

The Lanao Sultanate Leadership Legitimacy: Its Bases from Islamic Principles on Leadership, Maranao Traditions, Salsilas and Historical Claims
Legitimasi Kepemimpinan Kesultanan Lanao: Asasnya daripada Prinsip Islam Mengenai Kepimpinan, Tradisi Maranao, Salsilah dan Tuntutan Sejarah

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ABSTRACT

The Muslim Maranaos founded the Lanao Sultanate in 1616 and it continues until today as a traditional governance in Lanao del Sur in Mindanao, Philippines. Whereas, the Republic of the Philippine was established in 1946. Today, Lanao del Sur is part of the territories of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Literature reviews show that the Lanao Sultanate was less represented in the academic research since the early scholars specializing on the sultanates in the Philippines focused on Sulu and Magindanao sultanates only. In addition, there is a sizeable research gap on the Lanao Sultanate legitimacy in the areas of Islamic principles on leadership, Maranao traditions, *salsilas* (scholarly chain of genealogy), and historical claims. Hence, this study explores the bases of legitimacy of Lanao Sultanate from Islamic principles on leadership, Maranao traditions, *salsilas*, and historical claims perspectives.

Keywords: Lanao Sultanate; legitimacy; Islamic principles; *salsilas*; Maranaos; Maranao traditions

ABSTRAK

Maranaos Muslim mengasaskan Kesultanan Lanao pada tahun 1616 dan ia berterusan sehingga ke hari ini sebagai tadbir urus tradisional di Lanao del Sur, Mindanao, Filipina. Manakala, Republik Filipina telah ditubuhkan pada tahun 1946. Kini, Lanao del Sur adalah sebahagian daripada Wilayah Autonomi Bangsamoro di Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Tinjauan literatur menunjukkan bahawa Kesultanan Lanao kurang mendapat perhatian dalam penyelidikan akademik kerana sarjana awal yang mengkhususkan kesultanan di Filipina menumpukan perhatian kepada kesultanan Sulu dan Magindanao sahaja. Di samping itu, terdapat jurang penyelidikan yang besar tentang legitimasi Kesultanan Lanao dalam bidang prinsip Islam mengenai kepimpinan, tradisi Maranao, salsilah dan tuntutan sejarah. Oleh itu, kajian ini meneroka asas kesahihan Kesultanan Lanao daripada prinsip Islam mengenai kepimpinan, tradisi Maranao, salsilah, dan perspektif tuntutan sejarah.

Kata kunci: Kesultanan Lanao; legitimasi; prinsip Islam; salsilah; Maranaos; Tradisi Maranao

INTRODUCTION

The Foundation of *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*: Lanao Sultanate Geo-Political Divisions

Upon the establishment of the Republic of the Philippines in 1946, the traditional lifeways and the political system of the Maranaos had faced with conflict with the dominant system of the national government of the Republic of the Philippines. Politically, the Maranaos are caught in a dual political forces: first, under the national government, and second, under the communal government system of Lanao Sultanate. Currently, the Maranaos live and interact in accordance with both types of government. As a result, the Maranaos are caught in ‘two different worlds’. In a broader context, the Muslim Filipinos, in general, are caught between the said two systems of government and two systems of laws, one the Islamic law, and the other is the man-made law, the Philippines civil law. The former sprang from history and religion, the other enforced upon them by the national government.¹

Historically, the Magindanao Sultanate was governed by the Maranaos since the time of Sharīf Makaalang until today. This claim is acceptable due to the fact that Sharīf Makaalang, the 2nd sultan of Magindanao has a Maranao blood, and his descendants became the rulers of Magindanao Sultanate.

The Sultanate of Lanao enjoins a collective leadership which promotes unity and strong brotherhood and the equality of the Maranaos. It is also a consultative Monarch which is equivalent to Monarchical Democracy. The Lanao Sultanate was divided into division and each division was then divided into sub-divisions. Each sultanate’s division was ruled by their respective *panoroganan* (high ranking sultan) whereas, the sultanate’s sub-divisions were ruled by the lower ranking sultans, but these sultanates were inter-dependent on one another based on their *taritib* and *igma*.² The Lanao Sultanate has the House of ‘*ulamā*’ (learned scholars) who were the legal and religious advisers and judges. It also has the House of the ladies (*bai, bai-a-labi and potri-maamor*), *gurus* (teachers), *imāms* (religious ministers), and *pananalsilas* (genealogists).³

During the Spanish period, the Lanao Sultanate had *askars* (peace keeping force) who maintained peace and order in Lanao; it also had a military and naval force which then regularly joining the naval forces of Magindanao and Sulu sultanates. These joint forces were intended for a military expedition against the Spanish forces and military bases in the Islands of Visayas and Luzon, the Philippines. The Spanish forces were composed of Spanish men and Christianized Filipinos from the Islands of Visayas and Luzon. The Spanish leaders used the Christianized Filipinos in their policy of wars against the Muslim people in Mindanao whom they called Moros.⁴

According to Mamitua Saber, the Spanish colonial forces pursued military, and spiritual campaigns towards the Maranaos in the shores of Lake Lanao. It was in April 4, 1639, when a Spanish conquistador Corcuera sent the first Spanish expedition to the Maranao inhabitants of Lake Lanao areas. This expedition was composed of Spaniards and several troops of Boholanos from the island of Bohol in Visayas, the central part of the Philippines.

¹ Mamitua Saber, “Some Observation on Maranao Social and Cultural Transition,” *Philippine Sociological Review*, 1963.

² S. M. Macabando, *Brief History of the Maranao Mindanao, Maranao Salsila (Genealogy) Their Origin*. Vol. 1. (Marawi City: Marawi Sultanate League, 2008), 18.

³ Sohayle M. Hadji Abdul Racman, “The Islamicity of Lanao Sultanate, Philippines in the 17th Century as a State,” *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)*, Volume 42, No. 3. (2018): 205-230.

⁴ Ibid.

This campaign was jointly commanded by Captain Francisco de Atienza and a Portuguese Recollect missionary, Fray Agustin de San Pedro. Atienza and San Pedro managed to entering alliance with some of the chiefs or *datus* of Lanao. In 1640, Corcuera sent Don Pedro Bermudes Castro to Lake Lanao. Castro established garrison to establish the Spanish sovereignty in the areas of the Maranaos in Lanao. Later on, the Maranaos became suspicious and were alarmed by the threat of subjugation, hence, they drove back the Spaniards to the coastal towns in Mindanao. They also burned the Spanish installations in Lake Lanao. After this incident, the Spanish forces never return to the Maranao areas in Lake Lanao for over 250 years.⁵

According to Mamitua Saber, “the Maranao people maintained their independent nation under the *pangampong* (state) organization which was free from European domination.”⁶ The US forces came and made war against imperial Spain for political control of the Philippines. According to Helen R. Tubangui, the war between the US and Spain ended under the Treaty of Paris which was signed in December 10, 1898. Spain ceded the Philippines to US which it paid \$20,000,000 to Spain to compensate for the cost of improvements that Spain spent to its colony, the Philippines.⁷ In the 19th century, the Maranaos were again faced with challenges and were struggling to resist another superior force, the Americans, and then later, the Japanese who came during the World War II. If these superior forces did not come to the Philippines, it is likely that the fate of the Maranaos would be still under the sultanate system of government today.

The original political set-up of the Four States of Lanao was a *datuship* system. These Four States of Lanao were ruled by five *datus* who were brothers, namely Butuanun Kalinan, Batara Kilatun, Amerogong Topaan, Dimaampao Kalinan, and Domalandalan. Specifically, Butuanun Kalinan ruled Bayabao, Batara Kilatun ruled Masiu, Amerogong Topaan ruled Baloi, while Dimaampao Kalinan, and Domalandalan ruled Unayan. Domalandalan ruled the coastal areas of Unayan in Malabang, and Dimaampao Kalinan ruled the interior part of Unayan in Lake Lanao.⁸ These *datus* were founders of the traditional states of Lanao. In a nutshell, the Four States of Lanao were originally ruled by *datus* and its political structure was a *datuship* then later on, the Four States of Lanao had developed into a sultanate.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What are bases of legitimacy of Lanao Sultanate in the areas of Islamic principles on leadership, the Maranao traditions, *salsilas* (scholarly chain of genealogy), and historical claims?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant to Southeast Asian studies particularly the Philippines studies as a field of specialization. The Mindanao State University in Marawi City offers Masters and PhD in Philippine Studies programs, hence, this paper contributes to reading materials and academic references suitable to the said programs. This research paper is related to Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia, Islamic political thought and governance, Islamic culture,

⁵ Mamitua Saber, “Maranao Resistance to Foreign Invasion,” *The Maranao Man by Maranao Men*, No. 4, non-periodical series. Mindanao Art and Culture, Mindanao State University Research Center, Marawi City (1980).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Helen R. Tubangui, *The Filipino Nation, A Concise History of the Philippines*. Ed. by Jim Haskins (Philippines: Grolier International Inc., 1982).

⁸ S. M. Macabando, *Brief History of Maranao Mindanao...op cit.*, 7.

history, sociology, anthropology, and Philippines studies, thus, this paper contributes to the widening-range of Islamic field of studies and other allied specializations.

RELATED LITERATURE

Several edited volumes, originating from different fields of study, such as religious, political, and social aspects of Muslim tribes in the Philippines were written by many authors, one of which is Peter G. Gowing. His book⁹ entitled, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon* provides a comprehensive introduction to Islam and Muslims in the Philippines. Some of its chapters deal with the profiling of Filipino Muslims, the history of Islam, and the Islamization of the inhabitants of the Philippines, Muslim responses to colonialism, their religious beliefs, and practices, life ways, mores, art, and the Moro secessionist movement. This work is suitable for a general introduction of the Muslim history of the Philippines. It does not, however, discuss the contour and dynamics of political aspects of the Sultanates in Mindanao particularly the Lanao Sultanate.

The next literature is Jamel R. Cayamoden's¹⁰ Master thesis, *The Pat a Pengampong A Ranao: A Study on the Emergence of Lanao Sultanates in the 21st Century*. It explains that the early missionaries, and the founders of Islamic institutions, and Muslim societies in the Philippines were from Malaysia who propagated Islam, and established settlements with sultanates rules. He stresses that Sharīf al-Hashim Syed Abū Bakar founded the Sulu Sultanate which gradually expanded over the Islands of Jolo, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Palawan, and North Borneo; these Islands in the Philippines were represented in the five stars on the sultan's green banner. Cayamoden explains that Muslims from Malaysia were responsible in the propagation of Islam in the Philippines. In his thesis, however he does not explain the legitimacy of Lanao Sultanate governance.

Another literature is Antonio Isidro's¹¹ book entitled, *From Sultanate to Democracy*. It establishes that it was Sharīf Kabunsuan who organized the first sultanate of Magindanao in Cotabato which then later split into three allied powers. Antonio Isidro explains that this system of geographical organization later spread to Lanao where four *pangampong* (states) were established, and they still exist today in a complex and segmented structure. This means that Sharīf Kabunsuan had influenced the traditional leadership of the Maranaos in Lanao who adopted the Magindanao Sultanate's political system into their own *datu-ship* system by means of institutionalizing their own sultanate. Salah Subair contends that Sharīf Kabunsuan, a Hashimite was instrumental in the propagation of Islamic faith in Mindanao when he landed in Malabang in 1515, presently part of Lanao del Sur. Later, he proceeded to the mouth of the Pulangi River in Cotabato where he firmly introduced the Islamic faith to the native inhabitants there. His marriages with the daughters of local chiefs in Mindanao had resulted to the foundation of the sultanates in Mindanao.¹² This work does not discuss the legitimacy of Lanao Sultanate.

⁹ Peter G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1978).

¹⁰ Jamel R. Cayamoden (2007), "*The Pat a Pengampong A Ranao: A Study on the Emergence of Lanao Sultanates in the 21st Century*." Master Thesis, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, 1.

¹¹ Antonio Isidro, "From Sultanate to Democracy," *Mindanao Journal*, University Research Center, Mindanao State University, Vol. III, No. 2, Oct-Dec., 1976), 59.

¹² Salah Jubair, *Bangsamoro A Nation Under Endless Tyranny* (Mansoorah, Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Research Academy, 1984), 4-5.

The work of Abraham P. Sakili¹³ entitled: *Space and identity: Expressions in the Culture, Arts and Society of the Muslims in the Philippines* explains that the Islamization of the Southern Philippines began in the 13th century. It was spread through the effort of the Muslim Sufi missionaries. The interplay of political, economic, social and other factors helped spread Islam in the Philippines. Sakili states that the Islamization of Sulu Archipelago coincided with the advent of sultanate institutions in the Philippines. The most dramatic aspect of Sulu's Islamization was the arrival of Sharīf Abūbakar or Abū Bakar who was from Arabia. He arrived in Sulu via Borneo in 1450 from Palembang, Sumatra. He came from Arabia through Baghdad, and then to Sumatra before reaching Sulu. At Bwansa, he met a princess, Paramisuli whom he married. Raja Baguinda, the father of Paramisuli was succeeded by Sharīf Abūbakar after his death. Abūbakar founded the Sultanate of Sulu.¹⁴ Abūbakar further consolidated Islam in Bwansa, and shaped the political institutions along Islamic lines. It was chronicled in Sulu *salsila* that Abūbakar introduced the study of the Qur'ān, constructed a mosque, and a *madrasah* (religious or Islamic school).¹⁵

Abraham P. Sakili does not however explain the intermarriages between the ruling families of Sulu and Magindanao. It is interesting to note that Sharīf Laut Buisan, a Maranao descent, who was the 6th Sultan of Magindanao ascended to power in 1597, married the sister of Sultan Batara Shah Tengah of Sulu, who became the mother of [Potre] Gayang and Muhammad Dipatuan Kudarat. [Potre] Gayang was married to the grandson of Dimasangcay Adil, Sharīf Matonding, and their children were the reigning sultans and *bai-a-labis* (sultanahs) of Lanao.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Muhammad Dipatuan Kudarat or Sultan Kudarat rose to power as the Sultan of Magindanao for 52 years (1615/1619-1671). He married one of the daughters of Sultan Mawallil Wasit of the Sulu Archipelago, who ruled over his sultanate during the early part of the 17th century.

Lastly, the work of Peter Gordon Gowing¹⁷ entitled, *Muslim Filipinos-Heritage and Horizon*. Gowing argues that the Muslims, who arrived in Mindanao and Sulu in the 13th century learned the doctrines and laws of Islam, and they preached the teachings of Islam in the area. Thus, the native people learned the Islamic rituals and customs. They avoided eating pork, practiced circumcision, erected mosques, and absorbed the rudiments of Muslim theology, laws and religious duties. Sunni Islam of the Shāfi'ī school took root among them. Gowing adds, earlier in the 15th century, some of the Muslim natives in the Philippines became literate in Arabic. They also acquired copies of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, and some books on *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *tasawwuf* (mysticism), and other Islamic writings. During this period, Islam was spreading to the central part of the Philippines, Visayas and the Northern part of the Philippines, Manila. In this regard, I. E. Abeto says in 1571, the Kingdom of Manila was ruled by Rajah Solaiman, and its neighboring area i.e. Tondo was ruled by Rajah Lakandula (Abdullah).¹⁸

It can be inferred that in the 15th century, the Islamization of the natives in the Philippines was well established. The Muslim natives in Mindanao and Sulu became literate in Arabic. This period hastened the emergence of Islamic political system, and the reconfiguration of social, moral, spiritual, and cultural aspects of the native Islanders in the

¹³ Abraham P. Sakili, *Space and Identity: Expressions in the Culture, Arts and Society of the Muslims in the Philippines* (Manila, Quezon City, Asian Center: Published by University of the Philippines, 2003), 31.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hadji Abdul Racman, *The Political Legitimacy of Lanao Sultanate...op cit.*, 25.

¹⁷ Peter G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1978).

¹⁸ Isidro Escare Abeto, *Philippine History Reassessed, Book 1, A Collection of Undiscovered and Unresearched Historical Facts from Prehispanic Time* (Pasig, Metro Manila: Integrated Publishing House, 1989), 133-134.

Philippines. The religious institutions such as mosques and *madrasah* were established where the natives learned the vast rudiments of Islam. They also learned the teachings of the Qur'ān, Ḥadith, *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and other Islamic practices such as *tasawwuf*.

METHODOLOGY

This research used historical method, here, this method, the researcher collects documents and other sources that are relevant to his research inquiry. According to A. Halim Ali (2019) historical research is related to the research of past phenomena for a better understanding and its relationship with the present. He grasps a clear view of the past events so that he could possibly predict the future events. This method also requires a critical analyses on historical events that are relevant to the study. The researcher identifies his research inquiry. He reviews primary and secondary data that are useful in his research topic, he systematically collects and objectively evaluates data related to historical events that concern his study. He criticizes historical sources, and evaluates thoroughly the information he gathered.

He explains his research findings, and tests his research hypotheses to throw light to the current events. He uses historical sources to answer his research inquiry and then provide narratives of his findings.¹⁹ In this light, I used this method in gathering information on the foundation of the Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century. This research used secondary sources such as books, journals, reviews and others are primarily useful because they combine knowledge from many primary sources.²⁰ In this study, secondary data will be accessed through books, theses, dissertation, and journals among other most relevant sources.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The Legitimacy of Lanao Sultanate

In this paper, I will discuss how the Maranao leaders and families seek to re-invigorate and consolidate power in Lanao Sultanate system today to lend legitimacy to their leadership. The Lanao Sultanate has organization to represent its body in the local politics of Lanao del Sur, Mindanao. This organization is the Lanao Sultanate League. It was established by Maranao *datus* to re-invigorate the Maranao culture. Its members are incumbent sultans, retired sultans, *datus*, *bais*, clerics, professionals, genealogy experts, local media, and religious leaders. Its members are coming from the different *agamas* (Islamic communities) of Lanao. Today, these *agamas* are reduced to municipalities. The league's main office is located at the Provincial Capitol in the Islamic City of Marawi, where the office of the Lanao governor is located.

The Lanao Sultanate (archaic name, *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*) in the 21st century mirrors the Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century. Despite, the Philippines is a democratic republic nation, it too does have an existing traditional leadership recognized by the Maranaos, the sultanate leadership system. It is effecting a vital importance to the lifeways of the Maranaos, and their identity depends on it. It plays a crucial role to their societal formation, unity, progress, Islamic-religion, culture, and history. It has a unifying effect to all native Maranaos wherever they are. There are interlocking factors which contribute to the proliferation of the Lanao Sultanate in the 21st century. Few of these factors are the Islamic principles on leadership, the Maranao traditions, their *salsilas* and historical claims. These

¹⁹ See the work of R. J. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method* (Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1974).

²⁰ Robert B. Burns, *Introduction to Research Methods* (London, Thousands Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2000), 27.

factors also served as bases of the legitimacy of the Lanao Sultanate in the early 17th century and today.

From historical point of view, in the 19th century, parts of the Philippines islands fell to the United States which liberated the Philippines from Spain under the Treaty of Paris which was signed in December 10, 1898. Spain ceded the Philippines to US which it paid \$20,000,000 to Spain. In the 20th century, the Philippines gained independence from US. It was inaugurated in July 4, 1946. This indicates that Philippines became a state in the 20th century.

Since the Lanao Sultanate was founded in 1616, this means that, basing from this date, we are talking about a span of over 300 years which the Lanao Sultanate thrived. It ruled gloriously its own states and people independently. It managed and developed its own socio-political affairs independently without the influence of the colonial powers, Spain, the US and Japan. The Spain never succeeded in Christianizing, colonizing and subjugating the Maranaos. Spain failed to establish its authority in the Lanao areas. The Maranao *datus*, sultans and their Iranon, Magindanao and Maranao warriors led by Radia Laut, Sultan Kudarat resisted the Spanish forces.

The colonial Spain established its power in the sporadic areas in the Philippines. Thus, Spain did not fully exercise its power in the entire country due to its geographic set-up which is consisting of more than 7,000 islands and islets, an archipelagic state like Indonesia. Like Spain, the US did not exercise its power in Lanao areas due to the resistance of the Lanao Sultanate. In this regard, the Lanao Sultanate persisted from the 17th century to the recent century within its territories. From this point, we could not make an assumption that between the 20th century and the 21st century, the Lanao Sultanate is an illegitimate traditional socio-political entity, simply because the Philippines was established, and has a central authority system, a democratic republic state which has a president, elected. It is worthy to note that the Lanao Sultanate today is within the territories of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) which has a prime minister and has various ministries.

Due to scarce sources and data on actual events, social organization and political leadership in the 17th century. I will attempt to throw light on the Islamic principles on leadership; the Maranao traditions; *salsilas*; and historical claims lend legitimacy to the leadership of the Lanao Sultanate.

Islamic Principles on Leadership lend Legitimacy to the Leadership of the Lanao Sultanate On Shūra (Consultation) and Leadership

Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur’ān in Sūrah Ash-Shūra, verse 38, “*And those who answer the Call of their Lord [i.e. to believe that He is the only One Lord (Allāh), and to worship none but Him Alone], and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them.*” Allāh (s.w.t.) says in the Qur’ān in Sūrah Al-‘Imran, verse 159, “*And by the Mercy of Allāh, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allāh's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allāh, certainly, Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him).*” These verses emphasize the importance of mutual consultation among Muslims in their decision-making. *Shūra* is an Arabic word for ‘consultation’. The Qur’ān and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) enjoin the *Ummah* (Muslim community) to decide their affairs in consultation with those who will be affected by that decision.

The Lanao Sultanate was founded based on the instrumentation of mutual consultation. The political structure of the earlier Maranaos had been well organized and

well-ruled through the instrumentation of *kapemumusawira* (consultation). When a sultan passed away, his family members would hold consultations among themselves to determine the legitimate successor of the deceased sultan. After a thorough *kapemumusawira*, one among the legitimate claimants will be chosen based on his capacity to rule. The founders of the Lanao Sultanate founded it through consultation between and among themselves, and they mutually agreed to establish a conglomerate states, 43, each with a sultan equally competent, and all sharing a common origin of descent lines. This shows the crude interpretation of the early Maranaos on the Islamic injunctions on consultation, and thus they implemented it in their state-politics, and statecraft. The Lanao Sultanate had provided and addressed the socio-political, economic, and spiritual needs of the Maranaos.

On the issue on sovereignty, Article II, Section 1 of the 1935 Constitution of the commonwealth government has this provision: “The Philippines is a republican state. Sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them.” This means that the people are the sovereign ones and not the government. Whereas, democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. A democracy is a form of government wherein sovereignty resides in the people. Today, the socio-political and cultural practices of the Filipinos are integral parts of their rights.

Islamically, it is Allāh (SWT) Who is the true sovereign on earth and in the Hereafter. Muslim rulers alike are in public offices to perform the temporal spheres of life and to look after their subjects. Every Muslim has a moral obligations to fulfil in this transitory world, and they are answerable to their public and private doings before God in the Hereafter.

The Western concept of state like the Republic of the Philippines, the church and state are separate, in contrast, the Islamic concept of state is that, the mosque-religion and state are not separate like that of the old *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*. Although both Western and Islamic states, fundamentally, both have a territory, population, organization (government), and sovereignty. The Almighty Allāh has mentioned in the Qur’ān in Sūrah Ar-Ra’d, 13:11 “...*Verily, Allāh will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allāh)...*” This verse reminds the believers to obey Allāh’s commandments so that they will be guided into the right path. In this verse, Allāh (SWT) encourages the Muslims to transform their unwanted condition (state of darkness, ignorance) into *Ummahtan khayran* (the best of the best communities) enjoining good and forbidding evil.

The Muslim communities were established in the Philippines as early as the 14th century, although the Arab traders were trading in the Philippines as early as the 7th century. These Muslim communities, like the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* (Lanao Sultanate) had a wide-ranging socio-political, cultural, economic, and spiritual needs, and it is through establishing an Islamic leadership that these needs could be Islamically addressed and then achieve what Allāh (SWT) wants for His followers-to have the *Ummahtan khayran*.

Islamic leadership is needed to be established in the Muslim communities, so that these communities would not be disintegrated, ruined, misguided, and its people would not succumbed to corruption, evil, deceit, oppression, chaos, and immorality. In the 17th century, during the colonial period, studies show that the abuses of Spanish colonizers were rampant, they tortured, enslaved, killed, and oppressed the natives in the Philippines, Mexico, and Cuba. It was timely when the Lanao Sultanate was established, and it needed to act swiftly to secure its people from being oppressed or wiped out by the colonial powers. It was for this reason that Sultan Kudarat, in his speech, he lobbied to the Lanao *datus* to secure its people from being oppressed or enslaved by the Spanish powers. Allāh does not want the *Ummah* to be led by wrong-doers. He says, wrong-doers (oppressors, tyrants, unjust, and evildoers) cannot lead the Ummah, Sūrah *Al-Baqarah*, 2: 124. The Maranao *datus* were aware of the

evil motives, rude and brute manners of the colonizers. Thus, they got rid of the barbaric-colonizers who attacked their territories.

God says in Sūrah *Al-An‘am*, verse 165, “*And it is He Who has made you generations coming after generations, replacing each other on the earth. And He has raised you in ranks, some above others that He may try you in that which He has bestowed on you. Surely your Lord is Swift in retribution, and certainly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful...*” This verse reminds the believers that in the Muslim communities, the leadership should have hierarchies, the leaders, and the lead or the followers, and so, the leaders must lead their followers in accordance with the teachings of Islamic faith. In the 17th century, the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* was established for this reason. Indeed, this verse had inspired the establishment of *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*. Through Islamic leadership, the Muslim communities in the 17th century were highly organized, and led by Muslim leaders who served and administered the needs of their people. The public administration of the Lanao Sultanate had function fully, effectively and efficiently.

In Sūrah *Al-Baqarah*, verse 30, God says, “*When your Lord said to the angels, I am placing a khalīfah, a successor on earth.*” And also in Sūrah *Sād*, verse 26, it mentions the word *khalīfah* which has also been used for Prophet David, “*O Dawud (David)! Verily! We have placed you as a successor on earth, so judge you between men in truth (and justice)...*” In these verses, Sūrah *Al-Baqarah*, verse 30 and Sūrah *Sād*, verse 26, inform the believers that among them, there must be a God’s successor which is based on divine trusteeship, which then, necessary in establishing leadership. It is in this light that God entrusted them with leadership that is inspired by the teachings of the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* (ways and traditions) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to lead the faithful. The *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* leadership, in its wide-ranging functions, fulfilled these Qur’ānic injunctions.

There are other verses in the Qur’ān that explain concepts on leadership. For example, the Prophet of Allāh, Ibrahim, may Allāh bless him, was given the glad tidings that he has been appointed a leader of all the people. “*And (remember) when the Lord of Ibrahim (Abraham) [i.e., Allāh] tried him with (certain) Commands, which he fulfilled. He (Allāh) said (to him), "Verily, I am going to make you a leader (Prophet) of mankind." [Ibrahim (Abraham)] said, "And of my offspring (to make leaders)." (Allāh) said, "My Covenant (Prophethood, etc.) includes not Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers), in Qur’ān, Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 2:124*”. In this verse, it reminds the Muslims that one of the qualifications of a Muslim leader is being obedient who follows the teachings of Islam, and not among those who are wrong-doers. The *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* explicitly laid down the qualifications of leaders/sultans inspired by the teachings of Islam.

Some *Ḥadith* inspires leadership. For example, Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim, says, “*Each of you is a shepherd, and all of you are responsible for your flocks.*” This *Ḥadith* could mean that every individual could be a potential leader who could lead others to the right path, and the leadership of the Muslim community is a shared leadership based on mutual agreement between the leaders and the lead. The *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* is made up of conglomerate states having a shared leadership based on the mutual agreement of different leaders; this type of leadership was ratified in the Lanao *taritib* and *igma*. In other *Ḥadith*, it states, “*When three persons go on a journey, let them put one of their numbers in command*”,²¹

This *Ḥadith* calls on the Muslims to appoint a leader among themselves regardless of the size of their number. The *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* had numerous states, 43, hence, it is imperative to establish a multiple head of states to lead those states that time.

²¹ In Abu Da‘ud on the authority of Abu Sa‘id.

Aristocracy shares similar political concept with the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*. An aristocracy is a form of government wherein sovereignty resides in a small group of men. This is true to the leadership of the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*. The Maranao head of states ruled their subjects within the confines and territories of Lanao. Aristocrats are rich, powerful and they are elite, so is the head of states of the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*, they had tangible and intangible wealth, landholdings, *torogan* (palace), *oripen* (slaves), and material possessions, they were the ruling classes tracing their genealogy to the genealogy of the ruling sultans of Magindanao who were progenies of Arab-Malay royalties. During the Middle Ages, many Italian city-states had aristocratic governments. Venice during the 15th century was an aristocratic state, in comparison, the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* in the 17th century had at least 43 head of states. So is to say that, the European aristocrats and the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* ruling classes were legitimate political group during their time.

The Maranao Traditions lend Legitimacy to the Leadership of the Lanao Sultanate

The Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century and today is governed by the *taritib* (socio-political order), and *igma* (consensus). *Taritib* deals primarily with the political organizational set-up of Lanao. It regulates the succession of leaders, their duties and powers. *Igma* is the consensus of all secular and religious leaders. *Igma* guides the Maranao customs, traditions and laws, and defines the guidelines for all the people to observe and follow in all their daily transactions, and ways of life. It covers the social, economic, political, moral and spiritual aspects, and responsibilities, and defines the working relationship of the Royal Houses, the House of Peers, the Council of Elders and the Board of Advisers. It also prescribes the extent of penalty in the violation of any local customs, traditions, and the family and personal laws of the Muslims as well as their inter-relationship with the other state of Lanao. The *taritib* and *igma* are the drivers of the socio-political, economic, religious, and spiritual aspects of the Maranaos, and they are sustaining their kinship systems and relations.

The Salsilas lend Legitimacy to the Leadership of the Lanao Sultanate

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says: “*Know your genealogies in order to maintain close ties with your kin, for these ties, however close, are hard to maintain once severed, and hard to overstretch if kept strong, however distant they are.*” The Maranaos are aware of these prophetic teachings on maintaining the kinship system, thus, the Maranaos observe religiously these prophetic teachings, and applied them in their social milieu, and political lifeways. Their *salsilas* serve as the frameworks of the political structures of the Lanao Sultanate. The *salsilas*, the genealogy of the Lanao royalties are reviewed constantly, chanted during public occasions, memorized, written, and re-written by the *pananalsilas*. They are spoken before the audience during the enthronement and wedding ceremony of the royal families. The verses in the holy Qur’ān is memorized by numerous *imāms*, ‘*ulamā*’, *murids* (students in Islam), and among other people, and so are the *salsilas* which comprise of short narrative covering few paragraphs and pages, while the Qur’ān has 6,346 verses with 859 pages.

The *salsilas* used in this research are carefully considered based on their origins, the integrity of their authorship, and the originality, and the authenticity of their contents. In this paper, the works of Sultan Monsing Macabando, namely, *The short and concise History of Maranao, Mindanao, starting before the advent of Islam up to the present*, and *the Maranao Salsila, starting from the progenies of the Five Datus* were used. The Lanao sultans and *datus* accepted these books as the only first authentic writings about the subject to ever exist. In our generation today, the author-Sultan Monsing Macabando is the most learned and respected

leader possessed of knowledge about the subject. He has served as the Chairman of the Marawi Sultanate League of the Islamic City of Marawi and scion of the Royal Houses of Lanao.

The Maranao *salsilas* document the developments of the archaic Maranao societies, and the contemporary Maranao societies, leaders and families, which then lend legitimacy to the leadership of the Lanao Sultanate. The contemporary leaders in Lanao consolidate powers in the Lanao Sultanate system, hence, the original *salsilas* are used, and consulted when there is an enthronement of the royalties in Lanao. The *salsilas* are the testaments of the genealogy of the royalties, a tangible (written), and intangible (spoken) material for the kinship system of the Maranaos and their socio-religio-traditional political system.

The legitimacy of the leadership in Lanao Sultanate could be explained in the ‘House Society’ concept. Waterson²² quotes Claude Lévi-Strauss’ (1983), as he puts it, a corporate body i.e. ‘House Society’ like an ethnic group having leadership who exercises control of their material and immaterial wealth is considered legitimate as long as its mandates are being express in the language of kinship system or affinity or both. The *salsilas* of the Maranaos warrant their kinship system. Thus, the Lanao leadership is legitimate in this sense. The lead and the leaders are all Maranaos.

The Historical Claims lend Legitimacy to the leadership of the Lanao Sultanate

The founders of the *datu-ship* system in Lanao were brothers, while the founders of the Lanao Sultanate came from a common descent lines. The pioneering 43 *datu*/sultans of the Four States of Lanao Sultanate traced their genealogy from the founders of Magindanao Sultanate and its sultans, hence, the Lanao royalties traced their genealogy as far as Sharīf Kabunsuan, the first sultan of Magindanao who married Bae Angintabo, a Maranao from Malabang, Lanao, their Maranao son, Sharīf Makaalang succeeded him who was succeeded by his son, Sharīf Bangkaya who was succeeded by his son Dimasangkay Adil who was succeeded by his brother Gugu Sarikula who was succeeded by his brother Kapitan Laut Buisan who was succeeded by his son Sultan Kudarat and so on. The descent lines of today’s royalties trace their genealogy lines to the 43 pioneering sultans of Lanao in the 17th century. There were intermarriages between and among the royalties in Sulu Sultanate, Magindanao Sultanate and Lanao Sultanate.²³

Historically, the Philippines as a state came about in the 20th century, which was in 1946. In contrast, the Lanao Sultanate was established in the early 17th century, particularly in 1616. As a state, it has a community of persons permanently occupying a definite territory (the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*), it is independent of external control and has organized government to which the citizens recognized the authority of the sultans and rulers. It espouses moral values, serves social justice, and caters to educational and leadership needs of the Maranaos, and it provides social welfares. It has the four basic elements to make a state, namely, the people (demographic, the Maranaos, the *Ummah*), territory (geographic, the lands, mountains, hills, forests, resources, valleys, rivers, the lakes i.e. Lake Lanao, and the seas i.e. Moro Gulf), government (Lanao Sultanate, established consultative Islamic monarchy), and sovereignty or independence from external control, and has a robust military defense. None among the colonizers and Christianized Filipinos had exercised power and control over the people of Lanao. In a nut shell, the Lanao Sultanate is an Islamic state.

²² R. Waterson, *Houses and Hierarchies in Island Southeast Asia. In About the House: Levi-Strauss and Beyond*, ed. by S. Hugh-Jones and J. Carsten (Cambridge: University Press, 1995).

²³ Hadji Abdul Racman, *op. cit.*, 94-95.

The Issues on Multiple Sultanates in Lanao

Today, there are only 39 municipalities in Lanao, hence, if and when each of these municipalities enthroned its sultan, then, therefore, there are only 39 sultans in the Lanao Sultanate. The pioneering 43 archaic states of Lanao Sultanate were absorbed into the 39 municipalities of Lanao as a barangay which is a smallest demographic unit of a municipality. This means that the 43 pioneering states of Lanao Sultanate is reduced to 39. Today, the enthronement requires a huge expenditure to mobilize the enthronement, and even those with royal lineage may not be enthroned because of financial burden.

Comparative between the Sultanates of Lanao and Malaysia

Contemporary Malaysia has a prime minister, and has a multiple sultanates that is nine sultans. The case of Malaysia's sultanate system resembles that of the Philippines having multiple sultanates too, however many. This is the reason why the government of the Philippines do not intervene with the sultanate system in Lanao del Sur. Moreover, in the past and today, within the Lanao areas, numerous enthroned *datus* and *bais* are at the same time an elected senator, minister, governor, mayor, or a public school principal, lawyer, physician, etc., these factors push the proliferation of the Lanao Sultanate. Islam enjoins the believers to serve the Muslim communities and the mankind, and to contribute in improving the quality of life of the people through leadership that is genuinely inspired by the divine teachings of Islamic faith.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research found that the Lanao Sultanate is a legitimate governance. This research has provided the historical narrative of the foundation of the Lanao Sultanate of the Maranaos in Mindanao from the Maranao perspectives. This work also explained the Lanao Sultanate legitimacy in the areas of Islamic principles on leadership, the Maranao traditions, *salsilas* (scholarly chain of genealogy), and historical claims. It shows that the Lanao Sultanate was established in 1616, whereas, the republic of the Philippines was established in the early 20th century. Therefore, the Lanao Sultanate is older than the present government of the Philippines. The arrival of the Muslims from the Malay nations to the Island of Mindanao marked the beginning of the Islamization of the natives in Mindanao, Philippines, and the beginning of establishment of Islamic system of governance which is the sultanate. This research recommends to the future researchers to further investigate the other areas on the legitimacy of Lanao Sultanate, the historical foundation of Lanao Sultanate from the Maranao *salsilas* and narratives, and the socio-political interactions between the Sulu, Magindanao, and Lanao sultanates to contribute and improve the literatures on the historicity of these sultanates.

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