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Norshahril Saat

Testimonial Narratives of Muslim Tausug: Against Militarization in Sulu (1972-1974)

Elgin Glenn R. Salomon

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Faizal Amin & M. Ikhsan Tanggok

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Elgin Glenn R. Salomon

Testimonial Narratives of Muslim Tausug: Against Militarization in Sulu (1972-1974)

Abstract: *In order to provide a counter history to the predominate, monochromatic, and polarizing historiography of Martial Law in the Philippines, this article investigates the use of testimonial narratives from Muslim Tausug witnesses and survivors during the early years of militarization of Sulu province in the southern Philippines (1972–1974). It focuses on the narratives of war and violence which have been silenced and subjugated, as well as the role of identities and culture in the articulation of the conflict. Their testimonies offer a different perspective on the marginalization of Muslim Mindanao under the repressive era of Ferdinand Marcos' Martial Law. This article contributes to the study of Islam in the Philippines and Bangsamoro by exploring the ways in which Tausug Muslims use their religion to air their grievances and to fight against oppression. They were able to embrace Islam as their framework for emancipation because of their roots in postcolonial experience.*

Keywords: Moro National Liberation Front, Militarization, Martial Law, Tausug, Testimonial Narrative.

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Abstrak: *Bertujuan untuk mengajukan sejarah tandingan terhadap historiografi darurat militer yang mendominasi, monokromatik, dan terpolarisasi di Filipina, artikel ini mengkaji penggunaan narasi kesaksian dari para saksi dan penyintas Tausug Muslim selama tahun-tahun awal militerisasi di provinsi Sulu, Filipina selatan (1972-1974). Artikel ini berfokus pada narasi perang dan kekerasan yang telah dibungkam dan ditundukkan, serta peran identitas dan budaya dalam artikulasi konflik. Keterangan mereka menyajikan perspektif yang lain mengenai marginalisasi Muslim Mindanao saat Ferdinand Marcos menerapkan darurat militer. Artikel ini berkontribusi terhadap kajian Islam di Filipina dan Bangsamoro dengan mengulas bagaimana Tausug Muslim menggunakan kepercayaan mereka untuk mengungkapkan keluhan mereka dan untuk melawan penindasan. Mereka mampu memeluk Islam sebagai caranya mencapai emansipasi akibat dari jejak pengalaman pasca penjajahan mereka.*

Kata kunci: Moro National Liberation Front, Militerisasi, Darurat Militer, Tausug, Kesaksian Naratif.

ملخص: يبحث هذا المقال في استخدام الشهادات السردية من الشهود والناجين من تاوسوغ المسلمة خلال السنوات الأولى من عسكرة مقاطعة صولو في جنوب الفبين (١٩٧٢-١٩٧٤)، وذلك من أجل تقديم تاريخ مضاد للتأريخ السائد أحادي اللون والمستقطب للأحكام العرفية في الفلبين. وهو يركز على روايات الحرب والعنف التي تم إسكاتها وإخضاعها، فضلاً عن دور الهويات والثقافة في التعبير عن الصراع، حيث تقدم شهاداتهم وجهة نظر مختلفة حول تهميش مسلمي ميندناو في ظل الحقبة القمعية لقانون فرديناند ماركوس العسكرى. ويساهم هذا المقال في دراسة الإسلام في الفلبين وشعب المورو من خلال وصف كيفية استخدام مسلمي تاوسوغ معتقداتهم للتعبير عن شكاواهم ومحاربة الظلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جبهة مورو للتحرير الوطني، العسكرة، الأحكام العرفية، تاوسوغ، سرد الشهادات.

On September 21, 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986) placed the entire Philippines under Martial Law. One of the compelling justifications for its declaration was to suppress lawless violence that was spearheaded by both the Communist Party of the Philippines- New People's Army (CPP-NPA) in the countryside of Luzon Island in the northern Philippines, and the Muslim secessionist movement in Mindanao and Sulu archipelago on the southern periphery of the country. Materializing the objectives of Martial Law, Pres. Marcos heavily invested in the military which made the institution a locus of power in Philippine society. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) militarized both Mindanao and Sulu and fought against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) -- a nationalist and separatist organization with a secularist orientation that envisions Moro nationhood (*Bangsamoro*) as a response to the colonial and neocolonial rule that oppressed the Muslim.[1] However, amidst their violent encounters, many Muslims like the Tausug civilians who lived in the hinterland of Sulu were caught in their worsening encounters.[2]

The dominant historiography on Martial Law in Muslim Mindanao emphasizes the "Moro Problem" that highlights the issues of autonomy or separatism of Muslim Filipinos from the rest of the Philippines. Although there are works of literature that deal with Martial Law in Muslim Mindanao, (Noble 1976; George 1980; Majul 1988; Tan 1993; Rodil 1994; Abat 1999 Vitug and Gloria 2000; McKenna 1998; Abinales 2000; Tuazon 2008) and the early stage of militarization of Sulu (Stern 2009; Custodio and Dalisay 1999; Abubakar 2001; Halud 2015; Aliman 2021), the historiography of the "Moro Problem", remained for the most part polarizing and dichotomous where it focused on the ideological, political and military dimensions of the conflict between the MNLF and the Philippine State forces.[3] More so, compared to the stories of abuses that the military committed during the height of CPP-NPA's insurgency, fewer works of literature tackled the experiences in Muslim Mindanao. This historical framing not only failed to reveal the complexity of the problems on the ground, but it relegated the narratives of the Muslim Tausug civilians and rebels who directly witnessed and survived war and violence.

In general, there were efforts initiated by scholars and civil society groups to unpack the stories of marginalization and abuses during Martial Law. Unfortunately, many Filipinos, including the Muslims in

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Mindanao take the path of denial in discussing the horrors of Martial Law due to the following conditions: (1) The impoverished condition of the Philippines made the poor vulnerable to persistent abuses of the people in power. This would tie them towards their primordial need to survive, (2) In a systemic lens, the rehabilitation of Martial Law figures in our society today as some of them were appointed in the government or elected for public office (i.e., the return of the Marcoses and their allies in politics and historical distortion on Martial Law in recent years) and (3) The bureaucratic process that made the perpetrators accountable usually failed hence justice was not served (Diokno 2001, 84-85).

Unveiling the stories of abuses and marginalization through oral history and eyewitness accounts, I explore the use of testimonial narratives of the Muslim Tausug witnesses and survivors during the early stage of militarization of the Sulu province (1972-1974) as a counter-history to the dominant, monochromatic, and polarizing historiography of Martial Law. During the said period, the MNLF was at the peak of its influence in the hinterland of Sulu where they easily defeated the AFP and aggressively recruited new members to join the secessionist group.[4] Largely ignored in mainstream history, the testimonial narratives of the Muslim Tausug unravel the roles of identities and culture in the dynamics of conflict in Sulu. Collected through semi-structured interviews, this article focuses on the silenced narratives of Muslim Tausug witnesses and survivors, their reflections, as well as their discernments when they confronted the war At the same time, this study also utilizes the interviews in the master's thesis of Lea Usman-Laput in her dissertation, *Magison-ison: A Parallel Reality Construction of War among Joloano Muslim Survivors in Sulu, Philippines* (2005), and the narratives collected in the book of Agnes Shari Tan Aliman, *The Siege of Jolo, 1974* (2021) to comprehend the complex relationship among the soldiers, the civilians, and the rebels. Aside from that, this article also includes some stories of former MNLF rebels for a clearer view of the situation in Sulu under militarization. The narrators were chosen as recommended by the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) of the University of the Philippines and the Consortium for Bangsamoro Civil Society Inc. (CBCS), a solidarity network of Bangsamoro NGOs and other civil society organizations. Utilizing the snowball method, the chosen narrators also recommend their acquaintances to participate in this study. Most of the narrators were high school students when

militarization happened in the province. To protect the identities of the narrators, their names remained anonymous.

Criticizing the historiography of Martial Law in the Philippines, the survivors' narratives serve as an alternative source of knowledge on the marginalization of Mindanao during these repressive years. Indeed, as part of his criticism of the dominant historiography of Muslim Mindanao, Tausug historian Calbi Asain (2008) suggested that one should not only glorify the "major players" in history but also the greater mass of the people who made the emergence of the so-called history-makers possible at all". With the help of the testimonial narratives, the narrators reveal how they deal with injustice, suffering, fear, and invisibility (Lusk and Villalobos 2012) and they would then engage in the process of self –constitution, emancipation, and survival (Yudice 1991). In the context of authoritarian power like the Marcos dictatorship, these narratives highlight the agency of those who are directly affected by marginalization which would transform his/her narrative from being a victim into a self-conscious subject" (Moratilla 2012). Confronting the historical revisionism that white-washed the abuses and atrocities committed by the Marcos dictatorship against the Muslim Tausug, the stories of the witnesses and survivors presented a "shared sense of belonging to a particular community" (Reyes 2018) which manifest collective victimhood (Mohamad 2018) of the Filipinos. Above all, locating the Islamic Studies in the Philippine and Bangsamoro experiences and context would deepen the understanding of how Islam was used by the Muslim Tausug to articulate their grievances and to fight against oppression. Rooted on their postcolonial experience and their material condition, the Muslim Tausug were able to use Islam and their identity as Muslims to construct their framework towards emancipation.

Testimonial Narratives as Counter-History

The field of literature and history questioned positivist history as it claimed the accuracy, authenticity, and veracity of its narrative (Pison 2005). With this criticism, philosopher Michel Foucault used the term counter-history to define the process of reading events against the grain of hegemonic histories and it assigns an active role to the reader/critic in the interpretation of history rather than a passive viewing role. Opposing the master narrative, Foucault added that history is

a discourse and "cannot merely be a reflection of events". Rather, it "involves both the potential for manipulation – through rhetoric and through the power of language and the vision that it creates" (Pison 2005, 7).

Foucault refuses the idea that discourse is comprised of "homogeneous events" but rather, acknowledges that there are "several possible levels of an event within the very density of discourse (Pison 2005, 3). Inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche and opposing the supra historical perspective of history, Foucault pointed out that the discipline should "encourage subjective recognitions and attributes a form of reconciliation to all displacement of the past" (Pison 2005 7-8). This means that counter-history should respond to how official history monopolizes knowledge-producing practices which silence "alternative interpretation of historical experiences" (Medina 2011, 14). In short, counter-history (1) "reflects and produces disunity" in the official and mainstream history where "it resists and invalidates the normative expectations of the imposed dominant ideology, and (2) it "reflects and produces discontinuous moments in a people's past, gaps that are passed over in silence, and interest in the socio-historical fabric of community that has received no attention" (Medina 2011, 14-15). Therefore, the function of counter-history is to reveal the concealed discourse of those who have "no glory or those who have lost it, and who now finds themselves, perhaps for a time – but probably for a long time – in darkness and silence" (Medina 2011, 15).

The concept of counter-history itself "calls into question the very idea of a sole and unique present that would everywhere be the same, and that one could define with a single concept or set of uniform defining characteristics" (Rockhill 2017, 3). Through the resurrection of subjugated knowledge, the critique of institutions, discourses, and hegemonic histories would be possible (Medina, 17). Concerning nationalism, for instance, counter-history would critique the exclusions of the subjugated knowledge to a nation's official and hegemonic histories where it failed to "exhaust the domain of memories and narratives within" (Pandey 2001, 17). Meanwhile, Michael de Certeau in his book *The Writing of History* underlined that "history has no exclusive right to represent reality". He added that history survived because "they often displace, and silence other discourses considered to be their rivals" (Pison 2005, 9-10). One way of resurrecting these kinds

of knowledge that challenges and rejects the master discourse is through testimonial narrative which was written by people in the margin like the child, the "native", the insane, the criminal, and the proletarians. In his article, *The Margin at the Center: On Testimonio (Testimonial Narrative)* John Beverley (1989, 12-13) defined the testimonial narrative as:

> "A novel or novella-length narrative in book or pamphlet (that is opposed to acoustic) form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts and whose unit of narration is usually a "life or a significant life experience."

Giving voice to the subaltern, a testimonial narrative is an authentic narrative made by the witness and it "involves an urgency to communicate" the situation (e.g., war, oppression, revolution, etc.) (Yudice 1991, 17). Testimonial narrative is not simply a recorded participant narrative like oral history, but it emphasizes the intentionality and sincerity of the narrator where he communicates the problems of repression, poverty, subalternity, imprisonment, the struggle for survival, and others (Yudice 1991). Aside from that, it looks at the personal issue in the larger political context of its narration that would interject the reader and enjoin him/her to act (Moratilla 2012). Testimonial narrative can be in the form of, diaries, letters, memoirs, and in the case of this study oral histories and eyewitness accounts (de Guzman 2008).

Although both autobiography and testimonial narratives are related to each other, they have clear differences. If in an autobiography, the writers traditionally belong to the upper classes of the society, in a testimonial narrative, the narrator is either functionally illiterate, or if the person is literate, the person lacks the writing skill (de Guzman, 606; Beverly 1989). Aside from that, if an autobiography "focuses on the process of an individual to become special that transcends personal limitation which earned him/her a privileged status in a society", testimonial narratives look at the experience of the narrator that is representative of a social class or a group hence making his/her own experience "an agent of a collective memory and identity" (Beverly 1989, 15; Yudice 1991, 17). Testimonial narrative then makes the single narrator/author being replaced with a community of witnesses which then signify a collective history. Through the testimonial narratives, the memory enables language "to operate as outlets and productions of silent histories". This would then make the "invisible"

visible, hence democratizing the discursive field. Most importantly, testimonial narratives provide "alternative logics and resistance against "mainstream" realities of social exclusion and asymmetrical relations of power" that are different from the dominant forms of historical representation (Moratilla 2012, 45).

The Moro Secessionist Movement

The Moro Secessionist Movement as a Legacy of Colonialism

For most of its history, the Tausug, together with other Muslim ethnic groups in mainland Mindanao like the Maranao of Lanao, and the Maguindanao of Cotabato remained independent from Western powers which helped preserve their respective ethnic identity. Nevertheless, for some Muslim Tausug, both their victories and struggles against Spanish and American colonialism became their source of motivation to aspire for freedom from the Christian-dominated Philippines.

The introduction of Islam by Muslim traders from Southeast Asia in the late 14th century contributed to the development of the political and social system of Islamized ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao. Ever since the Tausug founded and ruled the Sulu Sultanate in the latter half of the 15th century, it became an intersection of regional and global exchanges (Warren 2002). Through invasions and Christianization, the Spaniards tried to subjugate the Muslims in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago into vassalage for missionary and economic interests. Concealing the real cultural and linguistic differences among the Muslim ethnolinguistic groups, the Spaniards started to apply the word *Moros*, an encompassing term that refers to all Muslims in Mindanao. The Spaniards initially failed in subjugating the Tausug until the mid-19th century when the sultanate eventually recognized its sovereignty after the Spaniards launched attacks on Jolo. But the colonizers only had nominal rule among the Tausug (Abreu 2008). Nevertheless, their colonization established hierarchies of knowledge and subject like the dichotomy between Christians and Muslims which remained to affect Philippine society in the contemporary time.

After the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1898, the Spaniards handed over the Philippines to the Americans, including the Sulu Sultanate. The new colonizers introduced progressive reforms to civilize, develop and educate their newly colonized Muslim subjects. The Americans directly controlled Mindanao and Sulu which separated them from the rest of the

Philippines (Milligan 2003). But the Tausug and other Muslim ethnic groups opposed the incorporation of the Muslim lands into the United States-controlled Philippines, the forced education, and the payment of local tax. They were also skeptical that the public education system of the Americans was used as a weapon to de-Islamizing them. The Muslims launched sporadic and local resistance throughout Mindanao, but the Americans were determined to brutally pacify the *Moroland*. This resulted in two of the bloodiest uprisings in Jolo– the Battle of Bud Daho (1906) and the Battle of Bud Bagsak (1913), where US troops massacred over 600 and 3,000 Tausug respectively. By 1920, the Americans handed over the control of Mindanao and Sulu to Christian Filipinos. Signaling the start of internal colonialism of Filipinos, this transfer of power made the Muslims politically, economically, and socially marginalized religious minorities within the Philippine state (Milligan 2003).

Christian Migration to Mindanao and the Ilaga Group

The Philippine Commonwealth became interested in developing Mindanao by giving tenant farmers from impoverished areas of the Philippines parcels of land. Hoping that it would contribute to national development, the government founded the National Land Settlement Administration (NLSA) in 1939 which aided in overseeing a larger and better-integrated system of settler colonies (McKenna 1998). Promoting Mindanao as "The Land of Promise", many families began to migrate to mainland Mindanao, especially from Panay Island in Central Philippines. Consequently, the Christian population skyrocketed at the expense of the Muslim population who were displaced in their land. Intruding in the ancestral lands of the Muslim and the indigenous peoples, many transnational corporations expanded their plantations (Abreu 2008). However, only a few government programs and policies were implemented to increase economic benefits for Muslims. Confronting the authority of the local elites, leaders in Manila like Pres. Ferdinand Marcos intervened and controlled the political affairs of the Muslim population (McKenna 1998). These conflicts, generated by political contentions and land ownership caused the violence that later intensified through the formation of *Ilaga*, a Christian paramilitary group that inflicted brutality against the Maguindanao and Maranao Muslims. Through their collaboration with Christian politicians and the Philippine Constabulary (predecessor of the Philippine National

Police), the *Ilaga* organized some of the most violent massacres throughout mainland Mindanao (Abreu 2008; Abinales 2012).

Jabidah Massacre, the Rise of the Counter elites, and the Moro Secessionist Movement

On the other hand, Pres. Marcos created Operation Merdeka where young men (mostly from Sulu) were conscripted to invade Sabah and regain its sovereignty from Malaysia. However, after some disagreements with the military superiors and some unmet expectations by the conscripts, 28 trainees (16 are still missing and presumed dead) were massacred on Corregidor Island on March 17, 1968 (Curaming and Aljunied 2012).[5] Revealed to the public by Sen. Benigno A. Aquino Jr, this tragedy became popularly known as the Jabidah Massacre. Congressman Rashid Lucman of Lanao led a proceeding to impeach Pres. Marcos in connection to this mass murder, but it did not get enough support in Congress.

Countering the forces of the *Ilaga* and as a response to the Jabidah Massacre, the Muslims led by Gov Matalam also created the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) in May 1968 with their armed forces called the "Blackshirts" in Cotabato or the "Barracudas" in Lanao. During the same period, two groups of counter elites emerged. First were the scholars of the Commission on National Integration (CNI) like Nur Misuari who studied in Manila and experienced the magnitude of popular anti-Muslim bias and witnessed increasing antagonism towards the Muslims. But some of them were also exposed to campus activism that was anchored on the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (MLM) framework, and later, they actively participated in the national democratic movement (Mckenna 1998). And second, were scholars who studied in Egypt as part of the pan-Islamic program of Gamel Abdul Nasser. Studying in Egypt, these scholars like Hashim Salamat were exposed to Nasserite nationalism and the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood. But unlike the scholars of Manila, "they are explicitly and exclusively Islamic in character" (McKenna 1998; Majul 1988). The student radicalization movement in the late 1960s, the oppressive internal colonialism by the Christian Philippines, the popularity of Arab nationalism among the Muslim intellectuals, and the continuing neglect of the national government to the needs of the people in the southern Philippines strengthened the Muslim secessionist movement.

After a talk with Pres. Marcos, the MIM disbanded which resulted in the founding of the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO) from the older MIM elites and student leaders with MLM backgrounds. But suddenly, Pres. Marcos signed Proclamation 1081 on September 21, 1972, placing the entire Philippines under Martial Law. Pres. Marcos justified the declaration "from the unsettled conflict between certain elements of the Christian and Muslim population of Mindanao and Sulu, between the Christian "Ilagas" and the Muslim "Barracudas", and the "government troops, and certain lawless organizations such as the Mindanao Independence Movement" (Official Gazette of the Philippines, 1972). The BMLO ultimately parted after some internal challenges within the formation citing enduring generational differences among its members. It started when aristocratic Lucman "sent a confidential letter to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) denouncing the Marxists in the Moro Liberation Movement which was led by Misuari" (Custodio and Dalisay 1998, 220).[6] This disagreement led to the creation of the Moro National Liberation Front on October 21, 1972 – exactly a month after the declaration of Martial Law (Abinales and Amoroso 2005).[7]

It is important to highlight that although Sulu was spared from the mass migration of Christians and its violent consequences, the news about these massacres reached the archipelago where some Tausugs sympathized with their fellow Muslims in mainland Mindanao. Angered by how the state forces brutalized their fellow Muslims, it motivated some Tausug to join the MNLF.

Overall, Martial Law brought the following effects to Muslim Mindanao (a) Crystallization of the feeling that the government was out to annihilate their communities. Despite the peaceful means of calling the government to end the conflict in Mindanao, all the concerns of the Muslim Filipinos fell on deaf ears (b) For many Moros, the atrocities done by the Philippine state are just a continuation of the centuries-old Moro wars. (c)The destruction of economic and socio-political infrastructure, (d) Brought by displacement, many Moros from the provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi remain to be repatriated from Sabah, Malaysia, (e) Heightened distrust between the Moro people and government led to the growing belief that violence can preserve life and liberty and (f) the growing conviction that Muslim Mindanao should be independent of the internal colonization of Imperial Manila

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(Abubakar 2001). However, one of the overlooked experiences of Martial Law in Muslim Mindanao was the militarization of Sulu. But this article looks at the event from the vantage point of the civilians like the Muslim Tausug.

Testimonial Narratives: The Militarization of Sulu

Responding to the massacres in mainland Mindanao, the rebels created their training camps and launched offensives in the hinterlands of the Sulu Archipelago. Consequently, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) then militarized the hinterlands of Sulu. But Jolo, the provincial capital of Sulu was spared from the confrontations of the soldiers and the MNLF. Ibrahim, a high school student during that time described his observation,

> "A kilometer away, you cannot go outside of Jolo. A few kilometers away from the town proper is now surrounded by the MNLF so we cannot go out. We are confined inside (Jolo). At night, you would hear the shelling of the canyon and the shooting of small arms. We were only in our house, and we would hear the explosions."

As an implementer of Martial Law, Pres. Marcos invested heavily in the armed forces which made the institution a locus of power in Philippine society (de Santos 2017). The generous support from the United States and the Marcos administration's priorities in strengthening the military increased the weapon acquisition that could be used against the growing threats. As noted by observers of the International Commission on Jurists, Mindanao, including the Sulu archipelago became the most militarized in the country and of all in Southeast Asia. Even though Mindanao has less than one-fourth of the population of the country, around 60% of the troops from the AFP are concentrated in the area (Robles, 2016).

Because of suspicion, militarization affected the livelihood and everyday life of many Muslim Tausug. Malik, who was a young husband during that time described how fruit traders could not easily trade from the hinterland to Jolo.

> "The livelihood of the people depended on fruits. They planted various types of these fruits throughout Jolo island (the primary island of Sulu). That's the livelihood of people in the hinterland. Same with the people in the town proper (of Jolo town). Ever since militarization started, it seemed difficult for them to harvest because they were totally watched by the soldiers."

Aside from that, the AFP confiscated the weapons of the Muslim Tausug masses because they fear that they might collaborate with the MNLF rebels. The action of the soldiers trampled the honor of many Muslim Tausug men since culturally, acquiring weapons like their guns showed their honor, bravery, and prestige. In the words of Omar (Phone Interview, March 15, 2021), "The Tausugs love their arms more than their wives".

Eruption of Violence and Human Rights Violation

The continuous militarization eventually led to brutalization in the hinterlands. Largely unaccounted for in mainstream and official histories, the armed forces committed human rights violations against the Tausug civilians during the early years of Martial Law. Hussein (personal communication, April 7, 2019), a high school student reflects the fear of the people towards the AFP.

> "…because we think that soldiers were bad. Since we experienced the abuses when we were still young, we imagine that they (soldiers) were bad. We were made to walk to the checkpoint while they inspected our things…. We were afraid of them… Every time I hear the word GHQ (General Headquarters), I am already afraid."

Ibrahim (phone interview, April 24, 2021) acknowledges the everyday reality of the Tausug due to militarization.

> "Many were picked up in their house and became suspects. They disappeared. Then you would see them dead the following day... Many were picked up (by the soldiers). While others, you saw them floating in the sea or they suddenly disappear… Sadly we were living in fear."

While Amir (phone interview, August 21, 2021), who was a high school student reminisced how his cousin was brutally killed by a soldier.

> "I will never forget how the soldiers killed my cousin. He came back from feeding his cow because he was from the hinterland. Then, he met a soldier. After that, he was shot. Worse, the soldier put him in a canal, then he put the dry leaves of the coconut (on his dead body) … Then the soldiers ignited it with fire. He was burned. Not contented in killing him, his body was burned. He was shot near the Muslim cemetery."

When asked about the killings in the hinterland, Samira (phone interview, August 21, 2021), a young housewife expressed her fear of the soldiers.

> Samira: "People from the hinterland would go to Jolo to sell their fruits. If the army would see them, they killed them."
>
> EGRS: "Why would they kill them? They only brought fruits."
>
> Samira: "Because they assume that they were *aktibis"* (activist, term referring to MNLF rebels)

As seen in the narrative of Samira, the military could not identify the enemy "in an environment where it is impossible to tell civilians from enemy combatant apart" (Kalyvas, 2006). Grounded on their identity as Muslim Tausug and/or their association with the rebels through kinship, the soldiers suspected some civilians as members or sympathizers of the MNLF.

Some Muslim Tausug already felt the tension with the Christians brought by their colonial and post-colonial history. However, this was further heightened during their militarization. In an interview with Lea Usman-Laput, (2005, 102), Jikirani who was accused of killing a Catholic priest recalled a lesson that he learned when he was a child "Our elders would say that even before, the Christian Bisayans were not worthy of trust". In another interview by Usman-Laput (2005, 98-99), Babu Arag, a housewife witnessed how their family's land was dispossessed which also resulted in the death of her husband and son. She described how they felt betrayed by the Christians

> "The land was divided between the government and a Christian military officer in 1970. With a portion of the land, the government proposed to construct a school building which was not materialized until now. The other half was accordingly registered in the name of the Christian military official. We had no idea we were to be evicted after having long occupied the land and harvested the copra of our coconut… Who would listen to illiterates like us? As many of our folks would say the Christian government is deceitful."

Babu Arag added that the Christians have been "arrogant, especially the soldiers" and they "would hit the *tau gimba* (upland folks) with the butt of their guns if the latter answers back if not they would be simply shot" (Usman-Laput 2005, 97).

Overall, the narrators thought that they were just caught in the conflict between the armed forces and the MNLF. When militarization took place in the hinterlands of Sulu, various forms of coercive social control were stipulated by the soldiers to weaken the MNLF. The soldiers were suspicious that the civilians might help their relatives who turned

into insurgents by giving them a supply of rice and other commodities. As a response, the soldiers conducted food blockades to starve the rebels. As proof of residency and identification, Hussein, (personal communication, April 7, 2019) added that a *cedula* (community tax) was often required at the checkpoints. Failure to present it to the authority might entail interrogation or arrest. The soldiers also imposed a proper haircut on Tausug men to avoid suspicion of being a member of the rebel group.

As one of the most powerful institutions during Martial Law, the military imposed discipline on the Muslim Tausug. But they became violent because of the immense power vested to them by Pres. Marcos. Most importantly they were skeptical of the civilians because they might conspire with the rebels. But the Muslim Tausug needed to continue their lives while facing their fear. As seen in the narratives, the power of the state trickled down to the bodies of the civilians -- that even the hair of men was subjected to their power. The body of the Tausug was reconfigured to become a docile body where it was "contained and disciplined to distinguish them from the 'barbarous and violent' (Foucault, 1977) MNLF rebels. Through this discipline, the military showed and performed the potency of the state (Reyes, 2018).

Displacement and Reprisal from the Military

As the violence and harassment worsened, the civilians needed to transfer from one place to another. Ibrahim (phone interview, April 24, 2021) narrated that "many places like (in the towns of) Talipao, part of Maimbung and Patikul were already chaotic. People were now in the evacuation center". With the declining cost of doing violent activities, the continuous militarization by the military worsened the brutalization in the hinterlands. Farid stressed that many soldiers died in their encounter against the MNLF, but the Tausug Muslim civilians carried the sufferings caused by their reprisals

> "Because of the strong forces of the MNLF, many soldiers died, and you cannot blame their anger. Sometimes, there was a (military) truck that underwent three ambushes from the MNLF rebels. If they would enter a town, they would be venting out their frustration against the civilians."

Abdul (personal communication, April 5, 2019) who was a young farmer shared his most traumatic encounter with the army who were defeated by the MNLF.

> "That night, we were bored, so we decided to catch some fish. There was a soldier who got drunk, and we were being told to walk and he would kill all of us. Good thing our friend arrived. He aided us. We were still studying in high school at that time. The soldiers just came back from an encounter. It was scary."

The MNLF fought unconventionally through guerilla tactics and with their familiarity with the terrains of the hinterland, they succeeded in inflicting casualties. When the troops lose in encounters against the MNLF, they would displace their frustration against the innocent Muslim Tausug civilians. With this constraint, the reprisal of the soldiers appeared rational at the expense of the noncombatants (Kalyvas 2006). Looking at revenge as a motivation for violence, war brutalized the combatants where it destroyed their "civilized" principles and dispositions (Kalyvas 2006). Through the actions made by the army, the civilians were just an object of their power and the soldiers showed it by depriving them of their recognition as human beings – as if they are just disposable bodies or "waste products of a society that no longer considers them of any value" (Giroux 2012). Caught in the middle between the clashes of the MNLF and the AFP, the disposability of Tausug bodies then portrayed the everyday reality of the marginalized Muslim Tausug marred by fear and oppression.

These testimonies then exemplified the excesses of power by the armed forces. As the implementer of Martial Law, the Marcos government gave them the authority and legitimacy to suppress all forms of rebellion. Human rights violations are common in the Sulu archipelago, mainland Mindanao, and throughout the Philippines. The MNLF claimed in the Permanent People's Tribunal report in 1980 that "50,000 Muslims had been killed, 200,000 homes burned,535 and 200 school buildings demolished, and 35 towns and cities destroyed (Custodio and Dalisay 1998).

Smuggling as a Form of Resistance

Facing violence and other forms of human rights violations, the militarization of Sulu also contributed to poverty and marginalization among the Muslim Tausug as it disrupted their agricultural production. But some Muslim Tausug civilians resisted the power of the military by smuggling food and other important commodities. The narrative of Mohammad (personal communication, April 7, 2019) who was a high school student exemplified this instance.

> "Smuggling is present because of the food blockade conducted by the military to starve the enemy. The civilians were caught in the middle. I think only two kilos are allowed. If it reached five kilos, they could arrest you and you will be arrested if you do not have a permit from the Philippine Constabulary."

In the perspective of Benedict Kerkvliet ([1990] 2013), lower status could not perceive wrongs, "being unable or unwilling to risk direct action". Therefore, everyday resistance empowers them. This resistance can be manifested in three characteristics (1) it is a small scall where it only involves "an individual or a small group with little or no formal organization and leadership, (2) frequent unawareness of opposing action or who is resisting or at least not immediately aware of it and (3) can "bring immediate benefit, including material gains to the resister". These characteristics exemplified the on-the-group experience of the Muslim Tausug civilians in the hinterland.

The narrators mentioned that some civilians helped their relatives who became rebels by secretly providing them with a supply of rice and other commodities. To strengthen their authority, the soldiers imposed sanctions against civilians who do not follow their orders. It is important to highlight that these civilians were not supported by the MNLF rebels to conduct smuggling. As the Tausug civilians reinforced the value of being *maisug* (bravery), they resisted the authority of the Philippine Army and Constabulary by smuggling sacks of rice. Although it was an illegal act for the military rule, the 'resistance from below' can be risky as it might lead to their arrest or death. The Tausug civilians applied what James Scott called the weapons of the weak where resistance does not seek to openly confront the forces that dominate (Little 1993). Indeed, the Muslim Tausug civilians were not mere passive actors in the conflict between the Philippines government and MNLF rebels. The civilians viewed their subtle subversion not only as a key to reclaiming their rights in acquiring their basic needs to survive their day-to-day lives but also, as a struggle to regain their dignity and self-worth. However, some of them believed that the MNLF articulated their everyday problems brought about by militarization.

Hula, Bangsa, and Agama: Respect Towards the MNLF

Islam played an important role in influencing the MNLF to fight against the Christian oppressors who threatened the populace with

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force. As an affront against the *Ummah* (Muslim community) Rashid (personal interview, July 23, 2021), a former MNLF member said that *jihad* became central to their struggle

> "During the 60s to early 70s, communities were raided. As a Muslim, it's your obligation to defend—to jihad…For the revolutionary, there are levels of sacrifices. First is your personal comfort. You have a very comfortable life, but you will leave your community (for a greater purpose). Next is you leave your family or your relatives. But the peak of your sacrifice is your life."

Amid militarization, Islam offered hope, individual dignity, and collective dignity, especially to those who are living in poverty, injustice oppression, corruption, threat, war, and violence (Milligan 2003; Lara 2014). For the rebels, fighting for their freedom entailed risk and uncertainty. But sacrificing comfort or life for the greater good (i.e. protecting and defending the communities from the abuses of militarization) remained a fulfilling venture. As the militarization intensified, the MNLF then strengthened the core intertwining elements of the movement which also signified Tausug's expression of their identity: (1) *Hula* means homeland or territory of the *Moros* (Mindanao and Sulu archipelago) where they are obliged to defend it from the invaders including the Philippine state. (2) *Bangsa* refers to the nation or group of people that were bonded together due to the commonality of their culture and traditions (in this case the *Bangsamoro*) which distinguished them from other groups in the Philippine archipelago, and (3) *Agama* connotes religion where Islam should be preserved and freely exercised without prejudice against other faith and indigenous culture within the homeland (Rashid, personal interview July 23, 2021). The traditional leadership culture of the Muslim Tausug was further reinforced to convince the civilian population to participate in the secessionist movement. Malik described the dynamics of the MNLF in the hinterlands.

> "They are strong. Their force is strong. You know, if the military would go to their (MNLF) area, the encounters would be non-stop. It's difficult for them because their force is very strong. Of course, some of them (MNLF rebels) were foreign-trained. They have an information drive, telling people their purpose as to why they went to war. They make it appear that it's because of religion. You know if they use Islam or religion, they can easily convince the people. The people would join. Hence, before conducting their training abroad, they already recruited many people in the area."

Islamic countries like Malaysia and Libya sponsored weapons, medical supplies, and military training to conduct the protracted war. This significantly strengthened the force of the rebel. Packaging anger and fear through the stories of abuses of the soldiers and relaying threats that their *agama* (religion) would be removed, the rebels spread propaganda to make them more attractive to the Muslim Tausug. Identities were then politicized by the MNLF where "the reference group shares some combination of common descent, shared historical experiences, and valued cultural traits… (activated when making) claims on behalf of their collective interests against either a state or other group" (Macapagal et. al 2018,2). The politicization of identities happened when subjective forces move to deploy distinctive narratives of culture and history as strategic issues and spark inter-ethnic differences and tensions that rationalize the conflict (Macapagal et. al 2018, 3). Promoting the process for collective violence to erupt, the militarization of the island promoted boundary activation where it generated an 'us vs. them' boundaries (Tilly 2003) – in this case, between the armed forces and the Tausug themselves. Amir (phone interview, August 21, 2021), who later joined the rebel group at the age of 14 narrated how the MNLF convinced them to become part of the movement.

> "They (MNLF) would tell us that we were colonized by people who were not from here (Sulu). They would force us to change our religion (to Christianity) and our place would be occupied by them. That was also the time that the Ilaga (group) also appeared. Because of that, people were scared (of the Philippine government) …The propaganda appeared attractive to the Moro youth, and many joined (the movement)."

According to Misuari's *Manifesto of the Moro National Liberation Front Declaration of Bangsamoro Republik* which was conceptualized in 1968 and delivered in 1974, the five million Bangsa Moro people wish to free themselves from "the terror, oppression, and tyranny of Filipino colonialism which has caused [us] untold sufferings and miseries" (Stern 2009, 177). Through witnessing and experiencing the abuses of the soldiers and relaying the message of the propaganda, it motivated the Tausug Muslim civilians to restore honor that was trampled by the Philippine state. For them, there's a need to respond to offenses – including the killings of their fellow *Moros* and Tausug. As stressed by Ibrahim (phone interview, April 24, 2021), "we (Tausug) are brave that once we are stuck in a mess, our truth prevails, and we would fight

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back". Validating the ethnographic work of Thomas Kiefer (1972, 53), the Tausug highly valued the concept of honor where "public cowardice or refusal to respond to an insult or affront is shameful in the extreme" since it tramples "pride, self-respect, and self-esteem". Hence, insults or any inappropriate remarks call for retaliation. Mohammad (personal communication, April 7, 2019) articulates how the conflict between the Tausug and the military during that time can trigger violence. "The soldiers thought that they were more superior so sometimes, they would create conflict with the Moros who were even more prideful".

Rebels gained respect from the communities which signified that they effectively persuaded them to join the rebellion. Ibrahim (phone interview, April 24, 2021), also mentioned how some Tausug received the rebels:

> Ibrahim: "The people have a good impression of them. They appeared as protectors of rights and religion…They are graduates of the University of the Philippines, then they are a bunch of people from Manila, and they are religious leaders. Those who are less educated were easily convinced to join the movement. Their numbers increased quickly. Nearly 75%, mostly children and adults joined them."
>
> EGRS: "Ahhh okay. So, does it mean that they are respected in the community?"
>
> Ibrahim: "Very respected."

With their leaders who studied at universities in Manila and Cairo, the MNLF easily articulated the systemic problems that the *Moro* masses confronted. In times when Filipino armed forces harassed and oppressed the *Moros*, they look at the rebels as their protector in safeguarding their rights. The Tausugs have been fighting for their self-determination ever since the days of the Sultanate of Sulu. But the MNLF's success against the Philippine state forces further validated the group's role as defenders of *Hula, Bangsa,* and *Agama*. With the effective use of military strategies and the reinforcement of the Islamic Tausug culture, the rebels were able to get the support of the Tausug masses. Later, Hussein also became a member of the MNLF, and his experiences during the militarization of Sulu made him reflect that there were no other means to end their suffering but to fight for their honor as a Tausug and as a *Bangsamoro*. In this case, his testimonial narrative becomes an "individual's biographical narrative of their coming of age or to a state of greater political awareness" (Lusk and Villalobos, 2012, 18).

To strengthen the legitimacy of the movement, the MNLF packaged the struggle of the Tausug against the so-called foreign invaders. This can be exemplified by the narrative of Abdul (personal communication, April 5, 2019).

> "They could not defeat the people of Sulu. See the Japanese, the Americans, and the Spaniards! They cannot defeat the province of Jolo. Until now, they could not defeat…. See, they (MNLF) have three guns… At the age of 12, they already have a gun. Will the soldiers continue to enter their territory? The heavy-duty soldiers would die at their (MNLF) hands."

As seen in his narrative, the long history of resistance against the so-called "outsiders" such as the Spaniards, Americans, Japanese, and Filipinos served as a justification for some Muslim Tausug to fight against oppression and marginalization by the Philippine State. They were also proud that even at a young age, some of their fellow Tausug already resisted the AFP. The narrative of Abdul signified bravery which is a highly desirable trait for a Tausug to become more respectable. The Muslim Tausug sympathized with the MNLF rebels since they restored their honor which was trampled by AFP. The MNLF during the early stage of Martial Law then represented Tausug's cause for self-determination.

Although supportive of the cause of the rebels, Abdul (personal communication, April 5, 2019) did not join the rebel group for the following reason "Because members of the MNLF have no salary. *Barangay tanod* (village police officer) has a salary". As a young farmer who has a meager income, joining the rebellion was not a rational decision for him. As the breadwinner of the family, he feared that his children might lose their father if he considered joining the rebel group. Looking at his family's condition, the cost of participating in the MNLF outweighed its benefit.

But not all Muslim Tausug civilians share the same sentiment with the MNLF. Others were not even receptive to their manners of convincing them to join the movement because they were too coercive and vicious. Sayeed (phone interview, March 6, 2021), who was a high school student mentioned some of the abuses committed by the rebel group

> "(The MNLF) were too harsh to their fellow Tausug. If you commit mistakes, they will punish you immediately. At the same time, if you are pro-military, they would get your properties like your land."

Supporting the observation of Sayeed, Agnes Shari Tan Aliman, a Chinese Christian Tausug author of the book *The Siege of Jolo, 1974,* and a survivor of the battle stated that the MNLF took money and valuables from civilians and terrorized them. Citing an example from a narrative of a survivor in her book, she added that the MNLF allegedly confiscated jewelry and expensive things from the people (Aliman 2021).

Subjugating The Narratives

For some survivors like Hussein, the recognition of their wretched situation during Martial Law remained a major problem. He recalled a challenge that they experienced when they sought reparation for the human rights violation committed by the Air Force against his family.

> "A camouflaged plane conducted scrapping. My father was hit. (But,) [t]here in the University of the Philippines (where the Commission of Human Rights is located), those human rights claimants said they do not know him (father). In the case of my father, they said that (he was not able to claim his reparation and recognition as a victim of Martial Law) because he is a Muslim. Many people got those (reparations) at the Commission of Human Rights, right? For us, the things that happened to my father are true, but he was disapproved (from the claims). In these instances, I do not believe them (The Philippine government). They gave the reparation pay only to those they wanted to give, and those who have strong connections to them. Most of them are from the Reds."

The narrative of Hussein is more than just an expression of his disappointment that his family was not given compensation by the Philippine government for the atrocity that the Air Force has done to his father. His narrative speaks volumes as to how the stories of the Muslim Tausug were relegated to the periphery of discourse on Martial Law. They felt that their narrative was silenced by institutions like the Commission of Human Rights (CHR) which was expected to recognize their stories. He also believed that the CHR is favoring the survivors who were affiliated with the CPP-NPA. For Hussein, he blamed their identity as a religious minority within the Philippine nation-state on the nonrecognition of his father as a victim of human rights violation.

However, some survivors and witnesses choose to move on despite that Sulu experienced heavy damages during Martial Law. Choosing to move on is a rational choice by some of the survivors and witnesses because there are more essential things that they need to deal with in their daily lives like feeding their families. Ibrahim articulated this sentiment

> "Why would we commemorate an event if it is not happy for us? We are reminded of the dark past. Your relative that got lost is now dead. The missing (individuals) were still missing What is good about the happenings in the past? How would you commemorate that? What good memory does it portray? Just like in the Battle of Bud Dajo during the American colonial period. When the Americans returned here to Sulu, my teacher said to us "You have no shame! You engage with the Americans. You don't know that after the Battle of Dajo the Americans destroyed (the mountain), then you will celebrate the anniversary that we were massacred? Go back to history! Our past is so dark then you will celebrate (the anniversary of Bud Dajo)? That's awful" My teacher is saying that it's not good for remembering because it's (the past) is so dark. So, we must look forward and see the future." (Ibrahim)

Collectively, the militarization of Sulu and its violent consequences were not part of the glorious past of the Tausug, an ethnolinguistic group that is known for its valiance against the colonizers. The militarization carried pain and sorrow to the Tausug that for some of these survivors, it's not worth remembering. Anchored on the Tausug concept of *sipug* (shame), this discernment from Ibrahim exemplified Paul Connerton's (2008, 68) concept of "forgetting as humiliated silence" where "some acts of silence may be an attempt to bury things beyond expression and the reach of memory, yet such silencing, while they are a type of repression, can at the same time be a form of survival, and the desire to forget may be an essential ingredient in that process of survival". Reminiscing on the chaos and demanding accountability for the abusers and perpetrators of violence does not make sense to them anymore. For them, they were already contented that they withstand all the difficulties that they faced in life. Articulating the teaching of Islam Amir believed that "[D]espite what happened, I forgave them. It's up to God to punish them -- if ever they have one".

Conclusion

This article delves into the testimonial narratives of the Muslim Tausug witnesses and survivors during the early years of the militarization in Sulu (1972-1974) as counter-history to the dominant, monochromatic, and polarizing historiography of Martial Law in Muslim Mindanao. Using the Foucaudian lens of counter-history that criticizes the prevailing historiography on the "Moro Problems", this study interrogates the subjugated and silenced narratives of Martial Law from the periphery

of the Philippine nation. Resurrecting and recognizing the voices of the Muslim Tausug masses, it opens opportunities for identifying various problems brought by militarization and how culture and identity play in their stories of survival.

During the militarization of Sulu, many Muslim Tausug in the hinterland experienced and witnessed the abuses and oppression by the AFP. As seen in their testimonial narratives, the soldiers stripped off their honor and dignity – from confiscating their weapons to killing some members of their families. But instead of being passive from the cruelties of the military, their narratives showed their overt resistance as their way of reclaiming their self-worth. While the MNLF gained traction among the Muslim Tausug, some civilians saw them as protectors of *Hula* (territory), *Bangsa* (nation), and *Agama* (religion). The MNLF articulated their everyday grievances against militarization and their desire to become independent. As an affront against the *Ummah* (Muslim community) *jihad* became central to their struggle where many of them sacrificed the comfort of their lives for a greater purpose – the emancipation of their fellow *Moros* from oppression. Grounded on the teachings of Islam, many survivors believed that their armed struggle could restore honor that was trampled by the AFP and the Philippine state at large.

While some of these witnesses and survivors continued to fight for the recognition of their experiences during the militarization of Sulu, many of them moved on or even suppressed their memories of war and violence. More than forty years have passed, yet Sulu confronts some of the most violent encounters of the government not only from Muslim secessionists but also from extremist groups like the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). This enduring conflict in Sulu further silenced the narratives of Muslim Tausug during Martial Law. In recent years, human rights violations persisted in Mindanao as the armed forces face their enemies in the hinterland (CNN Philippines Staff 2018; Lalu 2020; United Nations Human Rights 2020) while leaving the civilians in the middle of their conflict. However, if the root causes of poverty and abuses were not addressed, it would encourage more people to join the armed rebellion. Underscoring counter-history as a theoretical framework that gives voice to the silenced, this article could encourage more Filipinos and Bangsamoro scholars to tackle the subjugated narratives of Martial Law not only in Sulu but also in

Lanao, Cotabato, and Zamboanga in mainland Mindanao. Facing the various predicaments of the present such as the historical distortion and denialism of Martial Law and the continuing marginalization of many Muslim Filipinos, the stories of witnesses and survivors during war and violence in Muslim Mindanao need the recognition it deserves.

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Endnotes

1. The term Bangsamoro was derived from the word *Bangsa*, an Old Malay word for nation, identity, or rank, and *Moro*, a collective term for various Muslim ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines.
2. The Tausug is the dominant ethnolinguistic group in the Sulu archipelago in the southwestern tip of the Philippines who speak the Bahasa Sug language.
3. Some works of literature deviate from the dominant historiography on Martial Law in Muslim Mindanao. Book such as *Muslim Rulers and Rebels Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* by Thomas McKenna (1998) for example articulated how ordinary Muslims, particularly urban refugees who were displaced in Bangsamoro Wars in Cotabato in mainland Mindanao examine and made sense of the existing Muslim politics. McKenna's work proved that these Muslim civilians are not passive actors of the conflict between the state and the rebels.
4. Hinterland in this context refers to areas outside the town of Jolo, the provincial capital of Sulu. Before 1974, Jolo was spared from the encounters between the military and the MNLF. However, on February 7, 1974 the MNLF rebels suddenly invaded Jolo. Containing the forces of the rebels who were hiding inside buildings and houses, the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Air Force bombed and burned the town while the military fought the rebels on the ground. This confrontation resulted in widescale casualties, injuries, and displacements of Tausug civilians. This became known as the 1974 Battle of Jolo.
5. Corregidor is an island located at the entrance of Manila Bay in the southwestern part of Luzon.
6. Nur Misuari was constantly red-baited or accused as a Maoist by the Marcos government. But despite that the MNLF does not follow the ideology of Maoism, the Marcos government conveniently used the "Maoist" label to discredit the movement
7. From being a colonial term, the *Moro* in its name was then adopted by the MNLF as a symbol of resistance against the Christian-dominated Philippines.

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The journal invites scholars and experts working in all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences pertaining to Islam or Muslim societies. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers. Submissions that violate our guidelines on formatting or length will be rejected without review.

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3. Feener, Michael R., and Mark E. Cammack, eds. 2007. *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions*. Cambridge: Islamic Legal Studies Program.
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6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11th, 2007.

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