

MINDANAO SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: IMPLICATIONS ON THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

F. L. Dumagat

The government's [Spanish colonial government in the Philippines] lack of knowledge, up to this day, of the social organization of the Mindanao Moros has been the sole cause of the great importance we have given to the Cotabato Sultan in the treaty of 1837.¹

Social organization is indicated in the above quotation as a key to understanding the dynamics of Maguindanao Muslim society in particular. It is also true in the case of any society, including Philippine society, in general. Here, social organization refers to the "internal relations in the whole of Maguindanao" as Ilete puts it.²

The word "Mindanao" here refers to the people and islands of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-tawi and the other smaller islands in the area. Mindanao is a corruption of the word "Maguindanao" which is derived from "danao," meaning lake or flooded area, "mag," meaning akin to, and "ingud," meaning country, or people settled around the lake.³ "Mindanao social organization" then refers to the interrelationships of persons and groups of persons and their ordering in society in such a way as to maintain such society over time.

This paper aims to sketch the development of social organization of the Mindanao people based on historical and ethnographical studies. In the process, I may be able to explain why there was no unified resistance against Spanish "pacification" and colonial expansion especially by the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates. The contributions of foreign influences like the introduction of Islam and the use of firearms and steamships are examined as factors responsible for the development of social organization.

Social organization is conceptualized here as a means to an end. This means that social organization is a function of what society wants to achieve. For example, during wartime, social organization becomes militaristic and most activities are geared towards prosecution of the war, such that civilian pursuits like sports and entertainment are minimized. Another example is Max Weber's attributing Western development and capitalism to the "protestant ethic."⁴

The Cultural Foundation

It is well-known that folk Catholicism is a mixture of Roman Catholic Church and native Filipino beliefs and practices. The same pattern holds true in the superimposition of Islamic institutions on the pre-Islamic indigenous culture among the people of Mindanao.⁵

The proof that there was a common pre-Catholic and pre-Islamic Filipino culture of the peoples in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao is the common root words in the languages and dialects they speak. The words for counting (e.g., *isa*, *dalawa*, *tatlo*), kinship (e.g., *ama*, *ina*, *anak*) and familiar objects (e.g. *bahay*, *balay*, *abay* for house; *alad* for fence; *tubig*, *ig*, *waig* for water) have similar roots if they are not completely similar. These similarities can be traced to their origin from the Malayo-Polynesian stock. Their common belief in unseen spirits and the religious rituals connected to the life cycles (i.e., birth, marriage,

death), and the practice of giving offerings to the unseen spirits are additional evidence of common cultural roots.⁶ It is interesting to note here that the belief in a "twin spirit" called *inikadowa*⁷ in Maranao is also called *kadkadwa* in Itneg (Tinggian), both words obviously derived from *dwa* or two.

If it were true that there was a pre-Islamic and pre-Christian native Filipino culture, it is possible to postulate that the non-islamized groups like the Manuvu of Mindanao and the Itneg (Tinggian) of Northern Luzon, both of whom were not christianized by the Spaniards, could exhibit the native Filipino social organization. The ethnographic studies by Manuel and Cole on the Manuvu and by Cole and the present writer⁸ on the Itneg (Tinggian) may serve as basis for reconstructing Filipino pre-Islamic and pre-Hispanic social organization.

The common features of Manuvu and Itneg (Tinggian) social organizations are:

1. The kinship system serves as the basic organizing principle governing most activities such as hunting, swidden clearing and cultivation, conflict resolution, and religious observance;
2. Customary law and religious beliefs are interconnected, both of which provide the basic norms of behavior in society;
3. Village organization is based on kinship; and leadership is held by the most successful warrior (i.e., the *bagani* or *bahani* among the Manuvu, and the *maingel* among the Itneg, who later became the *lakay* or patriarch of a clan);

4. Social stratification is simple and two-tiered, namely, the community leaders (e.g., *datu* among the Manuvu, and *baknang* among the Itneg, both of which mean rich) and the ordinary villager. Stratification is not based on wealth but on one's influence in community affairs;
5. The main concerns of the community are security from enemies, good harvest, and good health for which the religious ceremonies are held;
6. Inter-village relations or alliance is strengthened through inter-marriages between two or more villages.

The kinship system - An individual is born to a kin-group which nurtures him as a baby, and socializes him as he grows older. The kin-group finds him a mate and involves him in the clearing and cultivation of the swidden, in communal hunting and fishing, and the religious ceremonies. His status and wealth are determined by his family affiliation. On the village level, the kin-groups' inter-relationships determine the effectiveness of village organization in a way, therefore, the kinship system performs the functions of government, such as maintaining peace and order and preparing the child for adult roles.

Customary law and religious belief - Much of customary law is rooted on religious beliefs. It prohibits or prescribes the performance of certain acts and obligations depending on the underlying religious beliefs. On the other hand, religious beliefs revolve around the spirits of the ancestors, the forests and rivers, and one's spirit. When one's spirit deserts a person due to the curse or spell of evil spirits, that person gets sick. The spirits of

the ancestors are the guardian spirits that give a person good health, good harvest, and children. Customary law is full of taboos to be observed to prevent the spirits from getting angry and cause sickness, misfortune or infertility.

The village organization - The village is usually inhabited by kin-groups. The bravest and successful warriors provide leadership. Among the Manuvu, the highest leader is a *datu*. This status, however, was borrowed from the Muslims.⁹ Earlier, the *bahani* or *bagani* was the leader because of constant warfare with neighboring groups like the Muslims. Later, the position of *datu* was superimposed over the *bahani* and other leaders performing judicial functions (i.e., the *ta-ukum* and *ta-usay*) and religious services (i.e. the *walian* or *tumanuran*) were added. But these functions were later on assumed by the *datu* in the 1960s.¹⁰

In the case of the Itneg (Tinggian), the warrior-leader was replaced by the *lakay* (old wise man or patriarch who was a former warrior).¹¹ Still later, the younger politicians took over leadership.¹² What brought about the changes was the imposition of Spanish and American colonial rules and the control of headhunting in the lower valleys of Abra.

Social stratification - The fact that life was simple (i.e., revolved around swidden agriculture and hunting) and that most people in the village belonged to the same kin-group, social stratification then was minimal among both the Manuvu and Itneg. The person who had more extensive swidden and had more livestock naturally became more well-to-do than his kinsmen who had less. This, together with one's performance in headhunting or war constituted the basis of social stratification. No social classes developed because there was no concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few individuals or families.

Community ethos - The concerns or ethos of a society determine largely the extent of activities in that society. To the Manuvu and Itneg, their main concerns were simply to have food for their family, to be free from sickness, and to be safe from enemies. Since good harvest, good health, and good fortune were

believed to be induced by pleasing the spirits with gifts and offerings, the braves would go on a headhunting expedition in enemy territory, which if successful would please the spirits. To be safe from enemies, the Manuvu and Itneg lived on tree houses. Some Itneg lived on hilltops, barricaded on all sides with thick bamboo fence.

The prevalence of headhunting raids did not, however, prevent the holding of big feasts called *sayang*, among the Itneg which lasted for 17 days.¹³ In the case of the Manuvu, they also celebrated a sacrificial feast to please the spirits.¹⁴

Inter-village relations - Inter-village relations or alliance was kept strong through intermarriages and peace pacts. This was true among the both the Itneg¹⁵ and Manuvu.¹⁶ However, the Manuvu had kept a belligerent relation with their neighboring Muslims of Malabang and the Maguindanao of Cotabato.¹⁷ In the case of Itneg, they also kept a belligerent relation with the Guinaang of Mountain Province.¹⁸

Noteworthy is the fact that despite the prevalence of hospitality and intervillage raids and wars mostly due to headhunting, trade was carried on in neutral zones. This explains the existence of ancient Chinese jars and dishes in remote areas of Abra. In the case of the Manuvu, trade also continued between them and the Muslims.

The Coming of Islamic Institutions

The coming of Islam to Sulu (Buansa) and Maguindanao superimposed Islamic institutions on the existing native culture which is postulated here to be approximated by Manuvu and Itneg culture. As early as the 10th century A.D. Muslim Arab traders operating in China, Borneo, the Moluccas, and Celebes could also have reached adjacent islands of the Philippines like Sulu and Palawan.¹⁹ Such trading visits may not have led to the establishment of the Islamic sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao but, they could have brought to the notice of Arab missionaries the Philippine islands as possible area of mission work.

At any rate, what is certain is the existence of a foreign Muslim grave, probably that of an Arab's in a *tempat* (sacred grove) on Bud Dato a few miles from Jolo town with the inscription 710 A.H. (1310 A.D.). Dean Cesar Majul interpreted

...that by the end of the thirteenth century or at the beginning of the fourteenth century there was already a settlement or colony of foreign Muslims in Jolo Island.²⁰

Based on the *tarsilas* (or *silsilah* in Arabic, meaning genealogy) of the ruling houses of Sulu, the islamization of Sulu, as well as the start of the Islamic sultanate due to the marrying into the ruling houses of Sulu of the foreign Muslim missionaries, may be traced back to Tuan Masha'ika who married the daughter of the "younger" Rajah Sipad (Siripada or Sripaduka). Masha'ika (or Mashayikh) means descendant of local "saints" and it is distinguished from *sharif* or *sayyid* which means descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.²¹ Sometime later, Karim ul Mukdum was said to have introduced Islam. Then, Rajah Baguinda of Mengkabaw of Sumatra arrived and got married in Buansa.²²

In the case of the beginning of Islam in Maguindanao, it can be traced back to Sharif Awliya who introduced Islam in the present site of Cotabato City in the 15th century. He was said to have married a *hour*i (celestial maiden) and begot a princess called Faramisuli, who later got married to Sharif Maraja who came from Johore and settled in Slangan, Cotabato. It is to the line that the *dumatu* clans of Maguindanao trace their royal lineage. Another branch traces its lineage to Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuwan who came from Johore in the first quarter of the 16th century²³

The significance of the spread of Islam in Sulu and Maguindanao was that they became part of *dar ul-Islam* (the household of Islam). In the words of Majul:

By adapting Islam, a segment of the population of the Philippines became part of wider religious community extending from the Pillars of Hercules to the borders of China. These people in the Philippines gained from Islam a high sense of religious community, new laws, a more developed political organization, a new system of writing, and, above all, a new ethical outlook on life. Having adopted values that transcended their race and particular culture, they began to consider themselves as a historical people, yet assuming all the time that their history was not the result of their own making or efforts. Without this consciousness as well as the benefits that Islam brought to the peoples of Sulu and Mindanao, they would have easily been swept away by Western colonialism and relegated to the limbo of conquered peoples.²⁴

In addition to the moral principle that forbade submission to unbelievers, especially the Spaniards who had themselves been subjects of the Moorish occupation, the Muslim Filipinos drew strength from the sultanate as an institution. The barangay datus of Luzon and Visayas owed no loyalty to a higher authority, since they were separate. But the datus in a sultanate, as well as the non-Muslim datus owing tributary obligations to a sultan, were under the protection of a paramount leader; they had duties and statutes that were institutionalized...²⁵

Both C. A. Majul and O. D. Corpus were correct in pinpointing Islam as the unifying and driving force that prolonged Sulu and Maguindanao resistance to Spanish colonialism. The resistance of the two sultanates was, however, not unified; neither was there sustained unity, for example, between Buayan and Maguindanao in fighting the Spaniards from the time of Sultan Kudarat in the 1600s and that of Datu

Uto's in the 1860s. Had the Spaniards the will and the manpower to consolidate their series of victories in their expeditions against the two sultanates, they could have eventually established Spanish colonial rule over them just as the American had succeeded in the earlier decades of the 20th century.

In any case, it is important to identify at this point the changes in social organization brought about by islamization. This will be the basis for evaluating the contribution of such new social organization to the Muslim resistance to Spanish colonialism.

Besides the arrival of Islaic missionaries and the subsequent establishment of the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates in the 15th and 16th centuries, respectively, what was noteworthy was also the arrival of the Badjaos from Johore to Sulu.²⁶ This fact is important because these Badjaos eventually played important roles in fighting the Spaniards both in Sulu and in Maguindanao, and in the administration of the two sultanates.

The first group, who earlier arrived in Sulu was the Buranuns (mountaineers), who settled in the Maimbung area; the second group was the Tagimahas (from Basilan?) who lived near Buansa; and the third group was the Baklayas who settled near Jolo town. The fourth group who arrived later was the Badjaos who did not stay in a particular place.²⁷ This *tarsila* account of different groups of settlers is the basis of the ethnolinguistic groupings into Tausug, Samal, and Badjao.

In the case of the Maguindanao, the *tarsilas* relate the arrival of Sharif Kabungsuwan and his group of warriors and settlers from Mecca and their disembarkation in Malabang. Kabungsuwan then proceeded to the mouth of Rio Grande and established a town. The people who did not accept his teachings and did not obey the Koran were driven into the hills. These were the ancestors of the Tirurais and the Manobos.²⁸

Even at this early stage, the Badjaos, Tirurais, and Manobos had been identified as different groups and located at the periphery of Islamic society. On the other hand, the Tausug of Sulu and the Maguindanao of Mindanao had been pictured as the faithful followers of the Prophet Muhammad whose leaders could trace their ancestry to the Prophet himself.

Formal government borrowed from the neighboring Islamic states like Brunei, Johore, and Ternate, eventually evolved out of the recognized leaders in Buansa, in the case of Sulu. These leaders were the *datu*s, *tuans*, *shaikhs*, and *orangkayas*, their importance following the order of enumeration. The *shaikhs* were religious leaders and the *orangkayas* were commoners who had wealth.²⁹ Further differentiation of offices took place in the course of time such that by 1753 the following offices and officials existed:

1. Datu Bandahara - Datu Salikaya - chief minister
2. Datu Maharajah - Iela - Muhammad Ismail and Datu Muhammad - Talha - functioned as supervisors (or executive officers?) to remind the officials of their duties and to report lapses to the sultan
3. Datu Jukan Pahalawan - Muhammad Baquir - commander of cottas and artillery
4. Datu Muluk Bandarasa (Bandarsha, shahbandar) - Datu Amin Saad - commissioner of customs
5. Datu Sabelmal - Datu Zein ul - Abidin - state treasurer
6. Datu Tumanggung - Datu Amin Abbas - chief of police and justice of peace
7. Datu Mamamsha - Datu Amin Hasan and Datu Muhammad Hamid - guardian of customary law (chief justice or secretary of justice or solicitor general?)
8. Datu Amir Bahar (Rajah Laut) - Datu Shabab ud-Din - highest naval officer or admiral (?)
9. Munnabil Alam - Datu Muhammad - in charge of Sultan's Cotta (aide-camp?)

10. Datu Sawajahan (or Sahuwadan) - Datu Adul Rahim - assists Rajah Laut in giving port clearance.³⁰

Among the Maguindanao, the formal government was adopted from Ternate's. It had two levels : (1) first level included (a) the King or Colano; (b) the Gugu or prime minister; (c) the Rajah Laut or official in charge of sea matters including warfare; and (d) the Kimalaha or the city mayor; and (2) the second level included the people's representatives called Marasaolis from the four clans. The four latter representatives were to countercheck any abuse from the first level or aristocracy.³¹

It is clear from the above formalization of governmental structure that Islam certainly made its impact on Mindanao social organization. In fact, what developed out of the diverse ethnolinguistic groups that came and settled in Mindanao was a "segmented state" as described by Warren:

The small states of the Sulu and Celebes seas crystallized in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These Muslim realms were situated on sparsely populated islands, coasts, and rivers and were reliant on trade as a resource. Lacking recognized boundaries, the political systems of these traditional politics linked widely disparate communities and groups who were not organically united above the village level in a larger, complex, dynamic web of social systems, rather than a particular aspect of the social structure. Territorial dominion, a system of specialized offices and a political hierarchy exercising some control over the use of force in the area of alleged dominion were implicit in the genesis of such traditional states (sultanates) as Sulu, Cotabato, Brunei, and Kutai.

.....

Critical to understanding the centrifugal nature of the Sulu Sultanate is the fact that it lacked an effective means of centralizing rights associated with the legal, political, and administrative spheres of the state. In the Sultanate the rights and duties of authority figures were duplicated at different levels of the traditional political system. The primary rights associated with the traditional political system among the Taosug were: (1) rights to perform legal functions; (2) rights to appoint and regulate religious officials; (3) rights to control over territory; (4) rights to control over subject people; (5) rights to wage external warfare; (6) rights to tribute and legal fees; (7) rights to control over markets; and (8) rights to mediate private warfare and feud.

.....

Stratified prestige in Taosug society perpetuated through a system of ranked social categories. The three legally defined segments of the population were the aristocrats, privileged and powerful yet numerically small, the village dwelling commoners comprising the broad mass of the Sultanate's population, and the *banyaga* or slaves who were numerous and mostly of foreign origin.³²

In the case of the Maguindanao, Laarhoven wrote:

This chapter clearly outlines the centralized political system that Maguindanao had achieved at the end of the 17th century. One gets a sense of the stableness and consolidation that took place under Sultan Barahaman. There was a

definite commitment on the part of the datus in his realm to acknowledge the sultan as head of state and religion. Even in the eyes of the Dutchmen, he was a strong ruler and was respected. At first, the Dutch had started out addressing and referring to him as "King" (Konig) but by the end of the century, he was called "Emperor" (Keizler) in the documents.

.....

I would say that the elements of Maguindanao politics shown in this chapter are a fair representation of what the Dutch documents reflects, although the last word has not been said about Maguindanao's political leadership. For example, the use of European deserters, the training of the sultan and the datus' troops, their weapons, and defensive hardware, still need a closer examination. All three variables - deserters, warriors, and weapons - were interrelated and important in the acculturation process of Maguindanaos. They certainly provide another aspect to the success of the flourishing sultanate.

The increase in population was also an important factor. At least 25,000 people lived in Simoay because when Sultan Barahaman moved to Kattituan, 5,000 families were involved. The Maulano and Baja Muda and their followers were not included. Even if half of the population left and half stayed behind, about 10,000 families must have made up Simoay. In the entire realm of the sultan, we may easily conclude that there were approximately 200,000 people in the turn of the 18th century, judging from the Brieving and Cloeck report.

Several times in the last two chapters, examples were given of the stratified rank system in operation. The next chapter will also indicate this. There was not enough data to devote a special chapter or section to it. Moreover, of all the writings on Maguindanao, its social organization has been described most explicitly, specifically by Mastura and Stewart.

The Negeri Simoay had streets on both sides of the river. The sultan's house was on the left bank. Next to his house was the mosque and, beyond that, a large plaza where the market was held. The same plaza was also used for training the armies. Past that, the street bent to the right, coming from the mouth of the river, and commercial district started. This consisted of streets with shops of shoemakers, jewelers, smiths, tailors, scribes, accountants, money lenders and exchangers, carpenters, etc.³³

Comparing the indigenous social organization described earlier with the islamized social organization, one can see the change from a homogenous people to a heterogenous group of settlers which became the basis of the social structure - composed of the aristocrats or ruling families, the commoners or ordinary villagers, the Samals and Badjaos who lived in the peripheral areas, and the slaves called *baniaga*. The ruling families handled the government operations, owned the farms and plantations, and controlled trade and taxation and tribute collection. The ordinary villagers served as small producers and artisans. The Samals and Badjaos provided governmental services to the sultan as fighters, couriers and agents, and tenders of the marine gardens and divers of pearls. The *baniaga* served in various occupation depending upon their skills such as secretary to the sultan, captains of raiding boats, workers in the plantations, and household servants. Evidently, economic activities changed from simple swidden farming and hunting to sedentary agriculture, trade, slave-raiding and trafficking, and warfare. The ethos was

transformed from the simple satisfaction of subsistence needs, beliefs in unseen spirits, and enjoyment of simple songs and dances to more cosmopolitan and sophisticated taste for European and Chinese products such as clothes, ornaments and guns and the drive to conquer and dominate over other peoples. And most importantly, formal government was instituted that ensured the satisfaction of public services and the protection of the state from foreign aggression. Although "segmented," the sultanates served as counter weights against the imperialist designs of the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the English.

Effectiveness of Social Organization

With the above picture of socio-political organization in the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates, it is now in order to examine how effective such social organization was in meeting the requirements of society, especially in countering the threat of Spanish colonialism and imperialism. Going back to the question of why Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates failed to forge a unified resistance to Spanish colonial aggression, it may be well to review the Spanish attempt to finally put an end to the "moro piracy" and slave-raiding in the Spanish-controlled settlements in Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon starting in 1635 when they built a fort at La Caldera, Zamboanga on April 6, 1635 to its abandonment in 1663 due to the Koxinga threat against Manila. It may be understood from the account by Majul that the Spanish King finally ordered the conquest and colonization of Sulu and Mindanao to prevent future raids into christianized settlements and to preempt or thwart the colonial ambitions of both the Dutch and the English in the area.³⁴

No less than the new Spanish Governor-General Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera undertook the talks of pacification which started on March 13, 1637 firstly to subdue and capture or destroy Kudarat of Maguindanao who was then perceived by the Spaniards to be the greatest obstacle to the colonization and christianization of Maguindanao. The plan was to deal with Maguindanao, then Sulu, then Borneo. As Majul put it:

His plan was clear: defeat and capture Kudarat in Mindanao and temporarily put a Spanish puppet as a ruler in Maguindanao, destroy the so far still impregnable *cotta* of the Sulu ruler, capture him, put strong garrisons in Jolo, and then attack Borneo, more specifically, the Camucones there, who were subjects of the Brunei sultan. These were to be done one at a time and under his personal command.

The result of Corcuera's efforts in the case of Kudarat was a peace treaty on June 24, 1645, recognizing Kudarat's suzerainty over the territory from Zamboanga to the Davao Gulf; but the Maranao area was recognized as a Spanish sphere of influence. In addition to the offensive alliance between Spain and Maguindanao, it was agreed upon that spoils were to be divided equally; captives were to be set free; trade was to be allowed; and the Jesuits were to be allowed to build a church in Simuay.³⁵

In the case of the Sulu expedition, the sultan's *cotta* was taken after three months of siege, due primarily to famine and epidemics inside the *cotta*. But the Sulu sultan and his family were able to escape. Eventually, the Sulu sultan was able to induce the Dutch to come to his aid, for which reason, they sent a force that attacked the Spaniards in 1645 but unsuccessfully. However, the Spaniards decided to give up Jolo because of the Dutch threat against Manila. Before leaving Jolo, they concluded a treaty with the sultan which is substantially similar to the one signed with Kudarat. The peace treaty with Sulu was made on April 14, 1646 in the presence of Kudarat's ambassador.³⁶

The peace treaties between the Spaniards and the Filipino Muslims were the result of a stalemate - a recognition by both sides of their inability to have complete prolonged control of the other, both sides trying to get the most of the situation, at the same time biding their time for a better opportunity to put an end to the threat of the other. The Spaniards tried to sow intrigues between the Buayan of Datu Maputi and the

Maguindanao and Ilanun of Sultan Kudarat, but without success because Datu Maputi realized the disadvantageous consequences of complying with his treaty with the Spaniards of paying tributes to them and allowing missionaries within his territory.³⁷ In Addition, Manakior, who had helped the Spaniards in return for a promise of making him Lord of Buayan, also eventually joined the camp of Sultan Kudarat, and even married Kudarat's sister whose dowry was the fort at Buayan.³⁸

Delving deeper into the strengths and weaknesses of the Spaniards and Muslims, there were at least four aspects by which the two sides may be evaluated: (1) organizational, (2) technological, (3) diplomatic, and (4) cultural. On the organizational dimension, the Spaniards had the superiority, being able to muster thousands of Pampango and Visayan conscripts. They were also superior in military strategy. On the other hand, the Muslims were vulnerable to intrigues, especially by the aggressive and cunning Jesuit missionaries who used the promise of Spanish support for the succession of a datu to the paramount leadership to win the loyalty of such datu to the Spanish cause and to deny his support to the hostile datu. The Spaniards pitted Datu Maputi and Maniakor against Sultan Kudarat whom they wanted to capture or destroy. The strategy was, however, neutralized by Kudarat through intermarriage. Nevertheless, it is clear that the lack of clear-cut and popularly accepted rules of succession, including strong and binding ties between datu and the ruling sultan on the one hand, and between a datu and his constituents on the other hand, made the position of the ruling sultan tenuous and subject to political intrigues from outside. Note, for example the famous exhortation by Sultan Kudarat to the Ilanun and Maranao datu which demonstrated his eloquence but not his control over them:

What have you done? Do you realize what subjection would reduce you to? A toilsome slavey under the Spaniards! Turn your eyes to the subject nations and look at the misery to which glorious nations had been reduced to. Look at the Tagalogs and Visayans! Are you better than they?

Do you think that the Spaniards will consider you of better stuff? Have you not seen how the Spaniards trample them under their feet? Do you not see every day how they are obliged to work at the oars and the factories with all their rigors? Can you tolerate anyone with a little Spanish blood to beat you up and grasp the fruits of your labor? Allow yourselves to be subjects (today) and tomorrow you will be at the oars; I, at least, will be a pilot, the biggest favor they will allow a chief. Do not let their sweet words deceive you; their promises facilitate their deceits, which, little by little, enable them to control everything. Reflect on how even the minor promises to the chiefs of other nations were not honored until they became masters of them all. See now what is being done to these chiefs and how they are being led by a rod.³⁹

From the point of view of technology, the superiority of the Spaniards was evident in terms of arms, boats, and equipment. Technological superiority was the deciding factor why the Muslims could not sustain a battle against the Spaniards. Their *cottas* and defensive works failed to stop the Spanish offensives. What is surprising was the inability of the Muslims to learn and acquire the technology of war despite their repeated reverses due to inferior arms and equipment.

In terms of diplomatic offensive, the Muslims were obviously successful in getting assistance from both the Dutch and English who provided arms supply and, in the case of the Dutch, direct intervention. The Spaniards were, on the other hand, at a disadvantage because their diplomatic relations with the English and the Dutch were conducted in Europe.

Finally, in terms of culture, the Spaniards had an aggressive and ruthless culture that Muslim culture could not neutralize or confront squarely. Of course, the fanaticism of the *juramentado* or *jihad* was a desperate measure bordering on the

hysterical, just like the *kamikaze* measure adopted by the Japanese in World War II in the face of impending defeat. It may be noted that despite the brilliant tactics used by Sultan Kudarat to offset the military and organizational superiority of the Spaniards by avoiding frontal battles except under the protection of his *cottas*, he was unable to analyze the sources of his weaknesses that would have enabled him to make provisions to strengthen them.

Conclusion

The development of Mindanao social organization from its indigenous origin to its islamization has been discussed, showing its highlights and effectiveness in confronting Spanish imperialistic aggression. The coming of Islam to Mindanao institutionalized government and introduced cultural and religious sophistication. Nevertheless, Spanish superiority in technology and organization were the decisive factors that humbled the brave and proud Muslims at the hands of ruthless conquistadores. What saved the Muslims from total colonial domination was the intervention and support of the Dutch and English.

This dependence on the goodwill and diplomatic support of the Dutch and English that enabled the ruling Muslim houses to attract supporters among their *datus*, intensified towards the 19th century. In fact, it was shown by Warren that the wealth and power of the Sulu sultan and his *datus* from 1768 to 1898 were dependent on the triangular trading relations between Sulu, China, and the European and European and American markets through the English traders. When slave-raiding and trade were disrupted by the Spaniards with the introduction of steamships, Sulu became weaker.⁴⁰ The same was true in the case of Datu Uto of Buayan in the 1860-1888. Reynaldo C. Ileto wrote:

Bereft of wealth, expressed in terms of slaves, cash and firearms, the Datu of Buayan could no longer attract a following. Nothing more is heard of him till his death around 1902.⁴¹

To some extent, it has been shown that a social organization that lacks cohesion and consolidation of power has no chance of competing against or eliminating a rival capable of exerting massive power at will and with ease when needed. When power is diffused and difficult to focus when necessary, the tendency is a weak impact resulting in defeat by a stronger rival. The segmented nature of the Muslim sultanates prevented them from confronting successfully the massive military expeditions the Spaniards brought to bear on them.

The implication of this historical fact on the present and future is the need for social organization to be adapted to the requirements of changing economic, political, and technological realities. It is interesting to note that there was no attempt on the part of the sultanates to strengthen their social organization, for example, in making power succession orderly and less disruptive, or in making the datu subject to the absolute authority of the sultan, and in turn, their followers to be subject to their authority, such that there was a chain of authority from top to bottom. The power structure of the Muslim sultanates was one built virtually on shifting sands, where the followers could simply desert at will a datu, or a datu his sultan when the datu or the sultan could no longer provide the slave-raiding expeditions or tribute or custom collection opportunities to them. There was a looseness of the "social contract" where leaders and followers were only in alliance and were not duty-bound to certain reciprocal rights and obligations.

If this kind of social organization continues in Mindanao or in the Philippines, there is no hope that foreign interventions could ever be prevented or avoided. When the loyalty of leaders to their sultan or to the nation-state could be bought at the expense of overall unity and resistance against foreign aggression or interference, just as the loyalty of followers is determined by their share of the booty in a slaving-raid, there is only little hope for the state to maintain its sovereignty.

The gradual integration of Maguindanao and Sulu into the international market could have been an opportunity for them to modernize their economy, government, and technology. They did adopt some modern military technology, such as trench warfare, but there was no attempt to learn the technology of producing their own arms and war machines. On the economic side, consumption became more sophisticated, but production was fixated on a slave-labor technology. It may be instructive to cite the modernization experience of Japan in the 1850's for comparison:

The people of Europe were at first skeptical and somewhat amused when they learned how seriously the Japanese were studying Western ways. But the Japanese knew that their existence as an independent nation was at stake. They chose the best models and followed them faithfully: their navy was copied from the British, their army built on Prussian formulas, their constitution combined British and German elements but leaned towards authoritarianism, their schools owed much to America educational plans, their courts adapted French and German modes of procedure. Specialists in the natural sciences, in architecture and engineering, in mining, manufacturing, shipbuilding, in every field from history to horticulture, were invited to Japan to give instruction, and Japanese students were sent abroad to observe and to learn.⁴²

On the other side of the ledger, the Muslim sultanates, together with the Igorots of northern Luzon, kept burning the fire of resistance against Western colonialism and imperialism. This knowledge of continuing resistance by the Moros and Igorots to Spanish colonialism could have been at the back of the minds of revolutionaries from Diego Silang to Emilio Aguinaldo, encouraging them to launch their revolts against the Spaniards.⁴³ Specifically referring to the Muslims, Majul wrote:

From a more restricted perspective, the Muslim struggle in the Philippine South can be considered part of the heritage of the entire Filipino people in the history of their struggle for freedom. It is not only that the sultanates represented the most developed native states in the Archipelago, but they represented peoples who had managed to keep themselves free from foreign invaders at the cost of so much blood, suffering and sacrifice...⁴⁴

NOTES

¹ Observation made by Infantry Commander Romaldo Crespo Y Guerra to the Governor and Captain-General, Manila, June 31, 1985, quoted in R. C. Iletto, *Maguindanao, 1860-1888: The Career of Dato Uto of Buayan* (Data paper No. 82; Ithaca, New York: Dept. of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1971), p. 14.

² *Loc cit.*

³ Ruurdje, Laarhoven, *The Maguindanao Sultanate: Triumph of Moro Diplomacy* (Q.C.: New Day Publishers, 1989), p. XIV. For details of specific ethnolinguistic groups and their relative population size, see P. G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos-Heritage and Horizon* (Q.C.: New Day Pub., 1979), pp. 1-10.

⁴ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic* (London: & Unwin, 1976).

⁵ This is extensively discussed in P. G. Gowing, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-69.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-69; E. A. Manuel, *Manuvu Social Oroganization* (Quezon City: Community Developemtn Research Center, University of the Philippines, 1973), pp. 246-260; F. C. Cole, *The Tinguian: Social Religious, and Economic Life of a Philippine Tribe* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1922; *idem*, *The Peoples of Malaysia* (New Jersey: D. van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1945) pp. 126-197.

⁷ P. Gowing, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁸ F. L. Dumagat "Social Change in an Itneg (Tinggian) Community: 1723-1941 (unpublished M.A. thesis, U.P., 1974).

⁹ E. A. Manuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-228; 308-344.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-228, see also F. C. Cole, *The Peoples of Malaysia, op. cit.*, pp. 184-194.

¹¹ F. Cole, *op. cit.*, F. Dumagat, *op. cit.*

¹² F. Dumagat, *Ibid.*

¹³ See F. C. Cole, the Tinguian..., *op. cit.*

¹⁴ F. C. Cole, *The Peoples of Malaysia, op. cit.* pp. 192-194; E. A. Manuel, *Manuvu Social Oroganization, op. city.*, pp. 196-197, 156-260. Note that in Maneul's study in 1956 and 1960 there is no mention of the relation between the feast and the sacrifice of a human life unlike Cole's study which was undertaken in the early 1900s.

¹⁵ F. Eggan, "Some Social Institutions in the Mountain Province, Norhtern Luzon, and Their Siognificance for Historical and Comparative Studies," *Journal of East Asiatic Studies*, II, (April 1954), 329-335.

¹⁶ E.A. Manuel, *op. cit.*, p. 241-245; 291-297, 342-344, 351-368.

- ¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 200, 352.
- ¹⁸ E. C. Cole, *The Tinguian ...op. cit.*
- ¹⁹ C. A. Majul, "The Muslims in the Philippines: A Historical Perspective." Gowing and McAmis (eds.), *The Muslim Filipinos* (Manila: Solidaridad Pub. House, 1974), p. 2.
- ²⁰ Ibid., p. 3; *idem.*, *Muslims in the Philippines*, pp. 59-62.
- ²¹ Ibid., p. 52.
- ²² Ibid., pp. 54-55
- ²³ P. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos*, *op. cit.*, p. 21
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 78.
- ²⁵ O. D. Corpus, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, (Quezon City: AKLAHI Foundation, Inc. 1989), Vol. 1, pp. 135-136.
- ²⁶ C. A. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* , *op. cit.* p. 62.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 53.
- ²⁸ Ibid., p. 67.
- ²⁹ Ibid., pp. 331-332.
- ³⁰ Ibid., pp. 331-332.
- ³¹ R. Laarhoven, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
- ³² J. F. Warren, *The Sulu Zone: 1768-1898* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985), pp. xxiv-xxv.
- ³³ R. Laarhoven, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

³⁴ C. A. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, op. cit., pp. 113-136.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 134-151.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 136-138, 151-156.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 142-146.

³⁸ Ibid., 141-146.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 141. See also different versions in O. D. Corpuz, *op. cit.*, 153-154, vol.1.

⁴⁰ J. F. Warren, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁴¹ *Maguindanao, 1860-1888: the Career of Datu Uto of Buayan* (Marawi City: MSU-URCm n.d.), p.95.

⁴² Geoffrey Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 362

⁴³ O. D. Corpuz, *op. cit.*, Vol. 11, p. 330.

⁴⁴ C. A. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 346.