

The Moro Muslim Conflict in the Philippines: A Postcolonialism Perspective

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Abstract

This article discusses the long and complex history of the Moro Nation, starting with the presence of Islam which flourished in the Southern Philippines. Then Spain came and the United States brought political and Christianization missions until the time of Philippine independence. The term "Moro" refers to the bad stigma of the Spanish colonials to Filipino Muslims because of their rejection and rebellion against the colonizers. Therefore, this literature review aims to examine the characteristics of Moro Muslims in three phases of struggle, i.e., the period of struggle against Spanish colonialism for 375 years, the struggle for independence from United States imperialism, and post-independence which was transferred to the Christian government of the Northern Philippines, so that the Moro Nation fought against the government of its own country as *Jihad fi Sabilillah*. By means of postcolonialism studies that define criticism of cultural appropriation and exploitation by colonialists, postcolonialism identity in a negotiation carries out disclosure of the deception given to it and brings others or otherness to itself. In this regard, the stigmatization has become a breakthrough spirit as a defense and struggle of the Moro Muslim community in the form of Jihad from discrimination during colonialism and post-independence.

Keywords: Philippines, Postcolonialism, Moro Nation.

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas sejarah Bangsa Moro yang panjang dan kompleks, berawal hadirnya islam yang berkembang pesat di Filipina Selatan, kemudian datang Spanyol dan Amerika Serikat yang membawa misi politik dan kristenisasi hingga masa Filipina merdeka. Sebutan Moro-pun adalah stigma buruk dari para kolonial Spanyol kepada muslim Filipina sebagai dampak dari penolakan dan pemberontakan mereka terhadap para penjajah. Maka dari itu, kajian pustaka ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dinamika muslim Moro pada tiga fase perjuangan, yaitu masa perjuangan melawan kolonial spanyol selama 375 tahun, kemudian berjuang untuk bebas dari masa imperialisme Amerika Serikat dan pasca kemerdekaan yang dialihkan pada pemerintah kristen Filipina Utara, sehingga Bangsa Moro berjuang melawan pemerintah negaranya sendiri sebagai Jihad fi Sabilillah. Melalui kajian postkolonialisme

yang mendefinisikan pada kritik atas perampasan dan eksploitasi budaya oleh pihak kolonialis, sejatinya identitas postkolonialisme dalam sebuah negosiasi menjalankan pengungkapan atas adanya kebohongan yang diberikan kepadanya dan juga mendatangkan liyan atau otherness pada dirinya. Terkait hal ini stigmatisasi tersebut justru menjadi pendobrak semangat sebagai pertahanan dan perjuangan masyarakat muslim Moro dalam bentuk Jihad dari diskriminasi masa penjajahan maupun pasca kemerdekaan.

Kata Kunci: Filipina, Postkolonialisme, Bangsa Moro.

INTRODUCTION

The Moro people are primarily Muslims who live in Sulu, Mindanao, Basilan, and Palawan. They are an ethno-religious group assimilated by a common religion, Islam. Moro is a term inherited from the Spanish colonists, they pinned the name Moro for the Muslim community in the Philippines which has a bad meaning of illiterate, evil, godless, and murderer. Hence, there is another perspective on their stigmatization of the Moro nation. They consider the Moro Muslim community in the Southern Philippines as the dangerous *other*.

The establishment of the Moro Nation was the result of years of peace discourse after the negotiation of peace between the regional autonomy group and the Philippine government, namely the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the impact of the rejection of the legality of Mindanao and the rejection of the establishment of territorially expanded powers by the national government. Although they gained independence from the United States in 1946, the Moro people lost none of their independence. They remain discriminated against, marginalized by poverty, difficult employment opportunities, and inferior education due to the Western curriculum, and were even subjected to military violence in the form of a massacre in Corregidor called the Jabidah Massacre in 1968.¹

A new chapter in history records the results of the struggle of the Moro Muslim community against the arrival of the country's colonial powers namely Spain, the United States, and Japan as well as their resistance to uphold their personality in the face of Philippine government policies that seem to marginalize their position. The topic of Muslim oppression in Southeast Asia is worth looking into, how Muslim societies have resisted rulers in wars of independence for five centuries. The Spanish, American, Japanese, and Philippine militaries

¹ Kustigar Nadeak dan Atmadji, *Revolusi Damai: Rekaman Kemelut Di Filipina* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1986).

have been unable to stop their ambitions to break away from their predominantly Catholic countries.

Postcolonial studies represent a new idea to consider cultural diversity as a critique of the dominance of Western civilization.² Since Postcolonialism is defined as an opposition to or critique of cultural appropriation and exploitation by colonialists, then colonialism and imperialism within this definition can be interpreted since colonial power was present in the scope of other nations' cultures until now.

This literature research examines both history and literature concerning the struggle of the Moro Muslim community in maintaining and defending their social rights which are marginalized by the domination of alternating powers. First, it started with the Spanish colonial occupation which was then traded to the United States imperialism, and then colonized by Japan after which the United States came back to colonize. Then the latest authority came from the Northern Philippines government which caused the Moro Nation to be oppressed by its own country. However, it is interesting to review more deeply the rejection and resistance of the colonized, with the rotation of negative stigma from the colonizers which ultimately merged with the struggle of the Moro Muslim community by expressing themselves as a means of self-defense and independent autonomy in their own territory.

METHODOLOGY

The research method in this article uses Library research or a literature study. A literature study is conducted by a researcher to support his research by exploring, examining, analyzing, and identifying information in the literature (reading sources, reference materials, or other research results). This research's literature review examines data such as information from journals, books, magazines, newspapers, and other publications as relevant secondary sources for this research. This research focuses on both history and literature that examines the struggle of the Moro-Muslim community to maintain and defend their societal rights that were marginalized by the dominance of colonial power. The concept of postcolonialism, which is defined as a critique of cultural appropriation and exploitation by colonialists, creates a bad stigmatization of the colonized, but this stigma becomes a breakthrough spirit

² Peter Childs and R. J. Patrick Williams, *An Introduction To Post-Colonial Theory*, 1st ed. (London: Prentice Hall, 1997).

as a defense and struggle of the Moro Muslim community in the form of Jihad from discrimination during colonialism and post-independence.

DISCUSSION

An Overview of Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism literally means a theory that was born after the colonial era. The term “post-” refers not only to the time that signifies the meaning of after or post, but rather to a concept and perception to oppose the discourse related to colonialism itself. Meanwhile, the term “-ism” refers to an understanding and ideology. So postcolonialism refers to aspects of comparative representation, discourse interpretation, conception, and perception.³ In postcolonialism discussions, the term postcolonial or postcolonialism refers to the end of the colonial era along with the independence of formerly colonized nations in the early 20th century. This term is often applied to distinguish between pre-independence and post-independence colonial and postcolonial periods. There are differences in the definitions of postcolonial and postcolonial, which specifically mean that postcolonial relates to a time, era, and period with definite boundaries, namely the post-colonial period. In contrast, as a theory, postcolonial is an intellectual tradition that has absolute boundaries.⁴

Postcolonialism is a post-imperial study that seeks to examine the authority of one culture over another. It is a synchronic and diachronic study of various aspects related to colonialism and imperialism. Colonialism is a government's attempt to control a region or another country (colony) by conquest. Meanwhile, imperialism can be defined as the colonization of European countries (Western countries) aiming at seizing foodstuffs, seizing abundant market production, and investing in colony countries. Therefore, the study of postcolonialism is the hegemony of power by Western countries in various media literature of other countries that can be dissected.⁵

Postcolonialism represents a new idea of considering cultural diversity as a critique of the dominance of Western civilization. What is universalism for the West is imperialism for the East. Western cultural values such as individualism, rationalism, functionalism, and

³ John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester University Press, 2000).

⁴ Nyoman Kutha Ratna, *Postkolonialisme Indonesia: Relevansi Sastra* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008).

⁵ Peter Childs and R. J. Patrick Williams, *An Introduction To Post-Colonial Theory*.

materialism are not considered universal for postcolonialism. In this regard, the Western principle is still and will remain in motion to maintain the hegemony that all interests are ostensibly global (world community) interests.⁶

Postcolonialism means the anti- or critique of colonialism⁷ in terms of cultural appropriation and exploitation by colonialists. Therefore, colonialism and imperialism in this definition can be interpreted since colonial power was present in the scope of other nations' cultures until now. Therefore, postcolonialism is an opposition in everyday life, like the pattern of resistance of small communities without going through the political system with movements to re-examine modern politics as the identity of the elite in power. According to Lubis, this strategy transforms society from one that tends to be positioned on two axes with one identity, to a community that interacts with each other and is spread across domestic and universal communities simultaneously.⁸

Discussions related to postcolonialism are not limited to a single and static concept. The discussion is not only about the effort to take the independence of a nation, nor is it limited to efforts to resist the investigation of a country's independence or resistance to the domination of colonialism and its legacies. According to Loomba, postcolonial or postcolonial is an opposition to the domination of colonialism and its legacies.⁹ Meanwhile, according to William, the discussion related to the postcolonial concept is a protest of the application of the view of the other with culture as its main component.¹⁰ The discourse related to culture in this case includes imaginary expressions seen from historical facts as a form of society that is dynamically incorporated to overcome problems with social awareness.

The hegemony and insistence of the colonizing culture to survive and vice versa, or the desire to progress and be free, so that studies related to fighting for independence are often

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington and Penerjemah M. Sadat Ismail, *Benturan Antar Peradaban Dan Masa Depan Politik Dunia (The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order)* (Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2001).

⁷ Ade Eka Anggraini, "Posmoderisme Dan Poskolonialisme Dalam Karya Sastra," *Jurnal Pujangga* 4, no. 1 (2018).

⁸ Akhyar Yusuf Lubis, *Dekonstruksi Epistemologi Modern* (Jakarta: Pustaka Indonesia Satu, 2006).

⁹ Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London: Verso, 1997).

¹⁰ Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, 1st ed. (London: Columbia University Press, 1994).

preceded by the addition of expressions of indigenous customs to emphasize that the culture of the colonized country is a tool to eliminate the cultural hegemony of the colonizing country. Therefore, the representation of identity by repairing and restoring the oppressed culture is a critique of the ideology of postcolonialism with the actual identity of doctrinal imperialism.¹¹ In this case, research on the historical record of the Spanish colonial doctrine with bad stigmas on the colonized people with rejection and resistance is interesting, thus triggering a negative stigma which ultimately merged with the struggle of the Moro Muslims who expressed themselves as a form of self-defense and autonomous independence in their own land.

The Advancement of Islam in the Philippines

Located on an archipelago with a strategic geographical location, the Philippines is a favorable route for the expansion of several countries as well as world trade. Historically, from the 9th to the 16th century, it was Muslims who controlled almost all trade. Islamic traders stopped by the Philippine archipelago on their voyage to China in the 12th century. As the oldest monotheistic religion, Islam first reached the Southern Philippines with the majority on the island of Sulu and the island of Mindanao with the arrival of Muslim merchants from the Persian Gulf and the Malabar Coast of South India, and most of them had followers from some of the sultanates of the Malay Archipelago.

Prior to the arrival of Islam, the Philippines was a territory ruled by several kingdoms. Islam was welcomed by the local community due to the teachings of Islam that were able to integrate and acculturate with the various customs and traditions of the Filipino people that existed before.¹² In the 10th century AD, the development of Islam brought by Muslim merchants from Arabia initially made Islam the majority religion in the Philippines, later becoming a minority religion after colonialism in 1521 to 1946 from Western colonizers. In addition, Islam became a minority in the Philippines due to the arrival of non-Muslims from the Northern Philippines. They immigrated to the Southern Philippines and were followed by

¹¹ Edward W Said, *Kebudayaan Dan Kekuasaan: Membongkar Mitos Hegemoni Barat / Edward W. Said (Culture and Imperialism)*, Penerjemah, Rahmani Astuti (Bandung: Mizan, 1995).

¹² Hasaruddin, "Perkembangan Sosial Islam Di Filipina," *Al Ma'arif: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2019).

the spread of Spanish Catholicism in the Philippines.¹³ In general, the development of Islam in the Philippines went through the following stages:

1. The Moro Muslims in the Era of Spanish Colonialism

The rapid growth of Islam across the Philippines eventually stagnated with the entry of the Spanish into the country. As a result, the development of Islam came to an inclusive halt and only took root in the center of Islamic civilization in the Philippines, namely the South and some of the nearby coastlines.¹⁴ This condition continued until the independence of the Philippines, which was politically, economically, and socially hegemonized by non-Islamic powers. Thus, the Muslim community is marginalized by all forms of government policies that oppress minorities. However, it is precisely the downturn of the minority people that is expressed by struggle and resistance under the pretext that they have the same authority rights as the majority citizens. This led to many movements to rise up for the right to autonomy in all aspects of life.

On March 16, 1521, AD, at the beginning of the Spanish colonial presence in the Philippines, domestic citizens already knew the hidden intentions of Ferdinand de Magellan's scientific expedition.¹⁵ An interesting thing about the historical record during the Spanish colonial period is that the Spanish conquest of the people of the Northern Philippines was conquered easily, without any resistance. In contrast, the Muslim-majority Southern Philippines firmly and simultaneously united to reject and even fight and fight tenaciously against the colonizers. This led to the colonizers being overwhelmed by the Sulu and Mindanao islands and spending 375 years of colonialism with wars against the Muslims in the Southern Philippines.

They did so through mission-sacred Christianization and politics of divide and rule as well as mission-secret Christianization. The fight against colonialism by the Muslim community in the Northern Philippines created a bad stigma called *Moor/Moro*, which means illiterate, evil, godless, and murderers. Since then, the nickname Moro has been attached to Filipino Muslims.¹⁶

¹³ Firmanzah, "Dinamika Gerakan Pembebasan Muslim Moro Di Filipina Selatan: Studi Terhadap Moro National Liberation Front (1971-1996)," *Jurnal Intelektualitas* 6, no. 1 (2017).

¹⁴ Firmanzah.

¹⁵ Arisman, *Historikal Islam Asia Tenggara*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Kalimedia, 2017).

¹⁶ Arisman.

During the colonial period, history records the biggest war in 1578 AD between Filipinos. The people of the Northern Philippines, most of whom had been Christianized by Spain, were included and appointed as soldiers of the Spanish colonial military, and then the evil mission of the Spanish colony was to send them to fight against the people of the Southern Philippines, who were predominantly Muslim. This resulted in a civil war between the Christian-majority Northern Philippines and the Muslim-majority Southern Philippines because of the Spanish colonial divide and conquer mission, and the sensitivity of the conflict has carried over to the present day.

2. The Moro Muslims in the Era of US Imperialism

Although Spanish colonialism failed in taking over the governance of Sulu and Mindanao, it continued to regionalize the two regions. This was proven by the Bates Treaty of August 20, 1899, with the lure of the right to religious belief, the right to express ideas, and the right to education for Moro Muslims. The impact of the transfer of power to US imperialism with its sweet promises, political cohesiveness, and unity among Muslim communities in the Philippines began to fragile, and cultural principles began to be tainted by Western norms.

Indeed, the Bates Treaty was meant to attract the Moro people in the Southern Philippines as well as to suppress resistance and rebellion against the colonizers. At that time the United States was also challenged by the rebellion of the Northern Filipino extremists led by the first president of the Philippines, Emilio Aguinaldo, to fight for the full independence of his country from colonial Spain and the imperial United States. However, the struggle of the Northern Philippine extremists did not run entirely smoothly. Their loss in 1902 AD to the colonizers led to the colonizers' policies in the Sulu and Mindanao regions being heavily contaminated by colonial interference in the form of the Open Door Policy. It was an open political system with massive capital investment and immigration policies. Subsequently, the islands of Sulu and Mindanao were merged into the province of Moro land under the premise of civilizing the people of the islands of Sulu and Mindanao.

Surprisingly, in 1898-1923 the United States had capitalized upon the opportunity to acquire the land and forests of the Moro region for the benefit of capitalist expansion. In addition, they also mobilized to fight against the Moro Nation, but this tactic was less efficient due to the strong resistance of the Moro Nation as a territorial defense. The

United States employed tactics and deceit with the lure of the right to religious belief, the right to express ideas, and the right to education for Moro Muslims. Because of the transfer of power to US imperialism with its sweet promises, political cohesiveness and unity among the Muslim communities in the Philippines began to fail and cultural principles began to be tainted by Western norms.

The background of these policies tantalized the Moro-Muslim community. It was based on the colonists' strategy to draw the Moro Muslims into the central wave of the Northern Philippines and integrate Christian cultures into their territory. Eventually, these strategies can intimidate indigenous autonomy traditions.

3. Pre-Independence and Post-Independence Moro Muslims

Prior to the independence of the Philippines, which was marked by the transfer of US imperialism to the Christian Filipino government under the capitalist system, they enacted the land laws inherited from the US colonies by declaring the obligation of land registration in writing with signatures and sworn oaths. The essence of the land law is to legalize the dispossession of Muslim land rights in customary and ulaya lands, which is entirely derived from the American colonial policy with the Northern Philippine government and commercially benefits only the capitalists. This system of colonialism was transferred to the Philippine government once the United States left. This resulted in the Moro people becoming a minority in their own land.

Spain grasped authority and dominated power only for their own favorable position. Therefore, they massively called for merit, self, and cultural superiority while at the same time calling for the opposite stigma for the colonized society. Alatas in his book *The Myth of the lazy natives*, examines orientalist texts exclusively on the Dutch East Indies of Malaysia and the Philippines. He argues that Indigenous people's lack of interest in working in sectors that support capitalism stigmatizes the myth that Indigenous people are lazy, creditors, thieves, drinkers, and so on.¹⁷

In fact, these myths helped justify and perpetuate the rule of colonialism and capitalism. Therefore, colonizers and capitalists feel entitled to regulate, control, and civilize those who are hegemonic. The superior image as well as the inferior image becomes a member

¹⁷ S.H Alatas, *Mitos Pribumi Malas: Citra Orang Jawa, Melayu Dan Filipina Dalam Kapitalisme Kolonial / S.H. Alatas; Penerjemah, Akhmad Rofi'ie* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan sosial (LP3ES), 1988).

of 'fixity'. It is a colonial discourse to distinguish between racial, historical, and cultural so that the colonized enter a state of disarray and question the existence of their identity by following the 'superior image' of the colonizers.¹⁸

On July 4, 1946, the Philippines was officially proclaimed a republic. Many of the Muslim Moro officials were given positions in the Philippine government and forced to work in accordance with the reformed Philippine government system. However, the coercive measures have resulted in some Muslim officials feeling that they have lost their national identity. For example, the Moro people find it difficult to accept a national constitution that is based on Western and Catholic values. Another case is the education system in Islamic schools that does not adhere to the principles of Islamic teachings as most of the schools built are inherited from Catholic missionaries who are very much against Islamic ideology. In addition, there is still a trauma of hatred among Moro Muslims towards Western Catholic missionaries. The government of the Northern Philippines' population migration agenda to the Moro Muslim community in Mindanao Island is one of them. Consequently, it changed their position from majority to minority in almost every aspect of life.

Moro as a Muslim Identity in the Philippines

Moor or Moro is a nickname left by Spanish colonials for Muslim communities in the Philippines which in Arabic منطقة بانجسامورو ذاتية الحكم *Manthiqah banjissamuru dzatiyah al-hukm* which officially includes the Moro Nation Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The emergence of the Moro Nation is the result of years of peace discourse following peace negotiations between the regional autonomy group and the Philippine government, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as the effects of the denial of Mindanao's legality as well as the rejection of the national government's establishment of territorially expanded powers. The Spanish colony used various methods to establish regional hegemony through mission-sacred, namely the holy mission of Christianization, politics of divide and rule, and mission-sacred (Christianization). The struggle of the Muslim community in the Northern Philippines against colonialism has created a bad stigma as Moor/Moro, which refers to illiterate, evil,

¹⁸ Gaudensio Angkasa, "Teori Postkolonial Dalam Kerangka Konsep Identitas," *Academia.Edu*, 2014.

godless, and murderous people. Since then, the nickname Moro has been attached to Muslims in the Philippines.

Postcolonialism studies in the formulation of an identity are more likely to use considerations that are placed in a binary or two-pole position. Binary opposition is a system that separates the world into two related groups. According to the ideology, a person is directed towards one of two justified choices, such as the West versus the East, the other versus the self, the objective versus the subjective, the past versus the present, the object versus the subject, or so on - one of which is seen as superior to the other.¹⁹

Leela Ghandi argues that the interaction between the colonizers and the colonized or former colonies has a hegemonic interaction between the parties with their superiority, namely the colonizers, and the colonized with their inferiority. Then the interaction towards hegemony creates domination and subordination. The interaction created bad reflections on the colonized party with negative stigmas such as ignorant, stupid, uneducated, barbaric, irrational, uncivilized, ignorant, mystical, and other bad stigmas.²⁰ Colonials have changed the mindset, structure, and system of citizenship, as well as the norms of life of the indigenous people themselves. Iswadi also argues the same thing regarding the impact of negative stigmas given by the Dutch colonizers on Indonesian women who were seen as inferior, marginalized in their own place, and isolated without being allowed to speak out, so that the impact was very cruel. For example, the Dutch colonizers forced marriage, female prostitution, and sex slavery on indigenous women resulting in physical and psychological trauma that led to mental retardation due to bad and negative stigmas.²¹

Edward Said characterizes the Orient as voiceless, sensual, female, despotic, irrational, and backward. Edward Said believes that during the era of colonialism, the formation of ideology was continuous even though Orientalism struggled to maintain the views and judgments of the East.²² Related to the cultural identity of the Moro Muslim community in the Philippines, the perception of cultural identity reveals opportunities to learn related things: First, it is not only how the Moro Muslim community holds their cultural identity while

¹⁹ Lubis, *Dekonstruksi Epistemologi Modern*.

²⁰ Leela Gandhi, *Teori Poskolonial: Upaya Meruntuhkan Hegemoni Barat / Leela Gandhi; Penerjemah, Yuwan Wahyutri Dan Nur Hamidah* (Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2001).

²¹ Iswadi Bahardur, "Pribumi Subaltern Dalam Novel-Novel Indonesia Pascakolonial," *Jurnal Gramatika*, 2017.

²² Said, *Kebudayaan Dan Kekuasaan: Membongkar Mitos Hegemoni Barat / Edward W. Said (Culture and Imperialism)*, Penerjemah, Rahmani Astuti.

taking some cultures that are not Filipino customs; The second is how some of them are able to carry out acculturation in totality by legalizing and then applying the cultural identity of the colonials who are in fact Filipino colonizers into their lives. Furthermore, perceptions related to cultural identity are related to matters of dialog that apply signs, symbols, and symbols of interaction; The third is how the Moro Muslim community understands and defines symbols at the level of communication science that can also be understood as a cultural identity.

Discussing identities presented in the negotiation of post-colonialist theory means discussing post colonialist identities. In this negotiation, the postcolonial identity carries out disclosure and the power of the lies given to it also brings out its otherness. Addressing the theory of postcolonialism in a negotiation is the same as addressing the identity of postcolonialism itself.

In fact, postcolonialism identity in a negotiation carries out disclosure and power related to the lies given to it and also brings the other or otherness to itself. Edward Said in his book *Culture and Imperialism* says that the interpretation of the 'self' as the self for distinguishing the other, namely the other, is interpreted by cultural imperialism such as representation, literary works that reflect the 'other' as a comparison, smart with stupid, civilized with savage and so on.²³

The Awakening of Moro Muslims in the Philippines

As discussed, beforehand, the step of Islamization in the Philippines ended because of the presence of the Spanish. This resulted in the loss of opportunities to develop perfectly throughout the Philippines, resulting in Islam only developing in the Southern Philippines and some coastal islands. This condition continued until the independence of the Philippines, with the dominance of economic, political, and social power on the side of the Christians. This made the Moro Muslim community feel threatened by government policies that discredited minority groups.²⁴

The response to the oppression of the Moro Nation, led to the emergence of organized resistance movements as a form of struggle of the Moro nation to separate themselves and become independent from the government, such as: Muslim Independent Movement (MIM),

²³ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

²⁴ Arisman, *Historikal Islam Asia Tenggara*.

Moro Liberation Front (MLF), Moro national Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) which tend to be radical. In addition, there are also extremist movements such as the Abu Sayyaf faction.²⁵ In addition, there are also extremist movements such as the Abu Sayyaf faction. The settlement procedure of the Moro Muslim community's dispute with the Northern Philippine government can be seen in the emergence of agreements with the Moro people's liberation movement represented by the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front), such as Tripoli Agreement in 1976, Jeddah Accord in 1985 and Peace Agreement in 1996.²⁶

Such kind of background does not make the Moro Muslim community surrender and submit. The awareness of existence as citizens of the nation who have the same rights makes the Moro Muslim community organize activities to rise and unite to achieve the same rights as other citizens with several realities, such as:

1. Compensation from World War II for the Moro Muslim community awakened and raised awareness of the existence of Islam as some left for Hajj and Umrah;
2. Islamic institutions, associations, and organizations are increasing with support from both national and international.
3. Colleges, Universities both private and public that require lectures with majors related to Islamic religion and awarding degrees in Islamic studies have been established in the Philippines.
4. The battle and struggle of the Moro Nation raises awareness with a high level of vigilance for Muslims.

There are two distinct groups that are promoting the revival of Filipino Muslims. First, the radical ideological group is dominated by the extremist MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) and they are a minority among the Muslims in the Philippines. The strategy was to gain sympathy by selling misery, oppression, and misfortune to attract the attention of international Islamic countries. Furthermore, they are engaged in jihad warfare to undermine the Philippine government. Second, moderate ideological groups in Muslim communities have ideas on various positive changes and revivals in religion and society. Their strategy is to maintain their identity as Muslims. They contribute to the political current of the

²⁵ Nuril Ayni, "Masalah Moro: Sebuah Kajian Perkembangan Kasus Konflik Internal Moro Hingga Kancah Internasional (1946-2019)," *Jurnal Bakaba* 9, no. 1 (2021): 8–14.

²⁶ Rina Rehayati, "Minoritas Muslim: Belajar Dari Kasus Minoritas Muslim Di Filipina," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 17, no. 2 (2011).

Philippine government to achieve goals with constitutional legality. This can be seen from the massive socialization of their ideological inspiration, by taking part in government efforts for peace and justice for the Moro Nation.²⁷

This type of attitude and circumstance of the Muslims has had an impact on the pace and development of Islamic proselytization in the Philippines. For example, Tabligh Marawy City includes Sub'an al-Muslimin Tabligh of the Philippines, Jama'ah al-Tabligh, and Islamic Tabligh of the Philippines, but these organizations have little information regarding their activities and existence in the Philippines. The organization that has a large scope in the Philippines is an Islamic organization called CONVISLAM which stands for convert to Islam. This Islamic organization has been operating in the field of da'wah since 1954 on a national scale. And the organization initiated a national scale organization in the field of da'wah called the Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines, (مجلس الدعوة الإسلامية الفلبينية) as the protector of all da'wah movements and activities, such as: expeditions to provincial branches, organization of public lectures, publication of Islamic books, construction of mosques, participation in various national and international conferences, provision of training related to religious propagation, special guidance on Arabic language and others. One of its effects is the establishment of many Islamic-based madrasahs (Islamic religious schools), especially in the Southern Philippines.²⁸

As for the relationship between Islamic organizations and the Philippine government as a form of Islamic revival, there are negotiations between the two parties that gave birth to the Ministry of Muslim Affairs which is responsible for organizing Umrah and Hajj, as well as Amanah Bank which has a connection with the ministry based on Islamic law, one of which is the prohibition of usury.

The Moro Muslim community continues to foster a new culture and civilization even though it has been hurt by Colonial Spain and the United States. They are slowly gathering fragments of the progress and power of Islam that once triumphed, physically and non-physically. The massive changes and improvements in Islamic civilization today can be seen in the number of mosques and madrassas that have been established because of support from both local and international Muslim organizations. Moreover, up to now, 1,500 madrassas

²⁷ Arisman, *Historikal Islam Asia Tenggara*.

²⁸ Saiful Muzani, *Pembangunan Dan Kebangkitan Islam Di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1993).

have been established, although most of them only reach the secondary level. Moreover, the government has also distributed special scholarships for Moro Muslim students who have achievements. This is also fully supported by al-Azhar University Cairo Egypt by providing scholarships to the Moro Muslim community to pursue education there.²⁹

For the sake of improving the quality of education of the Moro community, many Muslim teachers from abroad temporarily teach and guide in various madrassas in the Moro region. Consequently, many Moro Muslims have taken part in the Philippine government, although only in the Department of Women Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs, and no more. The National Muslim Civil Code of 1977 which deals with the mufti clause has been legalized, although not all judicial offices and sharia areas have legalized the law.

In 1981, the Office of Muslim Affairs was established in the Philippines, and much has been made of the return of Filipinos to Islam. In the national language of the Philippines, there is a term for people who return to Islam called "Balik Islam". The "Balik Muslims" mostly live on the island of Luzon. Among the 6.599 million Muslims who live there, some 200,000 are Balik Islam.³⁰

This is the latest situation of Moro Muslims in the Philippines, an effort to reassemble the dark history of Muslims during the Spanish and American colonization, reorganizing the image of Moro Muslims in order to revive the spirit of struggle and revival both from the economic and social aspects of society.

CONCLUSION

Despite Islam being a minority religion amidst a predominantly Catholic population, the Philippines has the largest Islamic region in the country, namely the southern Philippines, particularly Sulu and Mindanao. During the Christianization of the Spanish colonial period, these tribes in the Southern Philippines resisted and refused to convert. As a result, the Muslims in the Philippines were concentrated in the Southern Philippines. They formed a group known as Moro or Moro Nation. The struggle of the Muslim community in the Northern Philippines against colonialism has created a bad stigma as Moor/Moro, which means illiterate, evil, godless, and murderous people. Since then, the nickname Moro has been attached to Muslims in the Philippines. In postcolonialism studies, the formulation of an identity is more likely to use considerations that are placed in a binary position. Postcolonialism is defined as anti or criticism of cultural appropriation and exploitation by

²⁹ Arisman, *Historikal Islam Asia Tenggara*.

³⁰ Asep Achmad Hidayat, *Sejarah Sosial Muslim Minoritas Di Kawasan Asia* (Bandung: Prodi S2 Studi Agama-Agama UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2022).

colonialists, so colonialism and imperialism in this definition can be interpreted since colonial power was present in the scope of other nations' cultures until now. Indeed, postcolonial identity in a negotiation carries out disclosure and power related to the lies given to it and brings otherness to itself. Many facts are seen related to the return of Filipinos to return to Islam which they call the "Balik Islam" people who mostly occupy the Philippine Island of Luzon. Moro Muslims are eager to reconstruct the dark history of Muslims during the Spanish and American colonization, reorganize the image of Moro Muslims so that they can revive the spirit of struggle and revival both from the economic and social aspects of society with a new identity.

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