Colonialism and Change: The Case of Muslims in The Philippines

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Introduction

This paper is an examination of the changes brought about by colonialism and its impact on the Muslim Society in the Philippines. It is argued that the coming of the Spaniards and then the Americans to the country as colonizing powers had far-reaching implications on this society as its social, political, and economic conditions underwent radical transformation. Thus, the contemporary situation of Muslims in the Philippines, popularly called the 'Moros'[1] cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the historical forces that helped to shape their society into its present form.

The Muslim-Spanish Encounter

The Muslim-Spanish confrontation began in the sixteenth century when Spain established her rule in Luzon and Visayas and sought to extend it to Mindanao and Sulu as well (see Fig. 1). Due to Mindanao's strategic location, the Spaniards became aware of the island's importance in their attempt to establish a permanent foothold in Moluccas.[2] With the conquest of Mindanao, they could participate in the thriving spice trade in Moluccas, and could extend their sway over the neighboring countries as well. At the same time, they could also exact obedience from the neighboring kingdoms of Sulu, Brunei and Java.[3]

Throughout their occupation, the Spanish colonial authorities made serious efforts to convert Muslims to Christianity. This move was based on the Spanish missionaries' belief that conversion of the Muslims was necessary in making them loyal subjects of Spain.

In addition, they were determined to wipe off "Moroism" in the archipelago because of their fanatical hatred of Islam. This hatred that they brought with themselves to the Philippines was the hangover of their struggle for independence from Moorish rule in the Iberian Peninsula back home.[4] The missionaries also assumed that with the Muslims converting to Christianity, it would be easier for the Spaniards to plunder and gather wealth in Mindanao and Sulu. Besides, trading with fellow Christians would be easier than with suspicious Muslims. The missionaries in a sense became tools of the invaders just as the army served the invaders.

Moro Response towards Spanish Colonialism

The Spanish occupation of Mindanao and Sulu was very violent and destructive in nature. For more than three centuries, the invaders and the Muslims fought in the so-called "Moro wars".[5] Motivated by their political, economic and religious aim

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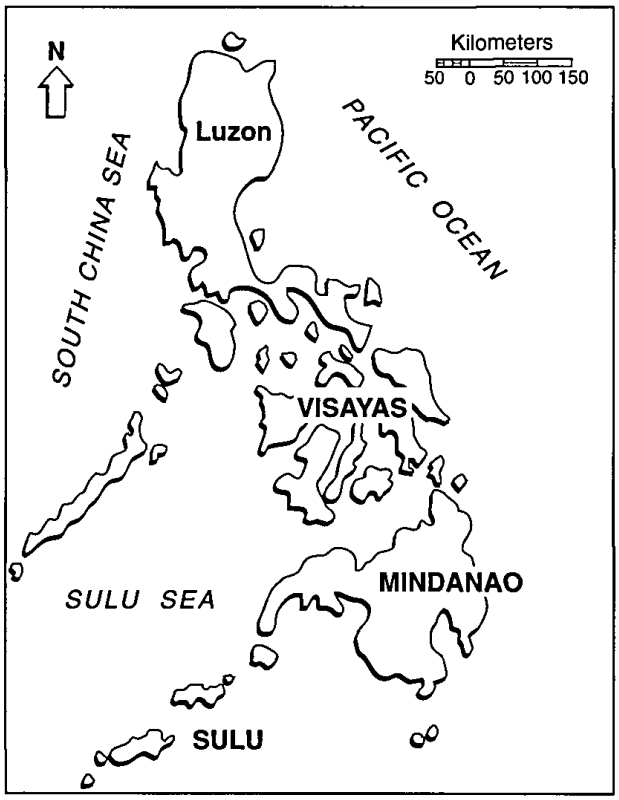

FIG. 1. Map of the Philippines.

Spanish conquistadors made determined attempts to subjugate and Christianize the rebellious Muslim people of Mindanao and Sulu. The colonizers, however, failed in their efforts because of strong resistance from the Moro population. However, they managed "to set up a few garrisons in the area which could have served for subsequent efforts had not the Americans arrived on the scene at the beginning of this century".[6]

Having been a free people who had relatively advanced socioeconomic and political systems, the Muslims defended themselves against the Spanish onslaughts in order to preserve the political, economic and religious foundations of their society. How did such a situation come about? Islam had already been introduced to Mindanao and Sulu at least two centuries before the Spanish invaders came to the country. Arab traders and proselytizers from the Malay Peninsula and Indonesian islands introduced Islam first to Sulu around the middle of fourteenth century. From there it spread to Mindanao and started to penetrate Luzon and Visayas when the Spaniards intercepted it and repulsed it to the south.[7] Thus, when the Spaniards began to colonize the country and convert its people to Catholicism, most inhabitants of the southern part had already adopted Islam. The introduction of Islam in Mindanao and Sulu brought about profound and dramatic transformations among the inhabitants who had accepted it. Cesar Majul, a Muslim educator observes:

> By adopting Islam a segment of the population of the Philippines became part of a 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.[8]

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Moreover, the Muslims in the Philippines had already established religious, diplomatic and commercial contacts with other Muslim kingdoms. These political, economic and religious conditions prevailing in the Muslim society made it most difficult for the invaders to subjugate Mindanao and Sulu.

The Impact of Spanish Colonialism

Despite the tenacity of the Moros in overcoming colonial rule, the long years of confrontation between them and the Spanish invaders brought significant changes to their society that has persisted up to the present time. Some of the major changes are highlighted below.

Christianization of the Philippines

In view of the prevailing conditions that existed among the pre-colonial Muslims, it was believed that their chances of Islamizing the northern and central parts of the archipelago and of expanding their social, political and economic boundaries were not unrealistic. Unfortunately, the Moros, however, were unsuccessful in these respects due to the centuries of Spanish colonization and subjugation. Renato Constantino, a renowned Filipino scholar, has stressed this point clearly. He states:

> If history had taken its course undisturbed, the Muslims might have Islamized the whole archipelago. They could have seized the leadership in nation building. As a matter of fact, Manila and its environs were already outposts of Bornean principalities. But the development of the Philippines took a reverse course. Instead of the more developed society expanding its influence over the others and diffusing its culture and social organization throughout the less developed ones, the Spanish conquest aborted this historical trend, developed the other regions and froze the evolution of what had once been the more advanced society, the Muslim south.[9]

With their fanatical hatred of Islam, the invaders made determined efforts to realize their goal of bringing Christianity to the entire population. Although they had failed in their efforts to convert the Moros, the Spaniards succeeded in converting the non-Islamized inhabitants who constituted the majority of the population. Thus, the colonizers not only collected raw materials and gold for the Spanish Crown, but also succeeded in making Christianity the dominant religion in the country even though it arrived in the Philippines several centuries after Islam.

Decline of the Moro Sultanates

One of the notable contributions of Islam to the Muslims in the Philippines was the sultanate, which was patterned after the Islamic Caliphate.[10] In the past, the Moros had different sultanates, some of which had attained tremendous power and influence in Mindanao and Sulu. The Sulu archipelago had only one sultanate, established around the middle of the fifteenth century under the legendary Arab missionary, Sharif Abu Bakr. The Sulu sultanate was known as the "first centralized political bureaucracy in the Philippine islands".[11] Initially, its power was merely confined to the areas along the coasts, but gradually extended to the entire island until the whole archipelago was finally integrated into one polity under an ideally central authority.[12] The Min

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island, on the other hand, had several sultanates, but three were notable: the Sultanate of Maguindanao (also known as the Sultanate of Mindanao or the Cotabato sultanate). The Sultanate of Maguindanao, founded by Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuwan, was known to have more power and influence over large territories in Mindanao than the other two sultanates. Najeeb M. Saleeby, a Lebanese-born American administrator, claimed that all Muslims in Mindanao, except the Iranuns, were at one time under the sole influence and control of the Sultanate of Maguindanao.[13]

Had the Spaniards not arrived, the Moro sultanates would surely have achieved greater centralization of power and would have certainly expanded their power and influence to the scattered and fragmented communities of Luzon and Visayas islands. The Muslims, however, had failed in this effort due to the increasing military activities of the Spaniards, who, by then, were already using sophisticated war machines. To quote F. Delor Angeles:

> Although the Muslims were able to resist, by 1898, much of their power had diminished. Their Dutch and British "allies" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had shelved ambitions in the Philippines to pay more attention to internal problems in their Asian empires. Moreover, Spanish technology, in terms of more powerful vessels and weapons, had advanced with developments in the West, whereas the Muslims were unable to keep the pace. Thus, the introduction of steam gunboats, machine guns, and breech-loading artillery in the colonial army and navy virtually swept Muslim raiders off the seas, blew their forts to rubble and their warriors using bladed weapons, ancient muskets and muzle-loaders, deeper into the hinterlands.[14]

The decline of the sultanates further increased when the Americans who replaced the Spaniards as the new colonial masters in the country, abrogated the Bates Treaty that acknowledged the authority of the sultan to govern his people, and instead, carried out a direct-rule policy over the Muslims. The Bates treaty was signed between the Sulu sultanate and the American colonial regime on August 20, 1899, and its abolition had serious consequences on the Muslims' political situation in the Philippines. This will be discussed more fully below in the section on Muslims under the American rule.

Today, the Moro sultanates are dead politically under Philippine law. However, they still remain powerful institutions in contemporary Muslim society in the Philippines.[15]

Christian-Muslim Alienation

Another noted legacy of Spanish rule is the deepening alienation between Christians and Muslims in the country. These groups of people were said to have belonged to one group of people prior to the coming of Islam and Christianity. However, a strong animosity for one another developed when the conquistadors considered the Muslims as their enemies who needed to be colonized and Christianized, and the Christians as allies of Spain in her wars against the Muslims.

The active participation of the Christianized inhabitants in Spanish-led attacks and expeditions to Muslim areas created hatred, resentment and suspicion among the Moros. They believed that even if the Christianized Filipinos were not outright collaborators of the Spanish invaders, at least they were effective instruments of Spanish colonialism and subjugation. This started the polarity that has since characterized these groups of Filipinos. As a consequence of their colonial experience, they have created negative images of each other which are still evident today. The Christia

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colonized and Christianized, had inherited much of the stereotypical thinking of the Spaniards, their prejudices, and hatred towards the Muslims. They viewed the latter as "uncivilized", "brutal", "teacherous", "bandits" and "pirates". The Muslims, on the other hand, regarded the Christians as an extremely "ethnocentric" people who did not appreciate Muslim culture and traditions, and who, if they could, would destroy Islam. Besides, they also considered the Christians as "land-hungry" people who used the government and its army effectively to drive the Muslims out of their homeland. The enmity between these groups of Filipinos intensified when the Christians started to occupy lands traditionally owned by the Muslims as we shall see below.

Economic Dislocation

During the long years of confrontation with the Spaniards, the Muslim population also suffered serious economic setbacks. Their rather advanced economy had the potential for moving on to a more developed stage which unfortunately was not realized. On the contrary, it moved backwards and got stuck in a state of economic stagnation. As part of their efforts to weaken Muslim resistance, the colonizers systematically destroyed Moro plantations, fields, and orchards as well as their flourishing trade and commerce with other peoples of Malaysia.[16] In addition, the colonizers' policy of destroying Muslim trading vessels also wrought havoc on the latter's economic lives as it prevented them from engaging in commerce with neighboring countries which was an important element of their economy as well as their way of life.[17]

Implications for Education

The Spanish strategy of using Christian-type education as an instrument to further their imperial ambitions brought serious consequences to the Moro educational system. With the introduction of this system of education, the latter also began to lose educationally to the non-Muslim population as they strongly resisted the invaders' attempts to establish schools in their areas. Since the Spanish system of education was based on their own values, institutions and interests, the Muslims had no choice but to reject it. Aware of its consequences for their society, they had chosen to resist this type of education in order to preserve their true culture and history. As a result for nearly four centuries of Spanish rule, not a single western-type of school was established by the Spaniards in the Muslim areas.[18]

Thus, the Spanish emphasis on a Christian-type of education became the cause of illiteracy, backwardness and stagnation for the Muslim society. The introduction of this system of education had prevented them from producing their own professionals who were badly needed by their communities. Unlike in the Christian communities, professionals such as medical doctors, dentists, lawyers and teachers were practically non-existent in the Muslim communities during the Spanish period. Therefore, Spanish colonialism had also created an educational and professional gap between Muslims and Christians in the country.

The educational advancement achieved by the Christian Filipinos enabled them to develop their socioeconomic and political structures rapidly. They realized that education played a vital role in change and development. And so, when the Americans defeated the Spaniards in the Spanish-American war in 1898 and became the new colonial masters of the Philippines, they used educated Christians from the north to man the administration in Moroland with serious socioeconomic and political repercussions for the Muslim community.

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The Muslims Under American Colonialism

The defeat of the Spaniards in the Spanish-American War in 1898 led them to cede sovereignty in the Philippines to the United States. The Muslim-occupied areas of Mindanao and Sulu were also included in this cession in spite of the fact that the Spaniards had never controlled these territories completely. As the new colonial power, the Americans not only inherited the resources of the country but also the problems therein. One of their formidable problems was the Muslim population who refused to acknowledge American sovereignty. America's basic policy for the Philippines was spelled out by President William McKinley. He declared that the islands were not theirs to exploit but "to develop, to civilize, to educate, (and) to train in the science of self-government".[19] This general policy also applied to Mindanao and Sulu. Since these two islands were populated by Muslims who were seen to be different from the rest of the inhabitants, a basic policy of integration was also carried out. This policy envisioned to change the Muslims politically, economically and socially so that they could become adaptable to the ways of the more "civilized" and "modernized" Christian population in the country.

To implement their policy, the American colonial regime first used arms to subdue the Muslims. Then, they resorted to education as well as a "policy of attraction". These policies were carried out in Mindanao and Sulu from 1899 to 1920 during which period the Americans had direct control over affairs in the area.

Stages of American Administration

The American colonial policies in Mindanao and Sulu were implemented under three different administrations, namely, the Military Government (1899–1903), the Moro Province (1903–1913), and the Department of Mindanao and Sulu (1913–1920).

1. The Military Government and the Non-interference Policy. Under this administration, the American forces carried out a "non-interference" policy towards the Muslim way of life. This excluded, however, the American right to curb the traffic in slaves and to forbid certain Muslim "barbaric" practices.[20]

In line with this policy, the American Brigadier-General John C. Bates signed the Bates Treaty with the Sulu Sultan, Muhammad Jamalul Kiram, on 20 August, 1899. This agreement acknowledged the Sultan's authority to govern his people and it guaranteed freedom to Muslims to practice their religion. The Muslim leaders of Basilan and Mindanao also entered into a similar agreement, though unwritten, with the colonial administration.[21] This agreement obviously recognized Muslim sovereignty albeit with some interference, but it was too short-lived to produce any good results because of its sudden abrogation in 1902. The abolition of the treaty showed the motive of the Americans to use it merely as an instrument to neutralize the Muslims in the Philippine-American War which erupted in the northern provinces of the country from 1899 to 1901. In fact its sudden abrogation was immediately followed by the imposition of the direct-rule policy over the Muslims. However, the colonial administration realized that a different form of government was required to integrate the Moros into the Philippine national life. As a result the Moro Province was organized in 1903. This decision could be attributed to the pressure exerted by the Christian Filipino nationalists to recognize Mindanao and Sulu as inseparable from the rest of the

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nation. In addition, both the American and the Filipinos realized the importance of the abundant natural resources of Mindanao and Sulu to the economic future of the country.

2. The Moro Province and the Direct-rule Policy. In this administrative set-up, the Provincial governor in Zamboanga served as the highest official and the *datu*[22] acted as the headman of the remotest tribal community.[23] They were directly supervised by the governor-general in Manila and the Philippine Commission which was dominated by the Americans until 1913. The Christian Filipinos constituted the remaining members of the Commission during this period.[24] This administration started the implementation of the American "develop, civilize, and educate" policy in Mindanao and Sulu. The Muslims however resisted this move as it was a clear violation of the Bates Treaty signed in August 1899. More importantly, the policy was founded on western culture, incompatible with their Islamic socio-cultural milieu and their indigenous way of life. The policy called for the adoption of western institutions and an obliteration of the entire Muslim social system that had characterized their society since they accepted Islam in the 13th century. The rapid influx of Americans into Mindanao and Sulu who behaved as though they owned these islands, also prompted Muslims to resist the colonial policy. Consequently, these opposing parties fought many bloody wars. In 1914, however, the superior military strength of the Americans finally triumphed over the Moro indigenous weaponry and war strategy.

Under the Moro Province, the colonial authorities undertook several programs such as expansion of public works, construction of schools, hospitals and dispensaries. Some of these efforts had already been initiated during the Military government administration. In addition, they introduced American concepts of justice and encouraged the development of agriculture and commerce. However, while they carried out these development efforts in order to facilitate the advancement of Muslim community along western lines, these programs largely benefited the Americans and the Christian majority. The educational system introduced by the Americans, for example, would alienate the Muslims from their religion and traditional way of life, while encouraging them to learn and accept those of the Americans. This unspoken policy was reflected in the statement made by General John Pershing with regards to the education of Muslim girls:

> Although it is well understood that Christianity as a religion is not mentioned in the school, it is lived by the [American and Christian Filipino] teachers and it may, in some measure, influence the lives of these young girls.[25]

The introduction of the western system of education was part of the American plan to train the Muslims to become good colonials. Consequently, it would be easier for the Americans to control and exploit the rich natural resources of the Muslim lands. As Constantino puts it:

> The educational system was not established by the Americans for the sole purpose of saving the Filipinos from illiteracy and ignorance. Given the economic and political objectives of the American occupation, education had to be consistent with these broad purposes of American colonial policy. The Filipinos had to be trained as citizens of an American colony.[26]

It is no wonder then that the Moros strongly resisted American education. However, it must be acknowledged that the Muslims benefited directly or indirectly from some of the programs initiated by the colonial administration. Unfortunately, these efforts

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part of the American economic design in the Philippines to exploit, develop and utilize the country's abundant natural resources.[27]

More importantly, the colonial regime encouraged the Americans and the non-Muslims from the northern and central parts of the country to settle in Moroland. In line with this move, several resettlement programs were initiated. By 1917, for instance, six agricultural colonies had already been set up in Cotabato and one in Lanao. To attract more settlers, the American administration initially provided loans for those who lacked funds. By 1919, however, the government actively encouraged only the migration of those home-seekers who have sufficient funds to tide them over the first year.[28]

As part of the resettlement programs of the Americans, Leonard Wood who was governor of the Moro Province from 1903 to 1906 increased the number of acres of land given to the settlers from 40 to 200. Furthermore, under this administration, corporations were allowed to flourish and owned up to 2560 investments in Mindanao alone.[29] Thus, the American emphasis on capitalist development was quite clear.

The resettlement programs was said to be part of the colonial administration's effort at "civilizing" the Moros. They predicted that by bringing the Christians to Moroland, the Muslims would be gradually drawn into the civilization of the Christian majority. The outcome of this integration effort, however, did not meet American expectation as their move to "civilize" the Muslims along western lines created more problems than expected. In addition, the resettlement programs were also part of the colonizers' larger economic aims of exploiting the natural riches of the region. Gomez suggests that:

> ... the resettlement projects were part of the economic plan of the Americans to make Mindanao [and thus, also the Philippines] productive to American capital. Thus, Mindanao was seen as a potentially rich colony—indeed, it was called "the land of promise". It was strongly believed that it not only could support the needs of the rest of the archipelago (especially in the area of food and clothing) but also more importantly, it could yield profits to American investment in the Philippines ...[30]

The American interest in the resources of Mindanao consequently led to the establishment of plantations in the area engaged in the production of raw materials and tropical crops needed by the industrialized countries. Logging companies also began to proliferate. After World War II, the number of plantation and logging establishments had increased tremendously. In addition, the gold mines in Surigao as well as other minerals in the region such as copper and coal were exploited.[31] Thus, under all these circumstances Mindanao was effectively exploited and colonized. This colonial past has persistently plagued the island, right up to the present.

3. The Department of Mindanao and Sulu. By 1914, after the Muslims had been subdued by arms, the colonial authorities replaced the Moro Province administration with the civilian-run Department of Mindanao and Sulu. Concomitant with this change was the intensification in the modernization of health, education and public facilities in Mindanao and Sulu which lasted for six years. This administration also facilitated the immigration into Mindanao of many Christian settlers from the crowded Luzon and Visayas regions.

In addition, a policy of 'Filipinization' of the administration of Mindanao and Sulu was carried out in 1920. This policy aimed at bringing more Christian Filipinos to administer the Muslim areas with a view to the complete transfer of control over Moro affairs from the Americans to the Filipinos. Consequently, after 1920,

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Lanao, all the other Muslim provinces (Cotabato, Sulu and Zambonga) had Christian governors.[32] This development had caused anxiety among Muslims. Therefore, when the idea for the independence of the Philippines was mooted and became a reality, the Muslims protested against the inclusion of Moroland in an independent Philippines. In March 1935, the Moro leaders submitted a memorandum to the colonial authorities expressing their disapproval on the formation of the Philippine Commonwealth Government which was to be the final step towards independence. The memorandum stated:

> Because we have learned that the United States is going to give the Philippines Independence, we want to tell you that the Philippines is populated by two different peoples with different religious practices and traditions. The Christian Filipinos occupy the islands of Luzon and the Visayas. The Moros, predominate in the islands of Mindanao and Sulu. With regard to the forthcoming independence, we forsee what condition we and our children who shall come after us will be in. This condition will be characterized by unrest, suffering and misery... We do not want to be included in the Philippine independence. For once independence is launched, there will be trouble between us and the Christian Filipinos because from time immemorial these two people have not lived harmoniously ... It is not proper to two antagonizing people live together [*sic.*] under one flag, under the Philippine independence.[33]

The appeals of the Muslims, however, failed as the Americans finally gave in to the pressure from the Christian Filipino leaders in Washington. They were able to gradually force the Muslim-dominated Mindanao and Sulu to become part of the Philippines.

The Consequences of American Occupation

Military Decline

The Muslim-American confrontation and the subsequent subjugation of the Muslims had significantly weakened the latter's military power. Despite their determined effort to thwart another invasion of their homeland, the Muslims' ability to resist American onslaught was severely curtailed. This could be attributed firstly, to their inferior weaponry against the technologically sophisticated American war machines and secondly, to the fact that prior to the coming of the Americans, the Muslims had been already engaged in very destructive wars with the Spanish conquistadors for more than three centuries. Thus, unlike the Spaniards, the Americans were able to subjugate the proud and brave Moros and establish direct rule over them.

Economic Dislocation

The decline of Muslim military power consequently paved the way for both foreign capitalists and Christian Filipinos to effectively colonize Mindanao and Sulu. The massive colonization of the islands was facilitated by the introduction of American land policies that significantly altered Moro territory and society.

Having conquered the fiercely independent-minded Moros by their mighty weaponry, the American colonizers were able to enact laws that best suited their interest.[34] These policies were effectively carried out in Mindanao and Sulu during their occupation. For instance, in 1902, the Land Registration Act was passed to deter

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the extent of private land-holdings in the county. This was followed by the Public Land Act of 1905, declaring all lands not registered under the Act of 1902 as "public lands" In the same year; the Mining Law was also enacted, declaring all public lands to be free and open for exploitation and purchase by citizens of the United States and the Philippines. Another law, the Cadastral Act of 1907, was passed, requiring cadastral surveys to be undertaken in acquiring new land titles. The enactment of the Public Land Laws of 1913, 1914, and 1919 followed, encouraging land-less peasants in Luzon and Visayas to resettle in Mindanao and Sulu. These land laws were enacted largely by the American colonial regime to have access to extensive areas of lands required for establishing plantation agriculture and for the resettlement of peasants from the Luzon and Visayas islands.

The introduction of colonial land policies had serious implications on the Muslim socioeconomic and political situation in the South. First the influx of Christian settlers to Mindanao eventually resulted in the Muslims becoming a minority in the south. These migrants began to occupy provinces and towns which were traditionally Moro. Second, it was the people from the north who became the dominant political force in the south. This is especially true when the administration of Mindanao and Sulu was transferred from the Americans to the Christian Filipinos and later these regions became part of an independent Philippines. Thus, with the Filipinization policy, the Muslims found themselves subjugated and ruled again by 'another' colonial masters, i.e. the Christian Filipinos who had also been colonized and oppressed all their lives. Instead of helping the Muslims develop their already-advanced political organization which used to be the source of their strength and freedom, the Christian Filipinos replaced it with their own pattern of leadership and authority incompatible with the realities and the cultural and religious values of the Muslim society. Third, there was an upsurge in big agrobusinesses, owned and managed by transnational corporations all over the traditional Moro provinces.[35] Thus, the Americans and other investors saw Mindanao as truly a land of promise—a promise only for them. Meanwhile, the minorities who had been dispossessed of their lands plunged deeper into isolation, backwardness, and stagnation which continues to the present time.

It should be noted that the Muslims had already predicted the serious consequences of the American land policies before the formation of the Commonwealth Government. In 1935, Datu Salipada K. Pendatun, representing the Muslim population, submitted a memorandum to J. R. Hayden, the vice-governor of the Philippines between 1933 to 1935, expressing his apprehension concerning colonial land policies. He stated that because of the Muslims' ignorance of government land laws, they would expectedly lose out in the competition for land ownership in Mindanao. In his view, the continued implementation of the American land policies would result in Christian homesteaders occupying most of the unreserved lands in Cotabato, thereby displacing the original Muslim occupants. Eventually such a situation would lead to violence and restlessness among the natives.[36]

The colonizers, however, totally ignored Muslim views and sentiments. Although aware of the presence of minorities in the vast tracts of untitled lands, they aggressively proceeded with the implementation of their land policies which catered to their interest and that of the Christian majority. Successive Filipino administrators in the country have also continued to disregard the presence of minorities in their traditionally-owned lands. Like their colonial predecessors, they also issued a series of legislations to legalize their actions in taking away ancestral lands for resettlement projects and plantation agriculture.

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Therefore, the displacement of Muslims from their lands was not the result of their ignorance of government policies alone. It could be attributed largely to the effective implementation of colonial land laws which only benefited the Americans and the Christian Filipinos.

Decline in Educational Standards

Throughout their occupation of Mindanao and Sulu, the Americans made earnest efforts to use education as an instrument of pacification and for the transmission of colonial ideals. After subjugating the Muslims by arms, they tried an educational approach to integrate these inhabitants into the Christian majority. In line with this idea, Christian teachers were employed to teach in the Muslim areas and textbooks written from a colonial viewpoint were used in the schools. The colonial system of education, however, failed to attract the majority of the Muslims. With Christian teachers and American textbooks, they felt that this system of education would give their children a good dose of American (hence Christian) culture. Consequently, their younger generation would acquire a distorted picture of their own history, and a way of life divorced from Islamic ideals. Therefore, accepting this form of education was tantamount to cultural suicide.

On the other hand, the Muslim refusal to accept western education consequently kept them in a state of relative educational backwardness. Possessing neither the economic resources nor the political strength to develop an alternative, effective educational system relevant to the realities and the cultural and religious values of their society, the Muslims continued to lag behind the Christian Filipinos educationally. This subsequently transformed them into a backward and uneducated people prone to exploitation and oppression.

In addition, their deplorable educational status also undermined the socioeconomic and political development in the south. Lacking the knowledge and skills needed for their social and economic development, they were unable to compete with the Christian migrants who were described by Reuben Canoy as being "better equipped, better educated, and better connected".[37] Since education and land ownership were important factors for social mobility, these migrants who acquired lands in Mindanao and Sulu and who had better education prospered and became wealthy. The Muslims, on the other hand, became desperately poor largely as a result of their particular colonial experience.

On the infrastructure scene, Muslim communities were also below par when compared to their neighboring Christian communities in terms of roads, electricity, health centers, irrigation systems, government schools, government buildings and the drinking water system. This deplorable condition was one of the glaring effects of the American integration policy. When the Christian migrants became the dominant political force in the south, they neglected the socioeconomic development of the Muslim communities. This neglect was aggravated by the long years of civil disturbance as well as the continuous political instability in the region.[38]

Undeniably, some Moros did accept American education and this acceptance brought them some benefits too. For instance, those who emerged as leaders of Muslim communities were normally the educated ones particularly those who belonged to the *datu* class. The educated Moro political leaders were noted for their role in organizing Muslim organizations and in establishing of high schools and colleges in Mindanao and Sulu that offered Islamic education. The significant role played by these leade

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strengthening Islam was contrary to American expectations that if they were to be educated along Western lines, the Muslims would easily abandon Islam which the Americans regarded as a progress-blocking religion.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, one can readily infer that the Muslim population in the Philippines had gone through turbulent times during the protracted colonial era. The coming of the Spanish and then the American invaders to Mindanao and Sulu, accompanied by policies that merely protected the colonial powers' own special interest in the area, resulted in disastrous consequences for the already-advanced Muslim society in the south. Although they were not subdued by the invaders, Muslims in the Philippines were affected in a variety of ways by the changes that accompanied western colonialism in their country. Both Spanish and American colonial systems had created obstacles for Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu to develop their already-flourishing economy and to effectively spread Islam to other parts of the archipelago. Furthermore, colonial rule and policies had sown the seeds of socioeconomic and political degeneration of the Muslim community and at the same time unleashed the divisive forces of Muslim Christian alienation in the country.

This paper examines in brief the difficulties encountered by a small nation beset by forces of western colonialism. In the light of its colonial past it can thus be seen that the stagnating character of the present Muslim society in the Philippines is largely a reflection of the policies and 'development' efforts initiated by the non-Muslim colonial administrators which resulted in the Muslims becoming victims rather than beneficiaries of the system.

NOTES

1. This is a term given by the Spanish invaders to the Muslims in the Philippines after the Moors (the Islamized North Africans), who invaded and ruled Spain for about eight centuries. It acquired a negative connotation because of the continued Muslim resistance to colonialism and subjugation as well as Christianization. Among the non-Muslim population in the country, the term "*Moro*" came to refer to the Muslim population whom they regarded as treacherous, slavers, polygamous, pirates, ignorant and uncivilized. Due to the negative connotations of the term, the Muslims became displeased of being called Moro until in 1970s when the civil war broke out between them and the Christian Filipinos. To show their distinctiveness from the Christian population, they proudly accepted the usage of the term without being bothered of its negative connotations.
2. Moluccas refer to the historic Spice Islands of eastern Indonesia.
3. Cesar Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (3rd ed.), Manila: Saint Mary's Publishing, 1978, pp. 113–115.
4. Peter G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizons*, Quezon City: New Publishers, 1979, p. 30.
5. This refers to the more than three centuries of bloody wars between Muslims and Spanish conquistadors. See Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, for a detailed description of the Moro wars.
6. H. M. Gomez, Jr, *The Muslim Filipino Rebellion: Meaning and Challenges to the Mission and Ministry of the Church in the Philippines*, PhD thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary.
7. C. L. Sharma, "Ethnicity and Education in the Philippines", in *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, p. 120.
8. Quoted in Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 78.
9. R. Constantino, *A Past Revisited* (Vol. 1), Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1975, pp. 27–28.
10. Najeeb M. Saleeby, *The History of Sulu*, Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1905, p. 161.
11. T. J. S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao: The Rise of Islam in Philippine Politics*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 19.

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12. Najeeb M. Saleeby, "The History of Maguindanao", in P. G. Gowing and R. McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos: Their History, Society and Contemporary Problems*, Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974, p. 185.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 185
14. F. Delor Angeles, "The Moro Wars", in P. O. Gowing and R. McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos*, pp. 28–29.
15. See Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon*, Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1978, pp. 55–58 for a detailed discussion on this topic.
16. See Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 35. Majul used the term "Malaysia" in a purely geographical sense to include the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian and Philippine Archipelagos. See also *Ibid.*, p. 345.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 345.
18. N. T. Madale, *The Muslim Filipinos: A Book of Readings*, Quezon City: Phoenix Press, 1978, p. 290.
19. F. B. Harrison, *Cornerstone of the Philippine Independence*, New York: Century Company, 1922, p. 36.
20. cf. Gowing and McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos*, p. 34.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
22. The term "datu" refers to a nobleman or a petty ruler.
23. Gowing and McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos*, p. 36.
24. See *ibid.*, 36; see also T. A. Agoncillo and MC. Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, Quezon City: R. P. Garcia, 1970, pp. 282, 328.
25. J. J. Pershing, *Annual Report of the Governor of the Moro Province for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1913*, Brigadier General John J. Pershing, Governor, Zamboanga: Mindanao Herald Publishing Company, 1913, p. 32.
26. R. Constantino, *The Mis-education of the Filipinos*, Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1982, p. 5.
27. See Gowing and McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos*, p. 35.
28. See Gomez, *The Muslim Filipino Rebellion*, p. 143.
29. C. M. Danao, "The Muslim Problem and the ASEAN: Focus on the Perception of Muslim Students of the Mindanao State University", 1983–1984, unpublished MA thesis, University of the Philippines, 1984, p. 32.
30. Gomez,*The Muslim Filipino Rebellion*, pp. 148—149.
31. cf. *ibid.*, p. 149.
32. See *ibid.*, p. 148.
33. Quoted from Ahmad Zainon, "Current Conflict Rooted in Moro's Historical Struggle", in *New Straits Times*, 13 November, 1986, p. 10.
34. See P. R. Makol-Abdul, "Capital, the State and the Emergence of Class Relations: The Case of a Rural Community in Southern Philippines", PhD thesis, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, 1992.
35. See also P. Makol-Abdul, "Socioeconomic Degeneration of Rural Maguindanaons: Contributions of Colonialism and Political Instability", MS thesis, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, 1988; and E. Mercado, "The Moro Struggle in Perspective" (Part Two), *Sandugo*, 3rd Quarter, pp. 4–11.
36. R. D. Silva, *Two Hills of the Same Land: Truth Behind the Mindanao Problem*, privately printed, p. 59.
37. See R. R. Canoy, "Real Autonomy: The Answer to the Mindanao Problem", in *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4, p. 297.
38. See Makol-Abdul, "Socioeconomic Degeneration of Rural Maguindanaons".

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