. Santos City	30,703	21,821	26.4	6.5	2.4	15.7	18.4
Iligan City	27,259	21,627	27.1	6.2	2.2	22.4	15.6
Cotabato City	26,445	21,493	11.4	1.4	0.3	21.8	12.8
Butuan City	20,627	18,237	24.5	5.3	1.7	15.7	26.3
Philippines	28,150	23,061	27.5	7.2	2.7	13.3	37.8

1. Computed using Balisacan's consistent cost-of-living poverty lines.

2. Computed for those 25 yrs old and over.

Table 10b. Comparison in terms of socio-economic profile between Marawi City and some neighboring cities (NSO, 2000)

	2002	2002	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
	% of workers in Industry	% of workers in Services	# of Wholesale and retail stores	# of Manufacturing enterprises	# of Restaurants	# of Hotels and dormitories	# of Recreational facilities	# of Banks and pawnshops
City	APIS	APIS	CPH	CPH	CPH	CPH	CPH	CPH
Marawi City	6.1	72.3	345	80	137	68	8	9
Zamboanga City	15.9	72.3	614	224	226	52	66	65
Cagayan de Oro City	15.1	80.8	683	271	438	206	159	169
Tagum	17.7	61.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Davao City	21.4	62.7	1499	740	797	333	346	252
Gen. Santos City	21.7	59.9	225	141	137	75	73	57
Iligan City	19.8	64.7	320	100	137	53	38	41
Cotabato City	10.1	77.1	265	114	157	51	74	35
Butuan City	20.0	53.7	778	316	263	102	104	81
Philippines	16.3	45.9	-	-	-	-	-	-

1. Computed using Balisacan's consistent cost-of-living poverty lines.

2. Computed for those 25 yrs old and over.

I believe there is a need for detailed explanation per item of the data presented above to avoid total misinformation. For example, the item on % of college graduate shows that Marawi City has the highest with 34.7% compared to the rest. This would mistakenly be construed to mean that the Maranaos or the residents of Marawi City have high level of education compared to the residents of the other cities. What very important factor here is the presence of Mindanao State University situated in Marawi City which caters to students coming from other regions of the country. As was previously cited early on in this paper, poverty makes it very difficult for the people in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City to allow their children to pursue higher education. It was also mentioned that Maranao students have high percentage of failure in the college entrance and scholarship examination given by MSU thus, those very few families who can afford private education for their children are the only ones who can send their children to college.

Another example is the item on the % of hotels and dormitories. For how many years now, the only hotel in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City is the Marawi Resort Hotel (formerly Ayala Resort Hotel) located at MSU. It is only in this past 2 years that we have another hotel located in the city. The only standard dormitories for students are the university-owned dormitories at MSU. The other dormitories which are privately-owned and located in the university and in the city are mostly sub-standard.

The % on banks and pawnshops also need some explanation. The only banking services available to the residents in the province and city are the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Philippine National Bank with two branches each located in the city proper and at MSU. The Amanah Bank is also present but with very few customers.

Still another example is the % on manufacturing enterprises. Except for the very small-scale brass making, mat weaving and other handicrafts, the province and city do not have any manufacturing company nor industrial company. Everything is being bought outside from food products to garments, construction materials and even agri-fisheries products such as rice, vegetables, fish, etc.

Due to the inadequate hotel, banking and other consumer goods and services available in the city, most of the residents and visitors do their transactions in the near by cities such as Iligan City and Cagayan de Oro City. This in effect results to the siphoning of most of the income and resources of the province and the city to these neighboring cities. In other words, there is a very big imbalance of trading here where Iligan City and Cagayan de Oro City earn so much from the residents of Lanao del Sur and Marawi City with nothing in return.

This is what others call as the positive and negative impact and spill over of the conflict. The conflict affected communities of Lanao del Sur and Marawi City gets the negative impact and spill over of the conflict by being overburdened, depleted of resources and further buried into the quagmire of poverty, while the neighboring cities are affected positively by the conflict by being the “supermarket” of relief goods as well as the daily basic goods and services and other supplies.

But what is most painful according to some M’ranaos is that amidst all of these, is that despite the fact that the Maranaos of Lanao del Sur and Marawi City are to a significant level considered the “life blood” of the economy of its neighboring cities, prejudice by some of the Christians in the neighboring cities against the Maranaos still exist. The Maranaos are allegedly often not treated courteously (sometimes to the point of rudeness) in the shopping centers, clinics/ hospitals and other public spaces in its neighboring cities, and most often discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities. According to most of the diaspora people in other parts of the country, this is also true for them.

To validate the allegation on discrimination with regards to employment, an interview was conducted with two (2) of the Jolibee managers in Iligan City. Based on the interview, the respondents said that the food chain does not in any way treat Muslim applicants or employees in a different manner. In fact, they are encouraging Muslims to apply for the job in order to eradicate the wrong propaganda against them that they are using pork liver as chicken gravy and pork oil. They further added that having a Muslim crew would help in communicating effectively with Muslim customers.

According to them they had a male M’ranao who has been their production controller and in charge of the kitchen flow during their first two (2) years. Further, another Maranao, a female, has been their cashier and she was considered as one of their best crew. However, due to cultural factor, the said crew resigned.

In terms of percentage of applicants, only 0.5% to 1% are coming from the Muslims, the rest are Christians. One Maranao crew was qualified last December 19, 2004, a student of Iligan Sanitarium and Hospital College but she has not continued the one (1) month training process due to her studies. This, according to them, is the reason why Jolibee main Iligan Branch currently doesn’t have a Maranao in their crew.

Discrimination here is not blatant, rather it is subtle but very systematic. For instance, in the case of the Mindanao State University (MSU), which is especially mandated to integrate the Muslims and the cultural communities into the national body politic, the University could not accommodate all interested Muslim youth. Because quality private education is increasingly becoming unaffordable and inaccessible even for the average Filipino family, more and more Mindanao youth are seeking admissions into this non-metropolitan University, both Christians, Muslims, and indigenous groups. However, budget limitation and other logistical considerations affect existing facilities and resources of the University and logically thus, constrain the University officials to limit the number of students that could be accommodated yearly to the University.

By virtue of their very poor academic background mainly attributed to poor standards of their elementary and secondary education that characterize basic education available for the children and youth from Muslim and cultural communities, they simply could not compete with their Christian counterparts. This is a very apathetic situation because no matter how hard they will try, and no matter how much interested they are in entering the University for a state-subsidized quality higher education, most of the Muslim high school graduates could not make it to admissions in the University. Majority they could not make it to the qualifying cut-off scores in the MSU-System Admission and Scholarship Examination ((SASE).

For instance, there are more than 10,000 takers of the said examination who indicated preference for Marawi Campus alone (Note:there are more or less 40,000 total number of SASE takers hoping to be admitted in any of the 10 autonomous campuses of the University strategically located all over Mindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-tawi). Sadly, however, in the last 10 years or so, MSU Main Campus in Marawi City can only accommodate some 2,000 new college freshmen yearly. The implications on the range of choices left for those who had to become out-of-school youth could be apathetic and dismal.

Table 11. Student Admission Trend in MSU Marawi Campus (2000-2004) (College Enrollment)

Religious Affiliation	School Years				
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Muslims	5,242	4,934	6,699	5,925	6,142
Christians	6,232	6,605	5,470	7,499	6,661
Total	11,474	11,539	12,169	13,424	12,803

Source: MSU-Marawi Annual Reports (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003)

A closer look at these figures above reveals that indeed there is a disparity between the Muslims and non-Muslims. A detailed analysis of the secondary documents particularly into the distribution by college points to the fact that a greater percentage of the Muslims are in two-year diploma courses in agricultural technology, engineering technology and the College Preparatory Courses (CPC). They need to complete the two-year technology programs before they can begin to pursue college courses of their choice. On the other hand, the CPC is a remedial program especially designed to admit students mostly Muslims and cultural communities whose SASE scores are classified as conditional. Such program consists of English, Math and Values courses which the students take for a semester or two until they are competent enough to start in the baccalaureate courses offered in the university.

Although the University addresses the issue of access and equity, by their sheer inability to perform comparably with Christians who had the benefit of better basic education in the elementary and secondary levels, the Muslims are simply helpless in the margins feeling second-class right in their own setting. Except for a small percentage who are exceptionally lucky enough and possess the competencies to be immediately admitted to the various baccalaureate programs. Many of these Muslim youth have to endure both the stigma of being in these special programs for SASE non-passers. They also have to contend with difficulties in coping with college given inadequate basic skills. Thus, it is not surprising that the inequity is further stretched up to the disparity in the number of graduates between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as the kind of courses in which they are able to finally hurdle and obtain college diploma.

E. Governance

There is recognized impact of the conflict on local governance in the province in the following areas:

1. On Local Government Management.
2. On Service Delivery
3. On Resource Generation and Management
4. On Participatory Governance

The very poor governance is specifically manifested by the following factors:

1. Economic

- a. Low agricultural production due to the following reasons:
 - Low in agricultural technology (No technological know how due to absence of technology transfer);
 - High cost of farm inputs but prices of agricultural products are low;
 - Inadequate agricultural support facilities such as irrigations, farm to market roads, no credit facilities (public and private banks) available, threshers, warehouses and dryers are lacking including farm animals;
 - Huge tracts of idle/uncultivated lands (poor utilization of agricultural lands due to the fact that Maranaos are not interested in farming).
- b. In aquaculture, the following problems are identified:
 - Use of dynamite and other illegal fishing practices (ex. The practice of electrocuting fishes or the use of electric power to catch fishes and cyanide fishing;
 - Extinction of endemic species due to introduction of new variety of fishes that are not compatible with the native fishes;
 - Lack of law enforcement policies formulated on Fisheries Code in the Lake Lanao area (Example: lack of rules on the practice of catching spawners and fingerlings)
- c. Insufficient income from cottage industries (brassware, mat weaving, furniture making, beads art , etc.) due to the following causes:
 - Lack of technical know-how for improving the quality of their products;
 - Absence of market due to lack of M-I-S;
 - Lack of capital and credit facilities required for better output (use of modern machineries)
- d. Massive unemployment due to:
 - Lack of job opportunities within the province
 - No active Public Employment Service Office (PESO)
 - No Public Information Agency (PIA)
 - Lack of Manpower training center
- e. Untapped natural resource (mines and minerals) marine, aquatic and forests etc.) due to lack of needed resources
- f. Negligence of LCE on business regulations

- g. Lack of capital due to absence of banks and other financial institutions

2. Environment

Generally, there is the so-called unregulated usage of environmental resources as shown in the following:

- a. Illegal logging and harnessing of other forest products like rattan causing erosion of soil/lands;
- b. Illegal quarrying;
- c. Illegal fishing;
- d. Lack of environmental management indicated by improper waste disposal;
- e. Lack of conservation and protection of Lake Lanao;
- f. Lack of sustainable development for Lanao Sur

3. Socio-Cultural

- a. Existence of “rido” or family feuds;
- b. High rate of illiteracy (DepEd data pointed out 20.27% of illiteracy rate due lack of teachers, school facilities are insufficient etc);
- c. Less representation of women in all development activities nor in sectoral bodies;
- d. High morbidity and mortality rates due to lack/insufficient health services and lack of sanitation (no sanitary toilets and there’s lack of safe drinking water);
- e. Prevalence of drug addiction and no rehabilitation center in the province;
- f. Presence of street children and beggars;
- g. No public cemetery;
- h. Very lax implementation of housing and land use regulations;
- i. Lack of housing program

4. Infrastructures

- a. Delayed construction of four bridges of Marawi City causing heavy traffic in the entire city;
- b. Widening of provincial and national roads;
- c. Unfinished circumferential road around the Lake Lanao;
- d. Additional construction of farm to market roads;
- e. No permanent Municipal halls in many municipalities of the province;
- f. Lack of Barangay halls, health centers, day care centers, women center;
- g. Improvement of the existing wharfs;
- h. Lack of public market and slaughterhouses;
- i. Construction of bridges causing heavy traffics in Marawi City;
- j. Lack of drainage along the national and local roads causing floods;
- k. Poor Irrigation system

5. Public Administration or Development Issues

- a. Many LCEs do not reside in their respective municipalities;
- b. Massive graft and corruption;
- c. Lack of education and leadership capabilities among LCEs;

- d. Irresponsibility of their functions and roles (among LCEs and local government personnel) due to non – vigilant or passive citizenry;
- e. Lack of capability among government to perform the assigned duties, tasks and functions;
- f. Laxity in the observation and implementation of civil service rules and laws due to culture;
- g. Lack of inter-intra agency coordination at the LGU level;
- h. Existence of political dynasty;
- i. LCEs lack of know-how on local government code, good governance and participatory governance;
- j. Lack of transparency in governance (example: in policy formulation, implementation of projects, fund allocation, etc.);
- k. Tax mapping;
- l. Local taxation;
- m. LCEs do not support price stabilization;
- n. Passiveness of LCEs and other local officials

VI. Spillovers and Diaspora

The spillovers of conflict are borderless and are not only geographic but are also emotional and psychological. Based on certain data, the geographical spillover that affected the Maranaos of Lanao del Sur has reached national and international levels. We find Maranaos all over the country as what television jingle says “*mula Aparri hanggang Jolo*” (from Aparri in the North to Jolo in the South, meaning from tip to tip of the country) as well as in foreign countries as OFWs, notably in the Middle East.

Figure 4. Map of Lanao del Sur Diaspora in the country

DIASPORA MAP OF LANAO CONFLICT IN THE COUNTRY

Most of the other cities and regions in the country became a safe haven for the displaced persons from Lanao del Sur and Marawi City. They were forced to flee for Human Security and Economic survival. At present, there are Maranao settlers throughout the regions in the country

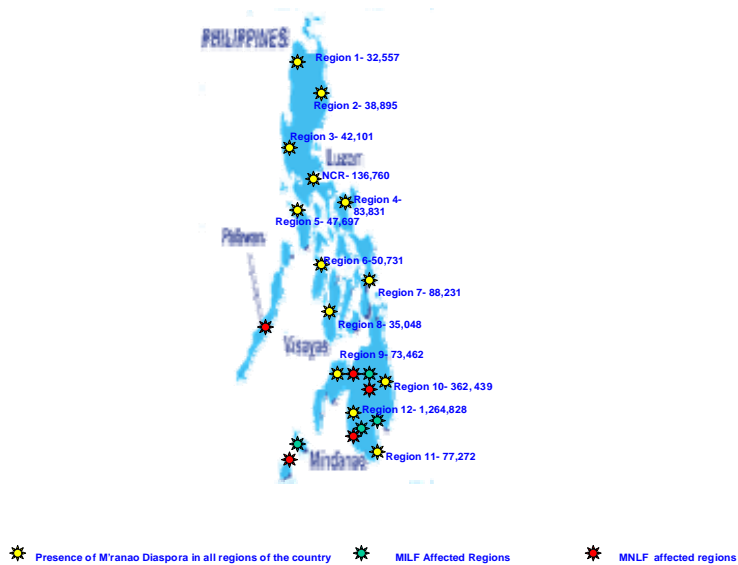


Figure 5. Map of conflict spillover in the country

Spill-over of the conflict in the other cities, provinces, and regions

The other provinces, cities, and regions of the country became a safe haven for the displaced persons who were forced to flee for Human security and economic survival. At present, there are Maranao settlers in all the regions of the country

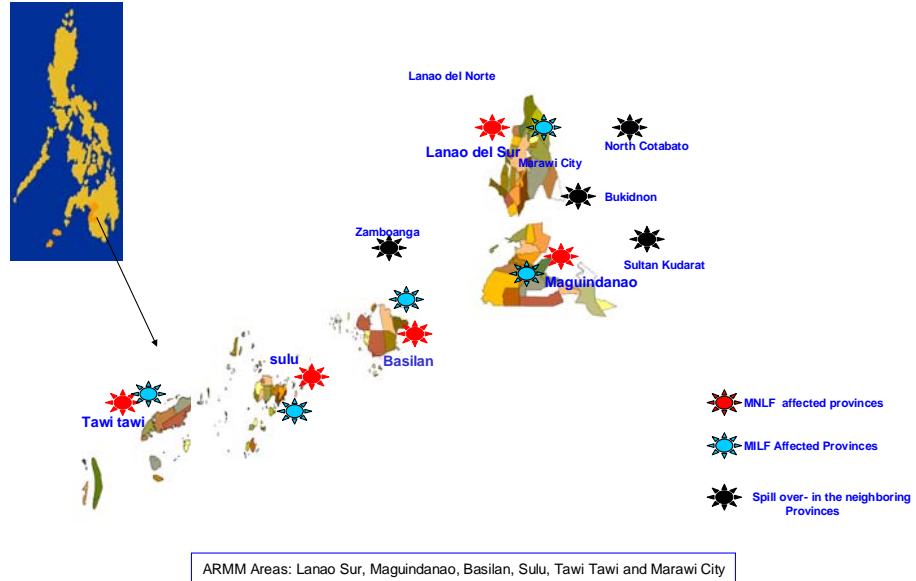


Table 12. Distribution of Maranao Ethnic Group by Region

Region	OMA total population of Maranao (2002)	NSO total population of Maranao (2003)
NCR	136,760	28,831
1	32,557	2,509
2	38,895	3,087
3	42,101	4,100
4	83,831	14,105
5	47,697	2,678
6	50,731	2,452
7	88,231	3,233
8	35,048	1,883
9	73,462	7,354
10	362,439	22,466
11	77,272	28,239
12	1,264,828	1,111,250
Total	2,333,852	1,232,186

Note: Region 1 includes Abra; Region 2 includes Kalinga Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao and Mt. Province; Region 9 includes Sulu and Tawi-Tawi; Region 10 includes Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Norte; Region 11 includes Surigao del Sur; and Region 12 includes Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao

The above table gives us very interesting incompatible figures on the total population of M’ranaos in the entire country. While the OMA figures is based on their 2002 census and the NSO is based on their 2003, the difference of 1,101,066 is just

unbelievable. I think this is a serious issue that the national government has to look into. The Moros has been for a long time complaining of “statistical genocide” whenever they see their percentage in the total Philippine population. They believe that the national government is deliberately further minoritizing them in number for political reasons.

Table 13 below further shows us OMA’s figure on Muslim population by Tribe, by region as of 2000 indicating a tremendous gap between the figures of NSO and OMA.

Table 13. Estimation of Muslim Population, by tribe, by region, as of 2000

Region	Maranao	Maguindanao	Tausug	Yakan	Iranon	Other Groups	Total
1	32,557	12,466	20,367	23,002		50,145	138,549
2	38,895	27,000	18,410	4,757	3,682	29,986	122,730
3	42,101	37,729	19,324	6,902	8,052	46,929	161,730
NCR	136,760	75,978	64,581	41,822	4,558	56,192	379,891
4	83,831	64,346	49,372	46,822	34,100	208,316	487,147
5	47,697	24,886	31,107	14,099	20,738	68,853	207,380
6	50,731	31,691	16,600	9,985		41,904	150,911
7	88,231	55,553	39,214	36,785	29,410	77,590	326,783
8	35,048	52,887	5,612	50,107	5,569	68,328	217,511
9	73,462	231,339	1,178,460	449,083	84,168	443,541	2,467,053
10	362,439	77,378	18,564	5,883	17,005	21,88	503,107
11	77,272	178,420	30,842	34,500	20,948	284,256	626,238
12	1,264,828	1,141,555	11,557	8,219	128,409	13,610	2,468,178
TOTAL	2,333,852	2,011,230	1,505,370	731,966	356,639	1,411,488	8,450,545

In order for us to have an insight into the thoughts , feelings and experiences of the diaspora individuals, I would like to share with you portions of the interviews conducted to some of them where they talked about their experience of the war and the lost opportunities they had because of the war. These lost opportunities were not only damage to properties but also their chance to improve the quality of their lives. They spoke of being forced to take on jobs where they have no knowledge and experience and live in an alien environment that is not culturally sensitive. These reinforced their fears and insecurities.

It is worthy to note that most of the interviewees mentioned what happened in the early 70’s when the Ilaga sowed terror in Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. (I have discussed this lengthily earlier in this paper) and the trauma brought about by the incidents.

We made an appointment to some members of the business sectors but they declined to be interviewed. So what I can share here is based on my personal experience as a head of NGO who provided relief services to the IDPs. I can say that some business establishments profited from the conflict, particularly from the relief and rehab assistance provided to the IDPs. This ranged from the basic food stuff (canned goods, sugar, salt, noodles, oil, dried fish, beans) to toiletries (soap, shampoo, toothbrush, combs, underwear) to water containers, construction materials (cement, wood, nails, galvanized iron roofs).

With regards to the effects of displacement and forced migration (Diaspora), I would like to share with the readers my own knowledge on this based on the interviewees and

consultations I conducted among Maranao IDPs and migrants in some parts of the country (e.g. evacuation centers in Marawi City and Muslim communities in Baguio, Laoag, Metro Manila, Vigan, Palawan, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Isabela Basilan, Bongao and Jolo, etc.). I believe this is very important if we want to effect a holistic, comprehensive and truly responsive peace policy for Muslim Mindanao and the entire country as a whole.

The following were the issues and concerns raised:

A. Bifurcated leadership

The erosion of traditional form of leadership (sultanate) to civil and democratic government (mayor). The *sultan* used to be a feudal leader with access to vast power and resources. With the downfall of the sultanates and the ushering in of democracy, the sultans lost their power and wealth. The only way to maintain such power and influence is to be elected to government positions such as governor, mayor, or representatives in the House of Congress. The dilemma is that the power and money of the elected official is a public fund to be used for public services and subject for auditing by the COA.

On the other hand, a sultan's power and money is for his personal use in support of his clan. He is not accountable to anybody.

For the forced migrants, particularly in non-Muslim communities, they have difficulty relating with the LGUs whose mode of governance is totally alien to them. In such an alien environment, transactions based on blood ties and kinship does not have a place.

B. Weakening of social cohesion

Death and destruction of properties and forced migration brought about by the conflict eroded the social protection and cohesion of the communities affected. At the clan level, there is crisis of support system. For example, people who are mediators of clan conflict are no longer around. This is also true with traditional birth attendants, traditional healers, etc.

At the family level, the emergence of female-headed households, widows, orphans, disabled, and more families living below poverty line. IDPs who chose to stay with their relatives (who are also poor) out of "*maratabat*" (pride/honor) instead of at the evacuation centers become an additional burden to their host family. At the individual level, migrant women and children are forced to break tradition and adopt an alien lifestyle to earn an income. An example of this is when we see Maranao women in short sleeved t-shirts and short skirt with no head cover, with a bilao hanged on their necks containing assorted goods which they try to peddle in the wet markets. Another example is when we see Maranao children peddling *sampaguitas* at the gate of the Quiapo church.

C. Affront to Human Dignity

One time during a relief distribution in an evacuation center in Marawi City, a fight broke out among the IDPs due to the food supplies. A very embarrassed woman came to me and said to me, "You know we are not really such a poor people. Before the war, my

family lived in a big house and we owned vast of land planted with coconuts. We had big warehouse for copra and two hauling trucks. We lived a very comfortable life and our relatives and neighbors would come to us for economic assistance. Now, are reduced to this, like herds of cows in a very small room, with only the clothes on our backs and willing to pull hairs just to have a kilo of rice or a can of sardines. I have never felt so shamed, humiliated in my life.” What have we done to deserve this?”

In one of my visits in Puerto Princesa, I met an old Maranao woman at the dirt section of the wet market. She had a 1- page newspaper spread on the ground where she placed her goods for sale comprising of five pieces of comb, ten pieces of nail cutters, around 6 headbands, three toy guns and two sunglasses. She was so embarrassed when she saw me as if ashamed of the very meager things that she had. I asked her where she is from and she said her family used to reside in a hillside in Baguio. When a portion of the hillside collapsed due to heavy rains, they evacuated.

Since they had no place to stay in Baguio, they tried their luck in Puerto Princesa. I asked her why they did not go back home to Lanao, and she said, they have been out for almost 30 years since Martial Law time. They used to have lands and farm animals in Lanao del Norte which they were forced to leave behind because of the war. Now, they don't have it anymore because the Christian settlers occupied it.

D. Discrimination and Exploitation

Being an IDP is like being reduced to the very lowest caste. They are often looked down on and blamed for whatever crimes and illegal activities that happen in their host communities. They are discriminated against and very much exploited for cheap labor, particularly the women and children.

During the 2000 “all-out-war,” many young girls went to Marawi from Pikit in search for domestic employment. They were accompanied by a fixer who brought the girls from house-to-house asking for P1,000 as an advance salary for each girl for three to four months. Those who were not accommodated settled for food for work or worse, even consented to a polygynous marriage as a third or fourth wife.

In my consultations in a Maranao community in Laoag, one woman shared that they have difficulty seeking medical services from the provincial hospital because they are not often entertained by the attending nurse or physician because they are Muslims. She related one of her experience which is upon entering the door of the hospital, the medical personnel looked at her and when they saw that she is a Muslim, they turned around and ignored her.

All the migrant Maranaos I spoke to in my visits spoke of being discriminated in terms of having a choice space in the marketplace, of being denied access to credit, and of being refused employment in offices and firms because they are Muslims. One female youth in Puerto Princesa said that despite her very good academic standing, she was refused employment because she is a Muslim. But of the issues raised, the most important is their need of a Muslim cemetery to bury their dead loved ones. For Muslims, it is a religious obligation to bury the dead within twenty-four hours. For Muslims in a far place like Baguio with no burial site for themselves, it is indeed a nightmare whenever somebody dies. They had to bring the corpse down to Laoag or Manila where there are

no cemeteries for Muslims. This is such a strain to the family and relatives of the dead both financially and emotionally.

E. Deprivation of sustainable source of economic and food security

The Moros and the Lumads have existential ties with their land. To them, their land is a symbol of economic and food security that is sustainable because it is handed down from generation to generation. More than the economic and food security, land to them is the tie that connects them to the spirits of their ancestors thus, maintaining the connectivity of generations. When a Moro or a Lumad is deprived of his/her land, she feels a deep sense of loss of belonging and of being because to them, having a land is having a life of abundance of all things.

F. Vulnerabilities of the women, children and the elderly to violence and exploitation

IDP women, children, and the elderly are vulnerable to all sorts of violence and exploitation. In the evacuation centers, there were widows and orphaned young women who consented to be part of a polygynous marriage just to survive. Some were forced to get married even at a young age which makes it very difficult for them during pregnancy and childbirth. The reproductive health implications for a young malnourished, anemic woman giving birth in an evacuation center without any medical help is just unthinkable. Maternal and child morbidity and mortality is very high among IDPs in addition to other sorts of diseases such as skin disease, pulmonary disease, diarrhea, etc. There were also reported cases of women who were forced into prostitution just to survive.

Battering is also experienced by the IDP women, particularly those coming from the rural areas with no electricity and other amenities present in the urban centers and do not have the life skill necessary to survive in the urban centers. They are often abused physically and psychologically by those who happen to employ them as domestic helps. They do not know how to use the washing machine, electric iron, use the right detergents, etc. Even their own physical hygiene is being used as a ground to abuse them. Some even experience sexual harassment, rape and unwanted pregnancy. For those who want better life by going abroad, they often ended being trafficked or coned by illegal recruiters.

The children are used as a source of cheap labor. They are also vulnerable to being handled by syndicates who are engaged in child trafficking, pornography and prostitution. They are also being recruited by the rebel groups as child soldiers, especially if their own fathers died in the conflict.

Elderly women who need caring become care givers themselves. They end up as surrogate parents to their orphaned grand children or nannies to them when their widowed mothers go out of the house to earn a living.

Women who are forced to flee her home and relatives because of the conflict is also vulnerable to violence from her very own husband. Having been taken away from her support system and being totally dependent on her husband economically, she becomes a target for abuse by her husband.

The same with the impact of the conflict, the issue of diaspora has brought both positive and negative gains to certain individuals and communities.

VII. Institutional and Community Responses

Amidst the challenges of growing up and living in conflict-affected areas, the Muslims are left on their own to cope. Thus the necessity for a mutually supportive institutionalized social network of clans and family. Muslims, in general, and the Maranaos of Lanao, in particular, are known to maintain closely knit families. There is always someone to turn to in times of need and trouble, for advice as well as support.

The traditional leaders and the religious leaders have always been a source of support. But without resources, and in conflict situation, their sense of power, their sense of control is apparently diminishing.

Furthermore, because of conflict and its consequent deprivations, some families are constrained to live apart – to look for educational and/or economic opportunities elsewhere, beyond Lanao, beyond Mindanao. This may have caused family break-ups, physically and emotionally. Where before the young can always look up to the old for wisdom, for models in traditional values and practices, at present, often the prevailing situation is that they only have their peers to talk to and to consult. These have so much implications in terms of social cohesion causing the breakdown of long cherished traditions, challenging one's identity. No wonder, many of our young appear to be at the crossroads – of changing identities, changing norms of conduct.

A. Local Government Units (LGUs) and Devolved Government Line Agencies (GLAs) Response

There was minimal assistance from LGUs and devolved LGAs due to lack of funds and capacity to respond efficiently and effectively to emergency situations such as the relief services to the internally displaced people (IDPs). These leaves the welfare of the IDPs, most of which women, children and elderly, to the non-government organizations (NGOs) in the area or to the IDPs themselves to cope on their own.

B. Relatives/ clan members response

Equally poor relatives of the IDPs have difficulty providing help to the IDPs. For a closely net clan, this inability to help their fellow clan members affects their sense of “maratabat” thus fuelling anger and resentment against the government.

C. Business sector response

The disruption of business transaction makes it difficult for the business people to help the IDPs. Much losses are incurred when business establishments are closed downed or destroyed by the conflict.

D. Traditional leaders response

They become incapacitated to help the IDPs, especially when they themselves have also turned IDPs. At the most, all that they can do is to help maintain peace and order inside the evacuation centers or in relocation sites where their influence still holds.

E. Religious Leaders response

Conservative religious leaders emphasize the need for an Islamic state in their sermons whenever an armed conflict arises. They blamed the government for the misery and sufferings the people are in. Since they are also affected by the conflict which leaves them so much inadequate in providing appropriate response to the situation, their role as “gate keepers of morality “ a very much challenged

F. Schools response

Schools, particularly public schools, are often the refuge for the IDPs. They are converted into evacuation centers. This often results to displacement of school children, of disruption of classes. In most cases, the classrooms are further dilapidated when the IDPs leave the area. For very poor schools, this is indeed a problem.

VIII. Analysis and Discussion

Considering that the conflict situation in Mindanao, in general, and in Lanao del Sur, in particular is a complex interplay of factors as shown in the framework, (Fig 1), I cannot pretend to have a simplistic analysis of the case at hand. The following are what I believe are the key issues in the conflict in Mindanao:

A. The Bangsamoro’s quest for self-determination

The Bangsamoro’s quest for self-determination is closely interlinked with their desire to survive as a people. History tells us that before colonialization, they had their own distinct way of life that was purely governed by their culture and religion. Their integration into the Philippine body politic was due to force and not through genuine desire. The centuries old struggle against the Philippine government is a natural result of this coercion. It is a basic human nature to rebel and harbor ill feelings and even hatred when one feels trampled on and human rights violated. There is a sense of basic threat to human security.

This is a reality that should be accepted and understood by the government and the majority of Christian Filipinos. To deny this would result to a never-ending conflict.

B. Unresolved deeply entrenched centuries old “wounds” among Muslims, Christians and Lumads

Another reality that should be accepted by the entire Filipino people is the existence of deep-seated biases, prejudices and hatred among the tri-people not only in Mindanao but in the whole country. This is a historical legacy of the Spanish colonizers that has greatly divided the nation and has endured up to this time. The reason for its sustainability is

because it is mired with so much religious fervor that for a deeply religious nation like the Philippines, it remains to be very vulnerable for exploitation and a potent instrument for mass destruction at all times. It is no wonder therefore that one of the main reasons for the emergence of the contemporary Mindanao problem in the early 70s was the Muslim-Christian conflict due to the atrocities of the Ilaga, a Christian vigilante group against the Muslims. By burning and desecrating the mosques and by carving the sign of the cross on the bodies of their victims, it was very obvious that the masterminds of this conflict wanted to exploit religion to their own advantage. And sure indeed they have succeeded the way the Spanish colonizers have succeeded. They have inflicted wounds on both sides that have endured up to this day.

As I have previously mentioned in this paper, the victims of this conflict are still traumatized even after more than three decades have passed. And this trauma continuously shape and influence the Muslim-Christian relation in this country.

Of equal importance to the Muslim-Christian trauma that has the potential to unleash another conflict if continuously ignored and relegated to the periphery, is the Lumad situation. The atrocities, exploitation and abuse experienced by the Lumads at the hands of both the Moros and the Christians is another historical injustice that has the right to deserves attention from the government and the entire Filipino nation before any armed struggle emerge from their side.

Obviously, human security is a big issue here.

C. Extreme Poverty

The state of human development as reported by donor agencies is so appalling that one would wonder when does one stop being human and starts living like an animal scavenging for food and sharing shelter with goats and cattle, if not with garbage. What kind of a nation that allows a group of its own people live with so little while the others live with abundance, particularly the elite? What is heart rending and mind blowing is the fact that this people who are forced to live in extreme poverty have so much natural resource in their midst but are prohibited to make use of it while the outsiders are allowed to do so or the very few influential and powerful among them are allowed to do so. They are the natural resources that feed others and place them in life of abundance while they could not even feed themselves or obtain even only for basic necessities to survive. This is indeed a weapon for mass destruction.

D. Development Aggression by government and multi-national corporations on the other hand and the lack of capital investment on the other

The truth of the matter with regards to extreme poverty in Mindanao, particularly in Muslim Mindanao is the presence of multi- national companies who have ownership of the choice properties, particularly land, and who have the license to extract natural resources from the land, water, mountains, etc. leaving nothing to the natives but toxic wastes, abused and degraded/ depleted environment. For a people who consider their land as their life, tragically, this also means death.

On the other hand, there is lack of interest for investors to put their money in the area for fear of loss of capital and other investments because of the conflict. They do not have confidence in the people that they have the ability to better their lot. What they

failed to realize is that the people have been there for centuries and understand their land better than anybody else. Who could make use of it wisely without destroying it but the local people themselves?

E. Insensitive and Ineffective Government Policies

Most government policies in the Muslim areas are perceived to be culturally insensitive and, therefore, ineffective in responding to the needs of the people. This is not at all surprisingly considering the fact that the form of government was alien to them and much worse, were forced on them. In the end, the Muslims are always perceived to be lawbreakers, ignorant and anti-development.

IX. Conclusions

The conflict in Muslim Mindanao, particularly Lanao del Sur is complex, deep rooted and multi-faceted and spans centuries. It is political, economic and social in nature and has affected all levels from the individual to organizational and institutional. The economic and social costs are so high that it has affected the entire nation. More than the economic cost is the social cost and the threat to human security. There is a need then for the government and the entire Filipino people to start a paradigm shift in their thinking with regards to the Muslim Mindanao situation in the areas of the peace process, healing and reconciliation, total human development, human security policy framework, community empowerment, participatory governance, and the role of women. Sectors such as the military, armed groups, local government units, private/business, civil society, academe and media should start undergoing deep reflection, dialogue among themselves and start strategizing on how best can they help in positively addressing the problem.

X. Recommendations

The following are my proposed alternative approaches with their strategic key action points in dealing with the Muslim Mindanao problem.

A. Peace Process

1. Government to stop the military position and pursue the institutional position in keeping with E.O. 3. It should also provide the necessary funds for the rehabilitation of affected communities. It should also ensure mechanisms that will allow for the participation of civil society and communities in the peace process. A national peace policy should be enacted by congress that addresses not only peace and development issues in the conflicted affected areas of Mindanao but also of the diaspora and the healing and reconciliation needs of the entire Filipino people.
2. MILF to be open for more dialogue and sincerely pursue other options to peace. Like the government, it should be open for the participation of civil society and communities in the peace process.
3. Civil society and communities should have sense of ownership and accountability in the peace process.

4. Women should work for their active participation at all levels in the peace process.

B . Rehabilitation of affected families and communities.

The internally displaced persons and families need serious attention for immediate rehabilitation. Some mechanisms for reparations have to be institutionalized. Even as IDPs, they have retained their human rights. As IDPs, their right to return, right to revenge, and right to truth-telling should be recognized and respected.

For meaningful healing and reconciliation to occur, the IDPs, and all other individuals, families, and communities affected by conflict should be provided genuine support so that, especially for them, there shall be justice, freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom from humiliation.

Here the role of donor agencies, the national government down to the local government units, the NGOs and civil society cannot be overemphasized. A synergy of interventions is the call of the times. There is a need for holistic, integrated approaches.

C. Equitable allocation and distribution of resources

There need to be institutionalized measures to reduce the widening gap between the rich and poor. Equally important is the need for just policies on ancestral domain. When in place, they have to be seriously implemented.

D. Natural resource management and livelihood

Mindanao is an island with rich natural resources. The people need support, financial, technical as well as political so that they will be able to harness such resources to improve their total quality of life. For instance, it is not clear how the Maranao have ever benefited from the fruits of development brought about by Lake Lanao which is the source of hydroelectric power for the many plants, industries, and corporations in Mindanao. (The height of irony is that many Maranao communities do not have power connections. Many Maranao households continue to live in the dark!) There is a need to put the brakes on development aggression for multinationals where the local people are always left at a disadvantage position.

E. Address the vulnerabilities of the women, children and youth

The needs of vulnerable groups including women, children, youth, the elderly and those who are differently-able have to be considered and addressed.

F. Corporate responsibility of the Business/Private Sector

The government cannot do it alone. The damages of war are too heavy and the business and the private sector can give their meaningful share to contribute for development. It is time for business to give back to the people.

G. Media.

The role of media is key. Media people can stop sensationalization whenever Muslims are involved, to stop labeling Muslims as terrorists, to downplay on stereotypes and differences, to foster the spirit of cultural pluralism.

H. Revive and pursue EAGA and turn back pages of history

EAGA drew so much excitement and potential and was expected to be among the region's "most vibrant growth spots". It has changed mindsets and developed new thinking amongst the people of Mindanao. It has awakened beautiful memories of intertwined histories, common experiences and traits, and raised awareness about friends and neighbors, thereby allowing cultural bonding to take place. This is more so with the Muslims in the South who share common legacies among its neighboring Muslim countries on what is Islam which is responsible for the involvement of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei in the peace process and also will strengthen regional collaboration on the fight against terrorism.

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