

## **The Muslim Filipinos' Struggles During the Spanish Colonization: Teaching the Past to the Future Generation**

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### **Abstract**

This study employed a descriptive design and utilized the qualitative content analysis method to examine and describe the representation of Muslim Filipinos in Philippine History textbooks. The relational and conceptual approaches were deemed appropriate for analyzing the textbook contents as they focused on extracting meaning without requiring a pre-established coding framework. The study identified an ambivalent recognition of Muslim Filipinos by textbook authors in their struggles against Spanish colonization. Consequently, the study recommends a thorough examination and reassessment of the four textbooks used in the first year of high school, involving unbiased historians, writers, Social Studies teachers, and individuals from both Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds. This reevaluation should aim to reconstruct the history of the Filipino nation through various means such as lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, and commemorative events. Active learning techniques, films, library research, and historical fiction can be effective tools in creating a more engaging approach to teaching and learning history. Regardless of the methods employed, it is crucial to adopt a humanistic approach when teaching history, as it fosters a sense of identity, provides role models for good and responsible behavior, and imparts the ability to learn from the mistakes of others. Furthermore, history facilitates our understanding of societal transformation and development.

**Keywords:** *muslim filipinos, struggles, spanish colonization. teaching the past, future generation*

### **Introduction**

Muslim Filipinos hold a distinct culture and society, which have evolved and developed through the years. These give them the identity, which has made them different from other Filipinos. Islam, as a religion, has greatly influenced the Muslim Filipinos culture and this has held them from being integrated into the Philippine body politic. However, Agoncillo (1990) commented that one reason for this was that Muslim Filipinos had suspected the Christian Filipinos of betrayal, for the latter were used by the Spanish and American colonizers in their attempt to obliterate Muslim culture and religion (p.19). The Muslim Filipinos have proudly expressed the fierce love for their culture and religion by courageously defending themselves from foreign colonizers and from those they considered enemies of their faith.

Agoncillo (1990) emphasized that a Muslim Filipino was looked down upon as an aberration -a "Moro", with all its ugly implications (p.19). The Muslim Filipino culture was epitomized as savage during the American rule (Torrance, 1917 cited in Abdulla, 2003), and characterized as backward, uncivilized and dangerous by the Spaniards (Majul, 1999). These had caused the Muslim Filipinos to become antagonistic to any attempt to bring them to the Christian society's fold. Agoncillo (1990) maintained that Muslim Filipinos believed that the attempt was made not because they were loved, but because their conversion to the Christian way of life was necessary. However, there was nothing more abominable to the Muslims than to be told to discard their "Moro" way of life (p.19).

Ganancial (2002 cited in Churchill, 2002) emphasized that Moro resistance against Spaniards and their allies (Christian Filipinos) was considered a criminal act and this did not contribute to the downfall of the Spanish colonial power. However, Dery (2002 cited in Churchill, 2002) disputed that the so-called Moro raids were not slave raiding but offensive operations against the enemies. In the same vein, the Muslim Filipinos' resistance against attempts to subjugate their independence continued during the American rule in the country in 1898. Tan (2002) described this resistance as a war of self-defense, plain and simple against foreign aggression. It was not as fierce as during the

Moro-Spanish wars (Baugbug, 2003). This may be due to the policy direction of the United States, i.e., to develop, educate and train in the science of self-government.

During the early 20th century, the Muslim Filipinos expressed their strong opposition to being part of the Philippines after the United States government promised independence to the Philippine Islands (Baugbug, 2003). They formally petitioned the President of the United States in June 1921, stating that the people of the Sulu Archipelago would prefer to be incorporated into the United States rather than being included in an independent Philippines.

In their declaration of Rights and Purposes, the Muslim Filipinos in Zamboanga proposed that the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan be designated as an unorganized territory of the United States of America (USA). This was done in anticipation that if the USA were to relinquish its colonies and other non-self-governing territories, these regions would be granted separate independence.

According to a paper presented at the SEACSON Conference in 2004, titled 'Issues and Challenges for Peace and Conflict Relations in Southeast Asia,' the Muslims argued that they belonged to a distinct nation due to their unique identity and long history of political independence. Drawing on the National Theory of Secession, they also claimed the right to self-determination, including the establishment of a state in areas where they constituted the majority. Their experiences in forming their own governing structures and resisting colonial rule were often cited as the basis for their demand for a separate nation and state.

Sakili (1996) claimed that in a country like the Philippines, where people were not homogenous, the concept of nationalism and its associated notions of national interests and national consciousness could be misleading and deceptive. He stressed that the "so-called nationalist elite", among them the politicians and the academicians, had been marginalizing the national minorities and disenfranchising them of their rights to indigenous property and identity (p.900). Sakili (1996) emphasized that the Muslim Filipinos were not given recognition for their contributions and struggles against Spanish and American Colonization in Philippine history. He said that the nationalist-elite historians' view of the image and the roles played by the Muslim Filipinos were not worth identifying. He stated:

The so-called nationalist historians and scholars, who were oversimplifying the history of the Philippine revolution had denied the recognition of the Muslim Filipinos roles and contributions in the Philippine revolution by associating it only with Bonifacio, Rizal Aguinaldo and their associates in the Propaganda Movement and the Katipunan (p. 900). This observation was strengthened by Gealogo (1999) who declared that Philippine History during the period of 1898-1946 focused mainly in the history of the elite while mass history was relegated to the background (p.143). He said that majority of the works produced during this period were concentrated on the developments of Manila and other parts of Luzon and its environs. Hence, Philippine History was called Manila-centric or Tagalog-centric history.

Notable historians and writers like Peter Gowing, Gregorio Zaide, Samuel Tan, and B.R. Rodil to mention a few, had written about the contributions of the Muslim Filipinos to the cultural, political, social and religious developments in the Philippines. Moreover, they stressed that Muslim Filipinos had developed and shaped their history characterized by bravery, determination and a strong sense of nationhood.

Meanwhile, Sakili (1996) stressed that Muslim Filipinos had been victims of Philippine historical manipulation. This meant that stories of Muslim Filipinos' struggles were changed and were made less important in the history of the Philippines. He maintained that this kind of "chauvinism"(exaggerated and aggressive patriotism) had disenfranchised the Muslim Filipinos of their glorious and heroic participation in the struggle for Philippine national liberation. Hence, as Filipino citizens, they had been demanding that their right to Philippine History be given justice.

The aforementioned discussion gives an overview of how Muslim Filipinos were represented in some literature and in some history textbooks written by foreign and Filipino Muslim scholars and other historian-writers. Their literary works read in various presentations such as conferences, seminars, and dialogues described the Muslim cultures, roles and struggles without a definite and objective stand. This has brought doubts and left obscure realities with negative perceptions among teachers and students of Philippine History about Muslim Filipinos and their contributions and representations in the history of the Filipino nation.

The Department of Education (DepEd) prescribed Philippine History as a subject to be taught in secondary schools (RBEC, 2002) and a course requirement in the tertiary level. In the 2002 Restructured Basic Education Curriculum (RBEC), Philippine History (Social Studies I) including Physical Education, Health, Music and Arts, Technology and Home Economics, and Values Education is integrated in MAKABAYAN, one of the five learning areas of the 2002 RBEC. In the secondary schools, Philippine History as a subject is allotted 240 minutes per week or 1 hour for four days in a week. It aims to develop among students the appreciation of the Filipino heritage as a foundation in inculcating the rights and responsibilities of a citizen, to participate in maintaining peace and development in the community and to be proud of being a Filipino who is skillful, dignified and globally competitive (RBEC, 2002). The Philippine History textbooks used in secondary schools are written by different authors and the topics are presented in various manners and approaches. Some topics are arranged chronologically and others are conceptually presented or in a combination of both.

Philippine History is taught in sixty-four (64) public and private secondary schools in the Zamboanga City. Majority of the private schools are situated in the urban area and are given a free hand to adopt and use Philippine History textbooks in teaching first year high school students. Public school students use textbooks prescribed by the Department of Education (DepEd) with proto-type lesson plans or teacher's manuals.

The researcher found it essential to review, probe and analyze thoroughly the textbooks used in teaching and studying Philippine History as this might answer the clamor that the history of the Philippines as such should be re-examined and re-evaluated in the light of the nationalistic spirit that was engulfing the nation. According to Santos (1999) in "Historiography, 1946 -1998", from the "academe rose the cry that Philippine History should be rewritten from the point of view of the Filipinos" (p.146). In other words, Filipinos should write the history of the Philippines in order for them to come up with a history reflective of the actual experiences of the people. Hence, it was relevant and justifiable that this study was conducted to gather empirical data that would support present observations and claims about the representations of the Muslim Filipinos in Philippine History textbooks.

### **Review of Related Literature and Studies**

There have been robust researches conducted on content analysis of textbooks that are akin to the present study. These are on the representation of the Arabs and Israelites in Israel textbooks, Pakistani textbooks, representation of Muslims in German textbooks and other studies that are taken from various sources. These will help shed light on the representation of Muslim Filipinos in Philippine history textbooks.

Firer (1985) conducted an analysis of history textbooks in Israel using the quantitative and thematic method. The results showed the historical origin of the Jews in Israel where they formed their nation and lived in exile. Moreover, it revealed the denial of the Arab rights to the land through deligitimization, their national movement and their refusal of recognizing a Palestinian entity.

Bar-Gal (1993) revealed in his research that Geography textbooks prominently focused on national values, exalting the glory of ancient history, highlighting the devastation and neglect of the land during the Israelites' exile, and emphasizing the rejuvenation and restoration of the landscape through the Zionist movement. These textbooks also portrayed the Israelites as a highly advanced, educated, industrious, and morally upright people (Zohar, 1972, as cited in Bar-Tal, 1998). The

Israelites were described as dedicated, diligent, and courageous laborers who transformed swamps and deserts into fertile land, established Jewish settlements, and defended against Arab violence (Firer, 1985).

In a separate study, the uniqueness of the Jewish people in their ability to endure persecution, their moral and cultural superiority, and the exceptional nature of the nationalist Zionist movement were underscored (Firer, 1985, as cited in Bar-Tal, 1998). The Jewish people were portrayed as the "Chosen People" and even as the "Pure Race." However, the Arabs were depicted as primitive, backward, unenlightened, inferior, fatalistic, unproductive, and apathetic, suggesting a need for strong paternalistic guidance (Bar-Gal, 1993, as cited in Bar-Tal, 1998). The Arabs were further characterized as divided, tribal, exotic, representative of the backward East, poor, sick, dirty, noisy, murderous, destructive, easily incited, and vengeful (p. 726). They were described as primitive, hostile toward Jews, prone to violence, and easily agitated (Firer, 1985), as well as hostile, cruel, immoral, unfair, thieving, wicked, bloodthirsty mobs, killers, gangs, and rioters, representing a primitive and backward culture (Zohar, 1972, as cited in Bar-Tal, 1998).

Nayyar and Salim (2003) conducted a survey study involving 30 experts on Pakistan's education system and discovered that Pakistani textbooks contained content aimed at fostering animosity towards Hindus. The textbooks placed significant emphasis on concepts such as Jihad, Shahadat (martyrdom), wars, and military heroes. The study also revealed that the textbooks propagated numerous gender-biased stereotypes and promoted prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination against fellow citizens, particularly women, religious minorities, and other nations. Additionally, important concepts that could encourage critical self-awareness among students were either omitted or neglected.

Likewise, Rosser (2003) documented the presence of bias in Pakistani textbooks. She noted that over the past few decades, social studies textbooks in Pakistan had consistently emphasized the animosity that Pakistani policy makers sought to instill toward their Hindu neighbors. Consequently, the minds of generations of Pakistanis, influenced by the ideology of Pakistan, harbored "fragments of hatred and suspicions" toward Hindus (p. 154). One significant omission in Pakistani textbooks was the exclusion of Operation Gibraltar, an action by Pakistan that provoked the Indian army's attack on Lahore. Most history textbooks failed to mention this event, and instead, they claimed that Lahore was attacked without any provocation from the Pakistani army (p. 15). Furthermore, Pakistani textbooks glorified the rule of Islamic invaders such as Mahmud of Ghazni, while often disregarding the comparatively peaceful reign of Akbar, an Islamic ruler. This selective portrayal was evident in the textbooks (Rosser, 2003, p. 15). Similarly, in this particular study, the researcher analyzed the claims and issues of biases and prejudices against Muslim Filipinos found in Philippine history textbooks used by first-year high school students.

A comprehensive study conducted by Muslim scholar A. Falaturi (1999), titled "The Representation of Islam in German Textbooks," critically examined German textbooks to assess how Islam was portrayed and whether it received adequate representation. The analysis of German textbooks revealed that despite good intentions, there were distortions and biased narratives surrounding Islam. These findings were meticulously analyzed, and recommendations for improvement were proposed, some of which had already been implemented in the latest German textbooks.

Similarly, Salah Ramadan El-Sayed, from Al-Azhar University (2005), noted that Italian school textbooks recognized the achievements of Muslim civilization. He pointed out that Muslim civilization had preserved and enhanced the cultural and scientific heritage of both Greece and Persia. However, he emphasized that Italian school textbooks presented the concept of Jihad and the personality of Prophet Mohammad in a negative manner (p. 7).

In a similar vein, Abdel Mohsen Bin Salem Al-Ukely, the head of a research team analyzing British schoolbooks for the General Directorate of Educational Research at the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, highlighted in "Images and Counter Images" (2006) that the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in British textbooks was generally neutral and positive. However, he noted that it turned negative when discussing topics such as the Crusades and the Arab-Israeli conflict (p. 5). Moreover, certain books wrongly associated Islam with terrorism and displayed a misunderstanding of the concept of Jihad, reinforcing the negative image (p. 5). In other words, in some aspects even in British textbooks, Arabs and Muslims were seen and treated negatively, such as when discussing the concept of Jihad and the Crusades.

Dr. Laubach (1973 cited in Concepcion, 1999) discussed about the culture of the Muslim Filipinos specifically on literature. He stated that the Moros possessed the largest body of Philippine pre-Spanish literature and this was because of their contact with Arabic and Hindu cultures more than that of any group of people in the Philippines. Moreover, "the culture of the Moros was far ahead of any group in the Philippines when the Spaniards arrived" (p.10). He further described the Moros as docile and peaceful people, but circumstances had made them a warlike race. Similarly, Francisco (1995 cited in Abueva, 1998) also pictured the Muslim Filipinos as cunning, cruel, treacherous, savage, pirates, raiders and slavers, by which whatever happened in Mindanao and Sulu as well as in other areas where they were found that was not within the level of acceptance by the Spanish and Christian Filipinos' value orientations (p.732).

Muslim Filipinos were called and identified as such, by which all these terms implied negative impression on the part of the Muslim community. In addition, the Christians developed the anti-Moro image among the Muslims because they described them in all negative adjectives in the English language (Kamlan, 1999). He claimed that in the moro moro plays (depicting the lives and struggles of Muslims and Christians in a play), Muslims were portrayed as pirates who were attacking Christians, and people who professed a false religion. In the same manner, Francisco (1995) disclosed that during the more than 300 years of Spanish colonization, Muslim Filipinos were considered as cunning, cruel, treacherous, pirates, raiders, slavers and sometimes called bandits and Moro robbers. These representations of the Muslim Filipinos were carried throughout the period of Commonwealth Independence and Post Commonwealth Independence. From then on, stereotyping of Muslim Filipinos began. It appeared on books, journals and magazines and were sometimes heard and mentioned in conferences, seminars and dialogues.

The above reviewed literature and studies provided various insights on the content analysis gathered from different textbooks and other reading materials, which were relevant to the present study.

### **Research Objectives**

1. Document the struggles of the Filipino Muslims during the Spanish colonization.
2. Explore some strategies on teaching the history to the future generations.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study adopted the descriptive design, employing the qualitative content analysis method of Wilkinson & Birmingham (2003) to probe and describe the topics and issues on the representation of Muslim Filipinos in the Philippine History textbooks. A combination of both relational and conceptual models was used to conduct an in-depth analysis of the contents of the four selected Philippine History textbooks used by first year high school students in both private and public secondary schools in Zamboanga City. The relational content analysis approach focuses more upon the meaning of what is stated (Berelson, 1971 in Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003, p.81). In a conceptual or thematic approach, it is the themes or issues in the text that the researcher intends to analyze (p.70). The relational and conceptual approaches are valid tools for analyzing the contents of Philippine History textbooks because it focused more on the meaning of what was being said in the textbooks and required no predefined coding frame to be applied. This study used more of the Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) conceptual/thematic approach in probing and describing the representation of Muslim Filipinos in their struggles against Spanish and American colonization; their representation in the emergence of the Filipino nation; and the representation of Muslim Filipinos in the development of their native culture and society before the colonization of the Philippines by the Spaniards. However, in analyzing the data, using these approaches, modifications were made since this was a purely qualitative-descriptive study "where steps involved in conducting such study were not distinct as they were in quantitative research" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993, p. 381).

The analysis of the contents of the selected Philippine history textbooks with emphasis on the representation of Muslim Filipinos is definitely a new study. A scholarly and instructive work by Halili, Jr. (2006) entitled, "Iconography of the New Empire - Race and Gender Images and the American Colonization of the Philippines" served as a model in conducting this study. However, Halili, Jr (2006) made use of the cultural studies, approaches and theories on race and gender in

analyzing and interpreting the political cartoons and caricatures, and on their influences on the American colonization of the Philippines and the American foreign policy. Similarly, this study attempted to seek answers to the research problems employing content analysis in a qualitative way specifically using the conceptual and relational approaches. This meant that the data and findings were "described in sufficiently rich, thick detail to make the research study valid and that readers could draw their own conclusions from the data presented" (Leeddy & Ormrod, 2005, p.100).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The Muslim Filipinos' Struggles against Spanish Colonization**

The first question was "How are Muslim Filipinos described or given recognition in the struggle against Spanish and American colonization?"

During the period of Spanish colonization, certain groups of Filipinos succeeded in maintaining their freedom. Spanish rule in the country was not easy and peaceful. Throughout the three centuries of their reign, more than a hundred revolts took place against the Spanish colonizers. These revolts included the Muslim revolts and those of other indigenous groups due to various reasons such as economic or agrarian troubles, tyrannical and oppressive rule, desire for freedom and religious control grievances. However, the most common cause was the abuses of the Spanish authorities against the natives (Viloria, et.al. 2005, p.119). These led the Muslim Filipinos to fight. In retaliating to the Spanish colonizers, the Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao were ready to defend their freedom, faith and land. They fought back by raiding and pillaging coastal towns under Spanish control. Spain was not able to extend her sovereignty to the Muslim areas in Mindanao. Viloria, et.al. (2005), in their textbook explicitly stated that the Muslim Filipinos were a constant threat to the Spaniards and were considered one of the obstacles to colonization. The Muslims often conducted surprise raids on coastal towns, looting and burning houses, killing the inhabitants and selling them to slavery. The Muslim Filipinos conducted several forms of retaliation to the Christianized inhabitants and to Spanish authority that remained unsuccessful in subjugating the Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao (p.75).

This declaration was specifically stated in the textbook, "Philippines: History and Government", an updated edition used in the Social Studies subject for first year high school students. They stressed that the Spaniards were also unsuccessful in subjugating the Muslims. The authors further stressed that the most strongly united group of Filipinos was the Muslims who were bound by the cohesive force of their religion, Islam and valiantly resisted Spanish domination. The Spaniards called the Muslims Moros (p.117).

These lines indicated that as a group, Muslim Filipinos were the strongest group because of their religion, Islam, which was considered a cohesive force that bound them together. This described the Muslims favorably. However, during the Spanish period in the Philippines, the term Moros as used by the Spaniards to all Muslims was an abominable term. For the Muslim Filipinos, it was an indication of discrimination. For the Spaniards, the term Moros was initially applied indiscriminately to most inhabitants of the Philippines since after more than seventy-five years of fighting against the Arabs and Moors in Spain, they again saw their enemies through the Muslim Filipinos, particularly in Mindanao.

The authors (textbook writers) of "Philippines: History and Government" (2005) reiterated that, although there were a few unimportant defeats on the part of the Muslim Filipinos, the Spaniards never successfully subdued the "Moros", referring to the Muslim Filipinos. Unimportant defeats or less significant fights were characterized as such since there were some struggles or fights of Muslim Filipinos wherein leaders were motivated by personal reasons and interests rather than the welfare of the majority.

Reyes and Tantengco (1997) in "Daloy ng Kasaysayan at Pamahalaang Pilipino", Chapter 8 presented the Muslim Filipinos in their revolt against the Spaniards. The Muslim group, united under one political system with Islam as its religion was being used to revolt against Spanish domination. The authors stressed that the Muslim Filipinos strongly protected the areas of Jolo and Lake Lanao, which

the Spanish authorities failed in their mission to control the trade and protect Mindanao from the Portuguese and other foreign invaders. The authors stated:

“Sa mga pag-aalsang ito, may mga grupong etniko na pinagsabay ang laban sa mga Kastila na pilit na pinanatili ang relihiyon at sistemang pampulitika. Isa sa mga grupong ito ay ang mga Muslim (p.119). (In the mass uprising, some ethnic groups who maintained their religion and political system fought against the Spaniards. The Muslim Filipino group was one of them).

These lines significantly showed that the Muslim Filipinos were among the ethnic groups who never allowed themselves to be conquered. The Muslim Filipinos were able to retain their religion and political system, the Sultanate. These lines also supported the claims of the Muslim Filipinos that they participated in the struggle against the Spanish colonizers.

Viloria, De Leon and Escalante (2003), in "Pilipinas: Hamon sa Pagbabago" stated that the Muslims were referred to as Moros in the same manner as what Viloria, et.al. (2005) wrote in "Philippines: History and Government".

“Tinawag sila (mga Muslims) ng mga Espanyol na mga Moro, na siya ring tawag nila sa pangkat ng mga Muslim na sumakop sa Spain nang 800 taon (p.109).” (The Spaniards called them (Muslim Filipinos) "Moro", the name they used to call the Muslims (Moors) who conquered and ruled Spain for almost 800 years).

The description of Muslim Filipinos indicated by the authors was an indication of being discriminated and disliked by the Spanish colonizers as what the latter did to the Moors who also invaded Spain because they were rivals then. Nevertheless, the authors (textbook writers) stated, that the Muslim Filipinos had a strong sultanate, a system of government established by the Muslim Sultan. In the same textbook, Viloria, et.al. (2003) further stated that the Muslim Filipinos bravely retaliated the Spanish expedition sent by Spanish authorities to Mindanao. "Gumanti rin ang mga Muslim sa pamamagitan ng pananalakay sa mga pook na sakop ng mga Espanyol partikular sa Visayas" (p.109). (The Muslim Filipinos took revenge against Spanish expeditions by conducting raids in areas controlled by the Spaniards particularly in Visayas).

This statement showed that the Muslim Filipinos had really struggled against the Spaniards in defense of their land, freedom and people by raiding (pananalakay) in pro- Spanish areas, particularly in the Visayas. With this, the Muslim Filipinos took advantage of strengthening their forces when the Spaniards abandoned some of the forts that they established in Mindanao due to the invasion of Chinese foreigners like Limahong. In addition, the authors wrote:

“Nang bumalik ang mga Espanyol sa Zamboanga noong 1718, muli na namang nakipaglaban ang mga Muslim. Bagaman bigo pa rin ang Spain na mapailalim ang buong Mindanao sa kanilang kapangyarihan, unti-unti nang humina ang mga sultanato hanggang sa ika-19 dantaon. Sa pagbagsak ng Sultanato sa Sulu noong 1876, patuloy na nakipaglaban ang mga Muslim sa pamamagitan ng juramentado o sabil allah, ang pagpatiwakal na pagsalakay sa mga dayuhang mananakop (p.110).”

(When the Spaniards returned to Zamboanga in 1718, the Muslim Filipinos continued their fight. Although the Spaniards failed to conquer the whole of Mindanao, the Sultanate power weakened until the 19th century. With the downfall of the Sultanate, the Muslim Filipinos continued their struggles through their suicide attacks known as "juramentados" or "sabil allah" against the foreign colonizers).

This passage stressed that the Muslim Filipinos continued to resist against Spanish troops when the Spaniards returned to Zamboanga in 1718. The decadence of the Sultanate (decline in power of the sultanate and its leaders) in 1876 did not stop the Muslim Filipinos in their struggles against Spain. They fought as juramentado or sabil allah, a sort of suicide attack in their resistance to foreign invaders. This also evidently showed that the Muslim Filipinos had participated in the struggle against the Spanish colonization of the Philippines.

In "Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan ng Pilipinas", Camagay, Lazaro Medina, Mateo, E., and Mateo, G.E. (2003) presented the Muslim Filipinos resistance to Spanish colonization in Chapter 9 where they stressed that "Mahigpit na ipinagtanggol ng mga Pilipinong Muslim ang kanilang paniniwala at buong pusong nilabanan ang mga misyonero na payakapin sila sa Kristiyanismo" (p.100). (The Muslim Filipinos strongly defended their freedom and belief while the Christian missionaries tried to convert them to Christianity).

This declaration indicated that the Muslim Filipinos were considered obstacles to colonization. Camagay, et.al. (2003) in "Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan ng Pilipinas" further indicated that the Muslim Filipinos resisted the Spanish authorities and reiterated that their native culture and religion would

continue to live and be retained. This was a clear manifestation that the Spaniards did not totally conquer the whole of the Philippine archipelago. This meant that they (Muslim Filipinos) had ignored the policy of Hispanization and Christianization of the Spaniards, and that they would continue to live with their religion, Islam. Furthermore, Camagay, et.al. (2003) stated:

“Simula't sapul ay tunay na tinutulan ng mga Pilipinong Muslim ang pananakop ng mga Kastila. Hinarap ng mga Pilipinong Muslim ang mga ekspedisyong militar na ipinadala ng mga Kastila. Nang binomba ang mga lugar sa Mindanao at Sulu, bumawi ang mga Muslim sa mga lugar na ito sa pamamagitan ng paglusob sa mga pamayanan sa Luzon particular sa Bicol at sa pagdukot sa mga mamamayan nito (p.116)”.(Since time immemorial, the Muslim Filipinos resisted the Spanish colonization. They fearlessly faced the military expeditions sent by the Spaniards. When the Spanish troops started bombarding some places in Mindanao and Sulu, the Muslim Filipinos retaliated by attacking and raiding areas in Luzon particularly in Bicol where they abducted its inhabitants).

This excerpt showed that the Muslim Filipinos long before Spanish colonization in the Philippines had already resisted. They showed their retaliation through armed struggles. In Luzon, particularly in Bicol, and in the Visayas, they retaliated by invading/raiding (paglusob) and abducting (pagdukot) the inhabitants who were pro- Spanish. The Muslim Filipinos were ready to risk their lives fighting in order to protect and retain their native culture and religion through the conduct of sabillah or juramentado, a kind of Muslim ritual wherein they would undergo cleansing before they would engage in being a juramentado. It is a Muslim belief that when one kills a non- believer (Christian) whom they consider as an enemy, they will enter paradise when they die. It was clear that in the textbook "Kasaysayan at Pamahalaan ng Pilipinas" presented the Muslim Filipinos as invaders and abductors during the period of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines as they struggled to defend their freedom and religion. The terms "invaders and abductors" implied negative representations for the Muslim Filipinos.

Content analysis of the four (4) textbooks in the area of Muslim Filipinos' struggle against Spaniards showed that the Muslim Filipinos were represented as "a constant threat and one of the obstacles to Spanish colonization of the Philippines". They were indeed recognized as the strongest united group of Filipinos who resisted colonization of their territory. Since the advent of Spanish colonialism, they had manifested their opposition, by word and deed, to colonial attempts that would deprive them of their liberties. Their answer to the Spanish bloody campaigns was the retaliatory raids on Christian communities in the Visayas and Luzon, especially in the Bicol areas.

Across all four textbooks, the authors and writers consistently highlighted the perception of Muslim Filipinos by the Spaniards as Juramentados, which Majul (1999) defined as "Muslim warriors." These individuals would undergo specific religious rituals and spend a night in prayer with panditas (learned individuals) before launching attacks the following day against Christian invaders. Their aim was to kill as many enemies as possible without expecting to survive the encounter. Gowing (2004) explained in "Kris and Crescent" that among the Maranao, Juramentados were known as Sabers, while the Tau Sug referred to them as Sabils (p. 3). These Juramentados were described as fanatics who believed that they would enter Paradise if they were killed in battles against infidels. They would enter a state of self-hypnosis, wielding a Kris (a traditional dagger), and charge blindly into the enemy ranks, regardless of whether they were Spaniards, Americans, Japanese, or fellow Filipinos. In this semi-mystical trance, the Juramentados often raced directly into intense rifle fire, displaying incredible resilience to wounds and requiring to be killed while still standing, before the attack could cease (p. 3).

This passage suggests that the depiction of Muslim Filipinos, represented as Juramentados, portrayed them as wicked and merciless individuals. Even in contemporary times, the perception of Moros as ruthless adversaries persists strongly in the minds of non-Muslim Filipinos, serving as a significant obstacle to fostering better understanding and relations between the Moro community and other Filipinos. This image has emerged partly due to the intense hostility displayed by Muslims towards non-Muslim Filipinos who embraced Christianity, categorizing them as "infidels," and partly because of the actions of the Juramentados.

Medina, (1991 cited in Amarillo, 1999, p.85) in "Cultural Message in Selected Sining Kambayoka Plays: Their Content and Impact", literally defined the term juramentado or parang sabilallah for the Muslims as a "person who takes an oath of killing an enemy of their faith." It had been used interchangeably with amok or amuck, which was not fair, because any person Muslim or non-Muslim



alike, can become furious anytime and turn to being amok/amuck. Historian-writers like Majul and Espina showed the various levels of meaning of this concept. Medina, (1991 cited in Amarillo, 1999), said that Amok is a Malay word, meaning possessed with a murderous or violently uncontrollable frenzy (p. 86). It is a furious attack. Colloquially, and in modern times, he stated that running amok (juramentado) means indiscriminate murder by a desperate individual or group of individuals who neither expect nor desire mercy. According to Majul (1999) in his work "Muslims in the Philippines," the Muslims in Sulu adopted the practice of juramentado, also known as sabilallah. Following certain initiation rituals and offering proper prayers, they committed themselves to die while striving to free Muslim territories from the enemy. The juramentados would charge at the enemy with the intention of inflicting maximum casualties, fighting until they were eventually killed themselves (p. 347). This was only an indication of a crisis in the Muslim struggle. In effect, the conduct of the sabilallah or being juramentado by the Muslims as a means of combat showed the defensive trend in Muslim Filipinos' resistance against the Spaniards. All these examples had indicated that the Muslim Filipinos were being featured, presented and recognized by the authors of each Philippine history textbook analyzed in the struggle against the Spaniards who invaded and colonized the Philippine archipelago in the 16th century. By presenting, mentioning and discussing topics and issues about the Muslim Filipinos related to the concept and themes of this study, the first question set at the outset of this study was considered answered. For instance, the labeling or calling of the Muslim Filipinos Moro, abductors, raiders, killers and obstacles or constant threats were examples of tagged and negative representations of Muslim Filipinos. In addition, all these implied that Muslim Filipinos were recognized, however, not in a heroic deed, but as different from the rest as they were discriminated and looked down upon since those terms implied negative characteristics. Moreover, all the four textbooks analyzed made mention about the Muslim Filipinos being Juramentados. Presenting the Muslim Filipinos as juramentados implied that the Muslim Filipinos were considered indifferent and wicked. This would also give the readers the notion that Muslim Filipinos were indeed cruel people, since the actions of a juramentado were regarded unusual and unacceptable as one might hurt or kill other people and thus be condemned for their actions. In other words, Muslim Filipinos were presented in the textbooks as dangerous and dreadful people and murderers.

### **Conclusions**

The authors of the four textbooks exhibited a contradictory stance towards the Muslim Filipinos' resistance against Spanish colonization. These textbooks presented varying and conflicting descriptions of the Muslim Filipinos, oscillating between positive and negative portrayals. In Reyes and Tantengco's (1997) Philippine history textbook, the Muslim Filipinos were depicted in a positive light, while Vitoria, et.al. (2005) and Camagay, et.al. (2003) presented them in a negative manner. Notably, Vitoria, et.al.'s (2005) textbook characterized Muslim Filipinos with negative qualities, whereas Reyes and Tantengco (1997) described them as possessing commendable qualities. However, the Philippine history textbooks authored by Vitoria, et.al. (2003) and Camagay, et.al. (2003) lacked a clear discussion and representation of the struggles of Muslim Filipinos against Spanish and American colonization.

When instructing children, it has been discovered that employing active learning methods, utilizing films, conducting library research, and incorporating historical fiction can enhance the engagement of teaching and learning history. Irrespective of the specific techniques employed, it is crucial to adopt a humanistic approach in history education. Consequently, teaching history to the next generation serves to foster a sense of identity and provides exemplars of positive and responsible conduct, while also imparting the ability to learn from the errors of others. Moreover, history enables us to comprehend the processes through which societies can transform and progress.

### **Recommendations**

This study recommends the need to examine and re evaluate the four textbooks used by the first year high school students and the teachers in the secondary schools. The National Historical Institute (NHI) has as its principal responsibility the role of being the gatekeeper of the past and protector of the national memory. Through its Historical Education Division, it may initiate the assessment of Philippine history books to rectify erroneous data. It also undertakes research and publication of

Philippine historical works and is active in the promotion of historical awareness among the public. This can be carried out by inviting historians and writers, Social Studies teachers, Muslims and Non-Muslims alike, with unbiased and a sense of objectivity in reconstructing the history of the Filipino nation through the conduct of lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, commemorations and the like.

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