

## THE 'MOROS OF MINDANAO: A SUBJECT OF SOCIAL CLOSURE

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18196/jgpp.62109>

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### Article Info

Article history:  
Received 02 Mar 2019  
Revised 07 May 2018  
Accepted 20 May 2018

*Keywords : Social  
Closure,  
Bangsamoro,  
Philippines,  
Autonomy*

### ABSTRACT

The long clamor of the Moro people, an Islamized group in southern Philippines, is not only a clamor that has been systematically ignored but one that is left unresolved and often politicized. This has led to a series of disappointing legal attempts to better the underdeveloped Muslim region through the failed experiment of decentralizing financial resources and political power. In light of this, the paper aimed to analyze the system-rooted social closure that the case of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao reflects. It is analyzed in the lens of the systematic exclusion apparent in the compiled statistical data from the Philippine Statistical Authority and other scholars. Also, social closure is analyzed by looking into the usurpatory activities undertaken by Moro armed groups to gain access from resources; political and economic. The paper is a qualitative explanatory study which provides an analytical lens to the secondary data gathered from government websites of the Philippines and from scholarly reports and published studies. It was confirmed in the study that the Moro People are socially excluded and some are supporting if not affiliated to the Armed groups fighting the government for a better autonomous region, some even for an independent state for the Moro nation..

## INTRODUCTION

The Moro people of southern Philippines known as Mindanao, has long been demanding for a 'better' power-sharing arrangement. The struggle for a greater degree of autonomy has long been present for decades. The initial solution was the establishment of Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) under Republic Act No. 6734 which was later expanded under Republic Act No. 9054 of March 31, 2001, an act to strengthen and expand the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Realistically, the conditions in the Muslim region remain unchanged and the ARMM remain to be one of the poorest among the regions in the Philippines (Kreuzer, 2005). Kreuzer (2005) argued that in the political aspect, the Muslim elite plays no role and the left resort is to cling upon patronage funds to be used in the region in exchange for the support of the ruling elite in Manila. Sakili (2012) further argued that "unlike other Muslim groups in Southeast Asia who have

regained freedom from colonizers and have been living progressively, Muslims in the Philippines continue to suffer with sixty-three percent (63%) of its population living below poverty line, four of its provinces among the 10 poorest provinces nationwide; Sulu ranking first, Tawi-Tawi third, Maguindanao sixth and Lanao del Sur which on the seventh rank”.

During the administration of Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016), a monumental hope emerged for the separatist groups in Mindanao, i.e. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). A peace negotiation was introduced which was a historic peace development in Philippines as it would put an end to the conflict which had caused 120,000 lives ("The Philippines: Renewing Prospects for Peace in Mindanao," 2016). The deal known to be as the Bangsamoro Peace Deal emerged 'after years of neglect, factionalism, and talks of bad faith' and it introduced a creation of a Bangsamoro sub-state composed of five provinces and with a larger degree of political, administrative, and fiscal autonomy in return for the MILF disarmament and end of MILF's demand for independence ("The Philippines: Renewing Prospects for Peace in Mindanao," 2016). Sakili (2012) described the Framework Agreement to be a hope that has come alive. The Framework agreement laid down the nature, structure, and powers of the political entity called the Bangsamoro that was proposed to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which President Aquino acknowledged as “a failed experiment” (Sakili, 2012). The biggest disappointment in the peace process happened when the Congress rejected the Framework Agreement or the Bangsamoro Basic Bill which put instantly killed the hope of a better autonomy deal and the hope of genuine commitment for peace in Mindanao.

Thus, it is interesting to delve into the exclusionary system that has built in the Philippines which denies the Moro nation of not only a larger autonomy but of chance to develop, economically and politically. The paper will look into the case of Moro by analyzing it in the lens of Social Closure Theory of Parkin (1979). There are existing literature analyzing the case of the Moro people of Mindanao in terms of poverty incidence (Ronda, 12 April 2016), conflict-focused (Adriano & Parks, 2013) (Kreuzer, 2005), poor educational outcomes (Concepcion, Digal, Guiam, De La Rosa,

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& Stankovitch, 2003), historical upheavals (Tuminez, 2008), and peace development efforts (Sakili, 2012). However, there is no literature found, that does not only highlight the predominant struggle of the Moros of Mindanao in the lens of social closure theory. Scholarly inquiries and statistical data have long established the prevalent marginalization that the Moro people are being subjected to. Scholars have been analyzing the chronic poverty, the marginalized status of Moros (Alicias, January 2017), but there's none that have scientifically proven through research, the social closure phenomenon with the Moro people as the case focus.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Social closure theory is a theory introduced by famous sociologist such as Weber, Collins, and Parkin (1979). By definition, it is a process in which a more "powerful" group, in variety of mechanisms, bars another group or groups from having access to social resources and opportunities (Khalanyane, 2012). The basis of denial may emerge from attributes of race, religion, status, language, gender, social origin, and educational attainment. Khalanyane (2012) argued that the primary motive of the group practicing closure upon another group is to maximize the monopolization of resources and other opportunities, political, social and economic in nature.

There are two forms of social closure, (1) exclusion and (2) usurpation. Exclusion is a form of social closure in which a group bars the other from resources and other opportunities (Khalanyane, 2012). Silver (2007) argued that exclusion is usually defined as 'a dynamic process of progressive multidimensional rupturing of the social bond at the individual and collective levels'. The social bond that Silver (2007) is referring to may come in the forms of social relations, perceived identities and belongingness, social cohesion, integration, solidarity, and institutional bonds. Exclusionary activities are identified to be activities that 'denies access to information, resources, sociability, recognition, and identity' resulting to an erosion of respect and solidarity and a reduction of a group's or an individual's capability to achieve certain goals (Silver, 2007).

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Silver (2007) further argued that social exclusion is a structural process of 'stripping away multiple dimensions of social involvement which results to a tension between the excluded group and the excluders' group. Silver (2007) described the groups involved in the process as the group of excluders; 'the agents who use various mechanisms to push others out and deny access to information, resources, opportunities, and relations'. The other group is the group of excluded; the group denied of the said resources, opportunities and etc. Furthermore, the process of exclusion causes the excluded group the loss of their status, recognition, and a primary cause of humiliation and discrimination.

Arguing not against but for furthering the understanding of the concept of social exclusion, Silver (2007) argued that the excluded groups maybe in some aspects be subject to exclusion but in other aspects they may also be included. This brought to the debate the classic concept introduced by the renowned sociologist, Simmel known as Sociological Ambivalence which basically argues that an individual can be excluded at the same time included at once but in different respective aspects and affiliation.

Silver further laid down that the emergence of modern individualism had diluted the power of nation-states thus groups have emerged to reassert and be included in the era of globalization. Thus, as much as social exclusion demand an inclusion as a solution, societal inclusion itself may itself be exclusionary in some aspect and to some groups (Silver, 2007; Woodward and Kohli, 2001). This was best emphasized by Emile Durkheim, the father of sociology, in his support to the idea that exclusion may at some point be inclusion and inclusion may also be exclusion when he pointed out that 'exclusion, ostracism, and punishment of deviant groups reinforces internal normative solidarity' (Silver, 2007). This leads the discussion to an understanding that inclusion of some groups is reinforcing the exclusion of others and that exclusion is creating and building of an internal solidarity that may develop an exclusionary nature back towards the other group. Usurpation is one example of an activity or set of activities undertaken as a product of a developed internal solidarity reactionary to the exclusion the excluded group is subjected to.

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Usurpation is from bottom to top, in which the group that is denied with opportunities and resources would act against the exclusion that they are subjected to and make effort to actively gain access and bite into the resources and benefits denied from them (Khalanyane, 2012). Khalanyane (2012) described usurpationary activities as activities that are embarked upon in order for the denied group to get a fair share from the resources, social and economic opportunities. As usurpation is an activity and are planned and sometimes unexpected, providing an analysis would require understanding the agencies present for usurpations. Thus, to analyze the phenomenon of social closure, set of indicators are identified below; such as the armed groups that negotiate with the government in behalf of the Moro people but does not always act in behalf of the Moro people, the nature of their groups, and the power they have in terms of man-power and ammunitions.

#### **Indicators of Social Exclusion**

The scholars employing the concept of Social Exclusion as a point of analysis has argued that it remains to be an academic debate on what dimensions 'truly' captures the process of exclusion. In other words there is no agreement on what constitutes exclusion as the dimensions of social closure are argued to vary from context to context (Silver, 2007). However, for the purpose of analysis, this paper has identified indicators from the globally used indicators crafter by the Eurostat (2017) in line with the European Union's 2020 agenda; these would serve as the backbone of analyzing the social exclusion phenomena. These are Health, Material Deprivation, Education, Personal Safety, and Labor market access. In analyzing, Social Exclusion, the identified indicators are explained in the table 1 below (page. 80)

#### **Indicators of Usurpation**

In order to provide an analysis of the phenomenon of Moro Social closure, there is a need to identify indicators that would be the basis to validate the existence of Usurpationary activities instigated by the Moro people. The tracing of activities that the paper will focus on are the emergence of armed groups that are striving to gain the government's attention through violence, bombings, and sporadic attacks. The armed

groups in Mindanao will be described substantially from the scholarly inquiries that were gathered.

Table 1  
Indicators of Social Exclusion

Indicator	Sub-Indicators	Source of Data
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life Expectancy</li> <li>• Underweight, Stunting, Wasting, and Overweight</li> </ul>	Philippine Statistics Authority
Education and Skills Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Enrollment Rate</li> <li>• Functional Literacy</li> <li>• National Achievement Test Mean Percentage Score</li> </ul>	Philippine Statistics Authority
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment rate</li> </ul>	Department of Economic Research (2017)
Personal Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime rate</li> </ul>	Murcia, Madanlo, and Tamayo (2016)
Labor market access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Average Income per family</li> <li>• Annual Expenditure per family</li> <li>• Annual Family savings</li> <li>• Poverty Incidence</li> </ul>	Philippine Statistics Authority

Source: Social Inclusion and Poverty Indicators, Eurostat (2017)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Profile of the Moro people*

The history of Mindanao, when traced back would point out that the Moro people were the primary dwellers in Mindanao and Sulu. The term “Moro” was coined by the Spanish colonizers who conquered Philippines in the 1500s. The term was linked by the Spaniards to the Moors, the Islamic islanders who ruled Spain for eight hundred years (Tuminez, 2008).

Among a number of indigenous tribes in Mindanao, the ‘Moro nation’ are made of thirteen Islamized ethnic groups, the most dominate being Tausugs of Sulu, the Maguindanaos of central Mindanao and the Maranaos of Lake Lanao in central-west Mindanao (Tuminez, 2008). Tuminez (2008) argued that the spread of Islam as a religion was ‘a continuation of the process of Islamization of the nearby Malayan islands’. It is not undisclosed to the Philippine society, nor globally, that the Moros have grievances and on why and where these grievances are arising from are questions that are more valuable to answer. Tuminez (2008) argued that the roots of the grievances of Moro are results of the minoritization that the Moro people were

subjected to. To provide a clearer analysis and understanding of the history of the Moro people, a timetable is provided below.

Table 2.  
Minoritization 'Activities' towards the Moro of Mindanao

Period	Year/s	What was done?	Effect
Spanish Colonization	1565-1898	Regalian doctrine was observed under this rule in which the Spanish Crown, by virtue of conquest, is the sole owner of the dominion of the state, and possesses the sole authority in classifying lands, forests, and etc. to those that are alienable and inalienable (Tuminez, 2008).	Tuminez (2008) argued that the Regalian doctrine of the Spanish colonizers contradicted and invalidated the communal land ownership practiced by the Moro people wherein the lands were commonly owned under the leadership of the clan <i>datu</i> (chief). Tuminez (2008) further argued that this also removed the free communal access of the local Moro people to water, forests, lands and other natural resources.
American Colonization	1989-1945	The Land Registration Act of 1902, under the American government, required all landowners to obtain legal titles for their properties, but the registration was only for individuals and corporations, excluding the clans and communities. In 1903, the Philippine Commission Act No. 718 Philippine Commission Act No. 718 was put in place with the purpose being, "An Act making void land grants from Moro sultans or datos or from chiefs of non-Christian Tribes when made without governmental authority or consent." The Public Land Act of 1905 declared that all unregistered lands as public, without consideration to any prior occupancy. In the year 1919, a public land act was put in place amending the one in 1903 which permitted Christians to apply for homesteads of up to twenty-four hectares, while non-Christians can only apply for a maximum of ten hectares. In 1936, another amendment was put in place stipulating that Christians could own up to sixteen hectares, while non-Christians could only own up to four.	Tuminez (2008) argued that the American land acts did not only take away the lands of their lands, but through legal procedures, it excluded them and the indigenous groups practicing communal land ownership from legally acquiring lands. Tuminez (2008) added that the Moros had then lacked the means to comply the sophisticated requirements for land registration i.e. cadastral surveys.  Also, the laws have removed from the Datus their authority over their lands and it substantially set legal discriminative treatment over the land size holdings for private individuals (Tuminez 2008).
Jabidah	1968	At least 28 young Moro military	The incident, known as

Massacre	recruits were killed by their superiors when they refused to continue their secret mission to infiltrate and foment unrest in Sabah, in eastern Malaysia. Sabah was formerly part of the Sulu sultanate and is claimed by the Philippines (Barron et al., 2017).	the Jabidah Massacre, is to have prompted more unrest and was a key stimulus in the formation of armed Moro separatist groups (Barron et al., 2017).
The Revoked 2008 Memorandum of Agreement	Peace negotiations, facilitated by the Malaysian government, culminated in the breakthrough Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain in mid-2008. However, the Supreme Court declared the deal unconstitutional (Barron et al., 2017).	Increase of clashes between the MILF and the Philippine government until 2009, displacing 750,000 and killing 400.

In general, Tuminez (2008) argued that the Spanish and American rules have resulted to a legalized method of land-grabbing which had left ‘a massive land disenfranchisement among Moros and other indigenous groups’. The legal system had set up a transfer method of the ancestral land away from the Moros and indigenous groups as the ‘American policy of mandatory land registration compounded the sense of dispossession among Mindanao’s native population’ (McDoom, 2016).

The existence of the notion that Moros were subjected to a minoritization was also even more highlighted as diverging narratives among Christian Filipinos and Muslim Filipinos on viewing the Spanish colonization in Philippines. Baybado (2017) argues that the diverging narratives view colonization as (1) a Christianization of Philippines and the other, (2) a de-Islamization of Philippines. Highlighting the religious divide in the Philippines, the table below provides a 2010 data of the religious affiliation by sexes.

Table 3.  
Five Predominant Religious Affiliation

Religion	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Total	92,097,978	46,458,988	45,638,990
Roman Catholic including Catholic Charismatic	74, 211, 896	37, 508, 216	36, 703, 680
Islam	5, 127, 084	2,553,847	2,573, 237
Evangelicals	2,469, 957	1,233, 206	1,236, 751
Iglesia ni Cristo	2, 251, 941	1,137, 108	1,114, 833
Other Religious Affiliations	1,452, 093	721, 724	730,369

Source: Philippines Statistics Authority (2015)

On a deeper lens, it can be understood that the social exclusion of the Moros and the emergence of usurpationary activities are not, if not entirely, then mainly grounded from the religious divide. Thus, it is important in understanding the social closure towards the Moros by having a grasp of the conditions of the Moro people.

*Conditions of the Moro people*

Gutierrez and Borrás Jr. (2004) argued that the Moro people have not only been ‘Minoritized’ for decades but they were also subjected to long standing structural inequalities which have resulted for the five provinces where the majority of the residents are Muslims, are the poorest provinces in the country. The five provinces are identified to be –Maguindanao, Sulu, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi.

Gutierrez and Borrás, Jr. (2004) further added that the quality of life in these provinces is at its worst and the life expectancy and adult literacy are the lowest in the Philippines. The policies and strategies of national governments have pushed Mindanao’s indigenous and Muslim populations to the margins of socio-economic and political development (Concepcion et al., 2003). Since policies and strategies reflect in the service provision, it is effortlessly understandable why government service provision in Mindanao in general is considered to be scant in predominantly Muslim areas. In the health provision during the 1970s, the country as a whole had one doctor for every 2,800 people; Mindanao had one doctor to 3,954 people; ‘Muslim Mindanao’ had one doctor to 6,959 people (Concepcion et al., 2003). The provision for education is also poor (Concepcion et al., 2003).

*Political Subdivision of the ARMM*

The Moro people are residents of Mindanao. The long struggle for self-determination, larger access to resources, and a higher degree of fiscal autonomy were the main demands of the Moro people. Under the provisions of Republic Act No. 6734, the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the ARMM is created with the composition of the four provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The ARMM is further expanded to include the province Basilan, except for the city of Isabela which is part of Region IX, and also the city of Marawi is included, and Shariff Kabunsuan Province. However, the creation of

Shariiff Kabunsuan was later revoked after a ruling from the Supreme court of the Philippines was released stating the unconstitutionality of the creation of ARMM. This was under the case of Sema vs. COMELEC which was given verdict on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2008. The region possess local autonomy to govern the region and thus a devolution of powers from the central to the local level was included in the package. The region has a governor of its own and the current elected governor and vice-governor for the term 2016-2019 are Regional Governor Mujiv Sabbihi Hataman and Regional Vice-Governor Haroun Alrashid Alonto Lucman Jr.

Table 4.  
Political Subdivision of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao

City/Province	No. of Municipalities	No. of Barangays
Marawi City	-	96
Basilan	3	210
Lanao del Sur	39	1059
Maguindanao	22	280
Shariiff Kabunsuan (later revoked)	11	209
Sulu	18	410
Tawi-Tawi	10	203
ARMM	108	2,467

Source: DILG-ARMM

## METHODOLOGY

The paper is a qualitative explanatory case study focusing its analysis on the Moro people in the Philippines, mainly located in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Qualitative research is used to analyze cases that arise in the natural flow of social life as well as sensitive interpretations of specific historical contexts (Neuman, 2003). The qualitative research is preferred as it fits best the aims of the study as the research aims to look into the history as well as the present condition of the Moro people. Furthermore, this is an explanatory type of research. Explanatory research are researchers aimed at linking topics to an issue as well as testing a theory's principle (Neuman, 2003), in this case the social closure phenomenon among the Moro people. The data in this paper are mainly secondary data retrieved from the official statistics released by the Philippine Statistics office in the year 2015, data from other scholars, and statistical data from other government agencies. Presented below is the Map of ARMM, where majority if not all of the Moros reside.

Figure 1  
Map of ARMM



Source: Wikipedia, Map of ARMM

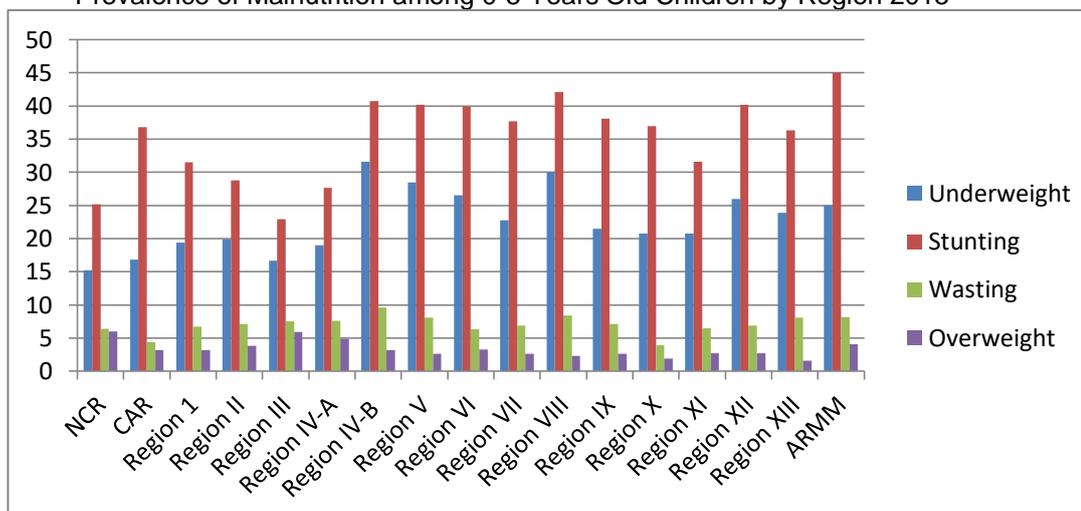
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to provide an analysis of the social closure phenomenon among the Moro people and the Philippine majority, the results below are laid down. The results are from the statistical data and statistical reports gathered, that were simplified and trimmed to focus in analyzing exclusion and usurpation. The indicators of exclusion were identified to be the basic services that the government provides, particularly, health, education, employment, crime, and income. The indicators of usurpation are firstly, identification of armed groups in the ARMM, and lastly, the nature of the groups, and common pattern of violence undertaken.

### *Health*

The aspect of health is a very vital component in analyzing the socio-economic conditions of the population, in this case the Moro people. Health reflects the proper diet which reflects the person's productivity and then his/her income. Poor health would emanate poor productivity. Thus, the importance of health provision from the central government is also at the same wavelength of the importance being put to economy, as health workers are the backbone of the economy. Analyzing the health provision towards the Moro people in the region of ARMM, the Prevalence of Malnutrition and the life expectancy years are presented in the figures below.

Figure 2  
Prevalence of Malnutrition among 0-5 Years Old Children by Region 2015



Source: Philippines Statistics Authority (2017).

The health outcome, in terms of underweight, stunting, wasting, and overweight is shown in the figure above reflecting that the percentage of underweight in ARMM is at 25 while the national average is at 21.6. The stunting in ARMM is at 45 while the national average is at 33.5. Lastly, the wasting percentage in ARMM is at 8.2, while the national average is at 7.1. The overweight is at 4.1 while the national average is at 3.8. The problem of poor health can be seen in the overwhelming stunting incidence in ARMM. Underweight incidence in ARMM is still higher than the national average.

Looking into the life expectancy indicator, a data gathered from the Human Development Index Report for 2012 revealed that ARMM provinces have the lowest life expectancy in the country. The table below shows the life expectancy years in the provinces of ARMM as well as the national average.

Table 5  
Life Expectancy Years of Provinces in ARMM 2012

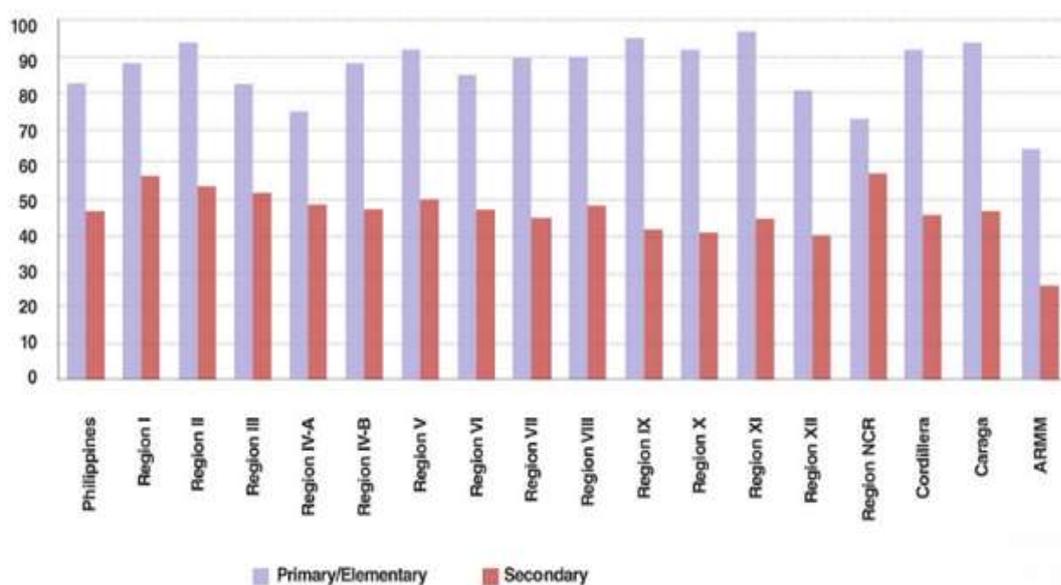
ARMM Provinces	Life Expectancy at birth (years) 2012	Life Expectancy Index
Basilan	63.5	0.669
Lanao del Sur	60.7	0.627
Maguindanao	59.5	0.608
Sulu	58	0.585
Tawi-tawi	54.4	0.529
Philippine National Average	73.4	0.88

Source: Human Development Index, Philippine Statistics Authority

## Education and Skills Literacy

Analyzing the social exclusion that the Moros have been subjected to is reflected in the outcome of the social services of the government such as in education and in health. Primarily, focusing the lens to the Educational outcomes, data were gathered to clearly highlight the exclusion of educational services which are apparent in an outcome-based view.

Figure 3  
Net Enrollment rate (%) SY 2011-2012



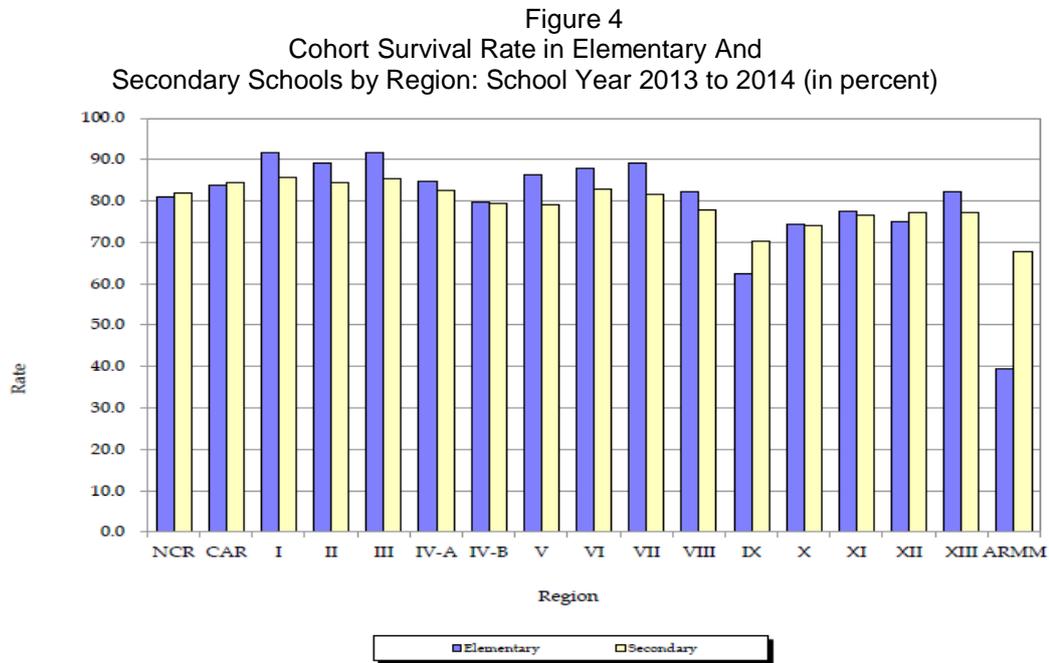
Source: EBEIS online (SY 2011-2012); DFAT & World Bank (2010)

From the data reflected in Figure 3, it can be seen that the ARMM region has the lowest net enrollment percentage for the school year 2011-2012. These rates are dreadfully low as compare to the national average; 91.2 for primary level and 62.0 for the secondary level (DFAT & World Bank, 2010). The conditions of the educational outcomes in ARMM are manifestations of the weak capacities in the region and the service provisionary deficiencies.

In understanding the survival rate of the students after they are enrolled , the gathered data are presented in Figure 4 (page 88).

Cohort survival rate at the elementary level is defined as the percentage of enrollees at the beginning grade or year in a given school year who reached the final grade or year of the elementary level. Philippines average Cohort Survival Rate for

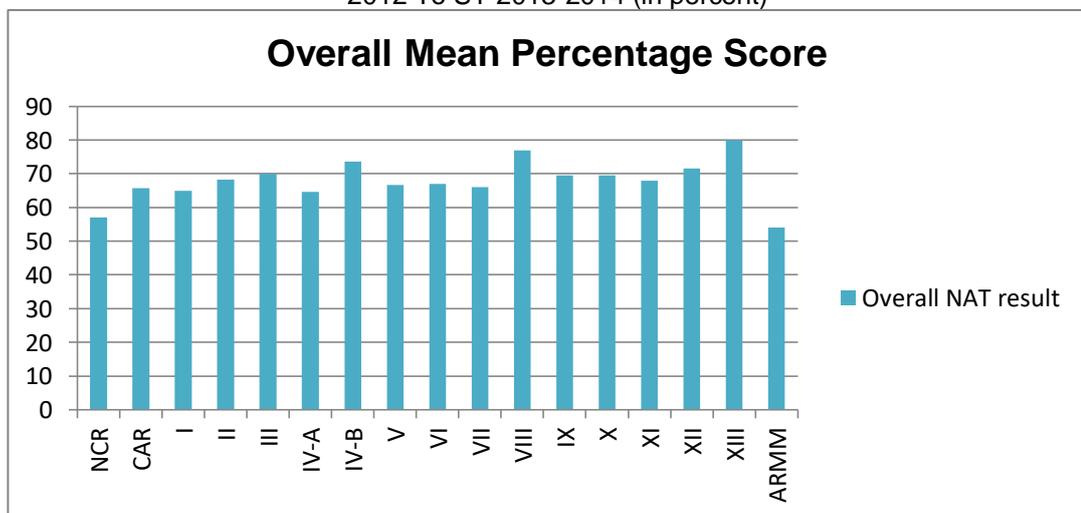
primary level 80.63. In the case of the ARMM for the year 2013-2014, at the primary level, the Cohort Survival rate is extremely low at 39.70.



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (2015)

Cohort survival rate at the secondary level is defined as the percentage of enrollees at the beginning grade or year in a given school year who reached the final grade or year of the secondary level. The Philippine average cohort survival rate is at 80.58 while the ARMM is in the bottom among the regions at a survival rate of 67.76.

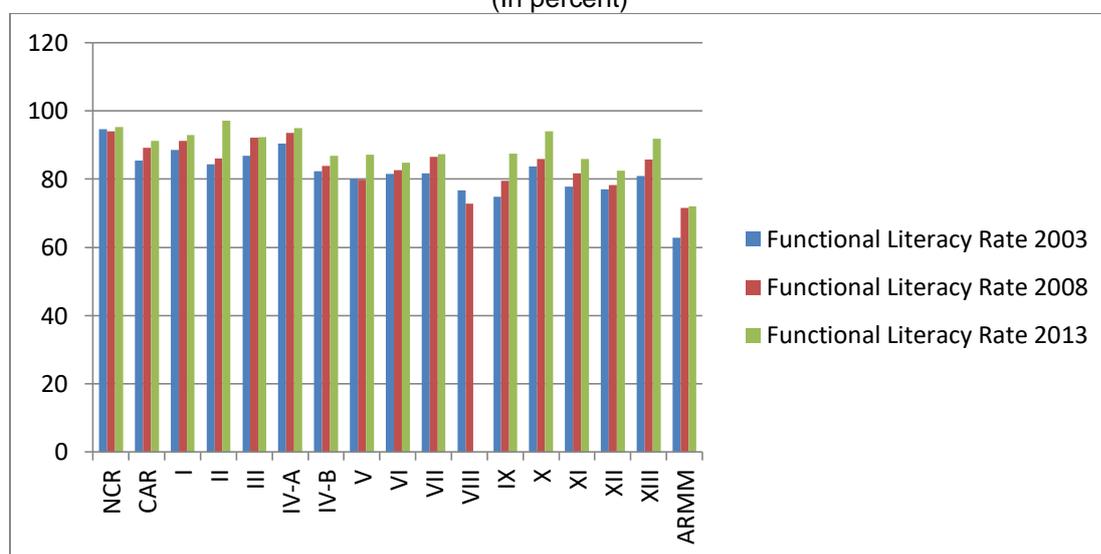
**Figure 5**  
Overall Result of The National Achievement Test of Grade Six Pupils by Region SY 2011-  
2012 To SY 2013-2014 (in percent)



Source: Philippine Statistical Report, Philippine Statistics Authority (2015)

The National Achievement Test (NAT) measures the desired learning competencies in the areas where the medium of instruction is English, these results highlights the performance of students per region. The test determines the progress of the pupils after ten months of study in the grade level. The scores projected in the graph above are in Mean Percentage Scores (MPS) per region. It can be seen that the lowest Mean Percentage Scores are from the NAT takers, or the students from ARMM.

Figure 6  
Functional Literacy Rate of the Population 10-64 Years Old by Region 2003 2008 and 2013  
(In percent)



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (2015)

Following the discussion regarding the functional literacy in the region ARMM, the data in Figure 6 is from the Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey from the Philippine Statistics Authority. It can be noted that the Region VII lacks data for the year 2013 for the region was purposefully excluded due to the devastation brought about by super typhoon Yolanda (International name, *Haiyan*). It can be noted above that the overall functional literacy rate from ages 10-64 is lowest at the ARMM from 2003 to 2013. In the year 2003, the Philippine average functional literacy is at 94.6, while the ARMM, at the very bottom, at 62.9. In the year 2008, the national average is at 94.0, the ARMM is still at the bottom at 71.6. After another 5 years, in the year 2013, the national average at 95.8. ARMM is still at the very bottom among the regions in the Philippines at 72.1.

## Material Deprivation

In discussion exclusion, income and poverty incidence cannot be ignored as these would highlight the economic power of the Moro people as well as how reliant they could be economically including, a possible prevalence of material deprivation. The Table 6 below shows the income and savings per family.

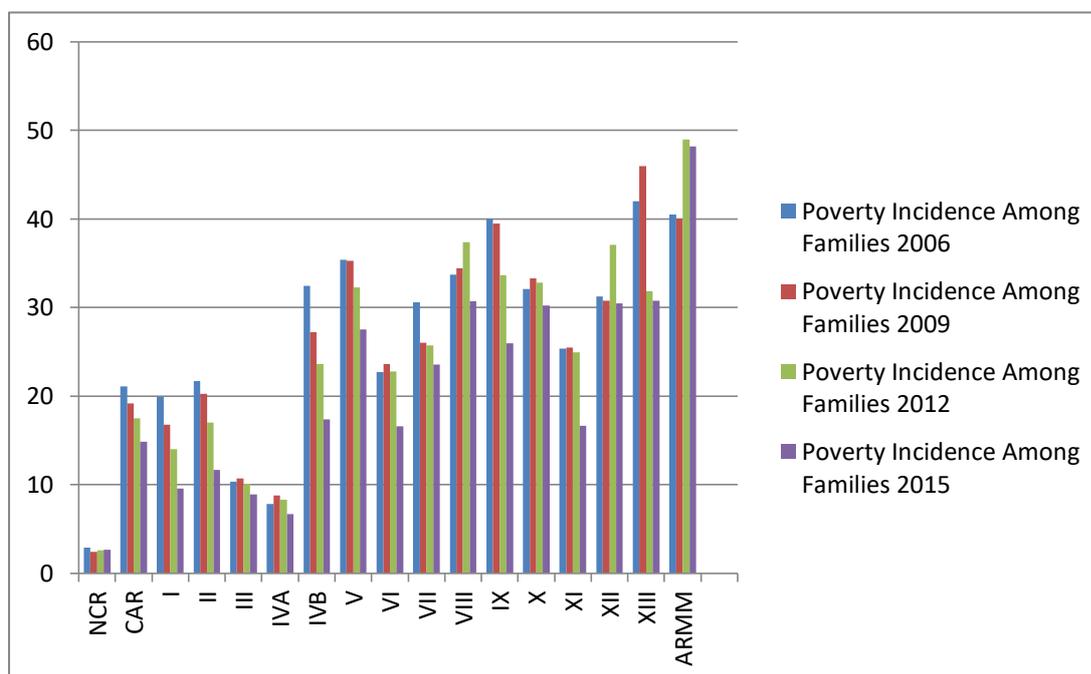
Table 6  
Number of Families, Average Annual Income and Expenditure by Region: 2012 (in thousand pesos)

Region	Average Income-Expenditure= Savings			
	Total number of Families (in thousand)	Average Income pesos (in thousand)	Average Expenditure pesos (in thousand)	Savings pesos (in thousand)
Philippines	21,426	235	193	31
NCR	2,917	379	325	54
CAR	375	257	188	44
I	1,105	204	159	35
II	771	195	140	55
III	2,386	259	211	48
IV-A	3,082	284	243	41
IV-B	638	179	138	21
V	1,165	162	144	18
VI	1,604	202	163	39
VII	1,577	209	164	45
VIII	902	166	132	34
IX	772	162	122	40
X	976	190	143	47
XI	1,078	194	156	38
XII	988	163	140	23
XIII	532	180	142	23
ARMM	577	130	114	16

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (2015)

Analyzing the data presented in the table above, it is reflected that the ARMM region of the Moro people has the lowest annual income per family with Php. (Philippine Peso) 130,000, as compared to the average family income in country-wide which is Php. 235,000. The annual income is to be deducted with the total family expenditure, in the case of ARMM, Php. 144,000. The country-wide average expenditure is at 193,000. The savings that families in ARMM retain from the income deducted with expenditures, is the lowest in the country- at only Php. 16,000.00 a year as opposed to the annual average savings per family, which is at Php. 31,000.00.

Figure 7  
Poverty Incidence in 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2015



Source: Philippines Statistics Office, (2017) [www.openstat.psa.gov.ph](http://www.openstat.psa.gov.ph)

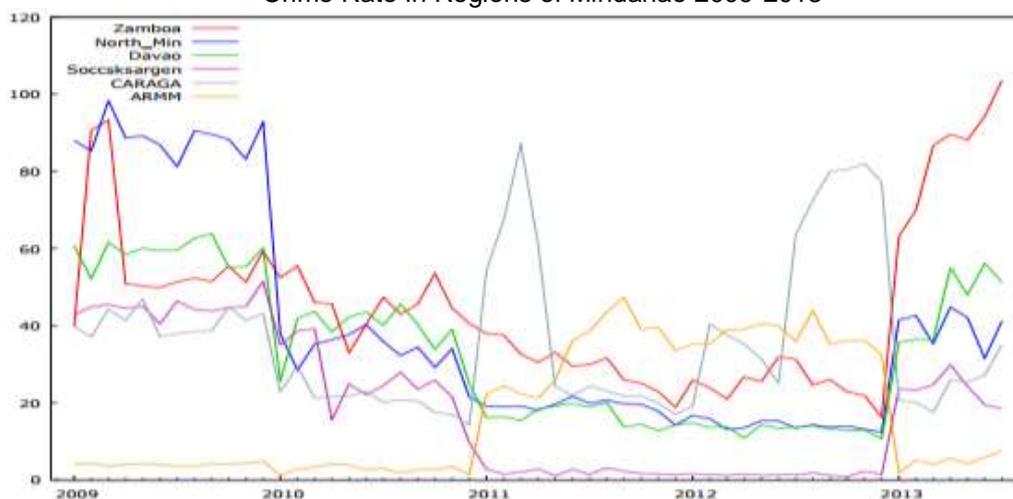
In Figure 7 above presents the poverty incidence by region, in the Philippines in 2006, 2009, 2012, and the latest 2015. It is reflected in the graph that in the most recent years, 2012 and 2015, the ARMM region has the highest poverty incidence at 49.0 in the year 2012 and at 48.2 in the year 2015. Poverty incidence is defined to be the proportion of the population of the country, in this case the Philippines, with per capita income less than the per capita poverty threshold. Thus, this can be supported by the presentation of Table 6 in the preceding part of the paper where was grasped that the ARMM has the lowest annual family income. These are indicators of the very poor economic status of the Moro people which would link to the exclusiveness of economic growth that the other region are experiencing.

**Personal Safety (Crime Rate)**

Another indicator for social exclusion is crime rate. The data gathered for this indicator is from the Philippine National Police as presented by another scholar. Crime rate is linked to social exclusion as high crime rate is a detriment to local

economies as well as to education. In Figure 8 presented below, the crime rate per region is presented.

Figure 8  
Crime Rate in Regions of Mindanao 2009-2013



Source: Murcia et al. (2016)

Looking into the data presented above, it can be grasped that the ARMM has a lower crime rate as compared to the other regions in Mindanao. This can be explained in the analysis of Adriano and Parks (2013) stating that conflict within the local areas are primarily brought upon the attention of the local village chief and thus, it is no longer adding to the statistics of the reported crimes in the local police stations. It is however, important to highlight that the crime rate may be at a lower level as compared to other regions but it is increasing progressively in the year 2013. Furthermore, armed conflict in the region and in the entire Philippines rest under the responsibility of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and not with the Philippine National Police thus it is not appearing in the data of the PNP. Various factors can be linked towards the rising of crime rate as it can also be linked to poverty incidence and high functional illiteracy in the region as pointed out in the above discussions.

### Labor market access

Labor market access is another important indicator. It could indicate the exclusion from workplace that the Moro people could possibly be subjected to. Thus, in the Table 7 below, the employment, unemployment, as well as underemployment per region in the year 2014 to 2016 are presented below.

**Table 7**  
**Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment per region in the year 2014-2016**

Region	2014			2015			2016		
	Employment	Unemployment	Underemployment	Employment	Unemployment	Underemployment	Employment	Unemployment	Underemployment
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>18.3</b>
<b>NCR</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>8.8</b>
<b>CAR</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>17.5</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>96.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>96.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>12.7</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>91.9</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>92.2</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>
<b>IV-A</b>	<b>92.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>92.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>15.5</b>
<b>IV-B</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>21.8</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>30.3</b>
<b>VI</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>19.1</b>
<b>VII</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>14.8</b>
<b>VIII</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>29.7</b>
<b>IX</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>22.4</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>27.9</b>
<b>XI</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>16.7</b>
<b>XII</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>95.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>23.8</b>
<b>XIII</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>94.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>94.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>27.8</b>
<b>ARM</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>96.2</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>14.8</b>

Source: Department of Economic Research (2017)

The table above highlights the employment, unemployment, and underemployment rate per regions in the Philippines in the year 2014 to 2016. It can be seen above that the ARMM has a lower underemployment and unemployment rate in all three years (2014-2016). This can be linked to the alternative livelihood and outpouring livelihood programs in the region of ARMM as part of the programs from national and international entities to alleviate the problem of poverty and socio-economically rooted conflicts in ARMM. However, when converged with the data regarding the income per families and poverty rate, the employment opportunities could be paying poorly.

### Usurpatory Activities

As operationally defined above, usurpatory activities are activities undertaken by the Moro people to gain access to political, social, and economic resources. These activities are usually undertaken by armed groups that are considered to be couriers of the interests of the Moro people. These desire to usurp the resources monopolized by the core 'Philippines' (excluding the Moro), Various groups came into

power. To what reason and to what nature is their establishment rooted from, are the central discussions of this section.

First and foremost, there is a need to understand the long existing conflict in the southern part of the Philippines. Adriano and Parks (2013) argued that there are multiple types of conflicts in Mindanao and that 'these conflict in the Moro areas has evolved from an ethnonationalist struggle between an aggrieved minority and the central government, to a highly fragmented conflict with multiple overlapping causes of violence'. These types of conflicts that the Philippine Government generally recognizes are presented by Adriano and Parks (2013). There are six major types of violence and many of such are overlapping, these types are:

**1. Separatist insurgency-related**

Adriano and Parks (2013) identified the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to be the participants of this type of conflict.

**2. Ideological, insurgency-related**

The identified participants of this type of conflicts are the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP-NPA), and other breakaway groups from CPP-NPA (Adriano & Parks, 2013).

**3. Rido-related**

This type of conflict is culturally embedded and is very prevalent among the Maranaos (Alvarez et al., 2014), a Moro ethnic group and these are mainly between influential clans or families (Adriano & Parks, 2013).

**4. Competition-related**

This type of conflict is said to be prevalent among the local elites competing for political posts during the elections in order to secure political power and control over of natural resources such as land (Adriano & Parks, 2013).

**5. Inter-communal (ethnic or tribal)**

This conflict arise between two groups affiliated to different religions, or between two groups within the same ethnic group or two different ethnic groups or tribe (Adriano & Parks, 2013).

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## 6. Criminal-related

This type of conflict is made up of forms of violence caused by criminal elements, with criminal intent of committing acts such as kidnap-for-ransom, drug trafficking, and extortion (Adriano & Parks, 2013).

There are a number of existing militant groups in ARMM causing violent conflict. The most predominant conflicts are characterized in the table below.

Table 8  
Characteristics of Conflict in selected localities

	Ethnic Composition	Major Conflict actors and forms of conflict
Basilan	Yakan and Tausug ethnic groups (Moro Muslim)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MILF</li> <li>• Abu Sayyaf Group</li> <li>• MNLF</li> <li>• Rido (clan feuds or wars)</li> </ul>
Lanao del Sur	Maranao (Moro Muslim) majority with small Christian Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MILF</li> <li>• Abu Sayyaf Group</li> <li>• MNLF</li> <li>• Rido (clan feuds or wars)</li> <li>• Criminal networks</li> </ul>

Source: Adriano and Parks (2013)

### Major Characteristics of the Armed groups

In understanding the usurpationary activities of the state insurgent groups, an understanding of their nature and historical upheavals needs to be established.

#### 1. Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

The Moro National Liberation Front or MNLF was founded by Nur Misuari in the year 1969. The initial goal of the creation of MNLF was to fight the Philippine government for an independent Moro nation in Mindanao (Barron et al., 2017). In the year 1976, a push for autonomy was put forward which was aided by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) however the agreement known as the Tripoli Agreement failed. President Corazon Aquino then signed the law to create the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao however the MNLF was no longer participating in the creation of the ARMM and they were conducting armed battles against the government (Barron et al., 2017). The most recent was what was publicly known as the Zamboanga siege.

The Zamboang siege was an incident triggered by Misuari's supporters which was launched in Zamboanga City on September of 2013. Barron et al. (2017)

argued that the apparent aim of the Zamboanga siege was to thwart the government's peace deal with the other armed group, the MILF. This aim led to the paralysis of the city of over a million residents and had reduced 30 to 40 hectares to war rubble and leaving 218 dead and hundreds more wounded (Barron et al., 2017).

## 2. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front is born out of the MNLF after a break away led by Hashim Salamat in the year 1978 happened. It is considered to be the largest Muslim armed group with total members around 10,000 to 30,000 composed of Maguindanao and Maranao from central Mindanao (Barron et al., 2017). The grievances is also born out of the historical and present exclusion towards the Moro which solidifies the aspiration of the MILF for a creation of a renewed self-governing region referred as, Bangsamoro (Barron et al., 2017). Barron et al. (2017) revealed that despite a ceasefire agreement between the MILF and the government in the year 1997, intermittent attacks were still launched from the MILF's side, some are attacks towards the Christian villages and it lasted until 2009, displacing 750,000 and killing 400.

Another breakaway happened and was recorded in history in December of 2010 when one of the MILF commanders, Ameril Umbra Kato, decided to break away from the MILF to form the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). In the data presented in the table below, the manpower as well as the arms strength of the Armed groups in the Philippines are laid down in the research of Barron et al. (2017).

Table 9  
Armed groups, their forces, and firearms as of October 2014

Armed Group	Forces	Firearms
Moro National Liberation Front (rogue MNLF elements)	558	314
Moro Islamic Liberation Front	11,600	7,700
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters	450	479
Abu Sayyaf Group	386	318
CPP-NPA-NDF	4,386	5,192

Source: Armed Forces of the Philippines; (Barron et al., 2017)

Vinck (2011), through a survey conducted among the displaced people in Central Mindanao revealed that the respondents have a high trust towards the police (72%), and 68% to the military and 39% to the MILF, and 33% to the MNLF. However, Vinck (2011), as cited by Adriano and Parks (2013) on a data from various

provinces highlighted that there are high trust ratings in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao for the MILF (66% and 67%, respectively) and for the MNLF (57% and 62%, respectively). This emphasizes the social acceptance of the Moro people, especially in the areas of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.

Furthermore, there is an ongoing strengthening of sub-nationalism in the Moro region. This was revealed by a survey that was conducted in 2009 after a Memorandum of Agreement failed between the MILF and the Central government. In this survey, it was revealed that majority of the Moro people identify themselves as Moro, second only as Filipinos. This validates the sociological ambivalence argument, which forwards an analysis that the exclusion of the Moro people from the 'Core Philippines' and the exclusion that they are subjected to, sowed and nurtured a nationalism. This also supports the existence of a social closure in which the Moro people are being subjected to an exclusion and the Moro people in return directly or indirectly affiliates themselves with the armed groups to demand for a much better power-sharing arrangement so as to have access to the resources in the center.

## CONCLUSION

The outcry of the Moro people for an autonomous region, some even a separate state can be linked directly towards there socio-economic condition, as seeing that a better access to resource mobilization and political power may improve the present conditions.

Looking into the results presented above, it can be summarized, that in the area of health, the Moro people has the shortest life expectancy, the highest stunting incidence, higher than the average underweight, overweight, and wasting incidences. In the area of education, the Moro people has the, lowest net enrollment, lowest functional literacy, the lowest scores in national achievement test, and the lowest cohort survival rates for primary and secondary students. In the area of income, the Moro people has the lowest annual average family income and the lowest annual savings when the average expenditure is deducted and also, the Moro people has the highest poverty incidence in the year 2012 and 2015. In the area of employment and

crime, the Moro people are doing relatively better than the other regions, however crime rate is climbing up in the years 2013. Thus, from the above understanding, it can be said that the Moro people are socially excluded from the other 'Filipinos' with a better and improved quality of life and out of this historical and current deprivation that the demands for autonomy arise. This is the usurpationary action from the Moro people. The formation and enduring existence of the MILF and MNLF are proofs that the power-sharing negotiations are not yet over. There are two demands from the excluded Moro people, The first is a territory reflecting their identity, culture, and religious freedom and the second is a for an improved socio-economic conditions (Oquist, 2006; Soliman, 2005; Adriano & Parks, 2013).

Does the recognition that the Moro people are socially excluded and working for their inclusion have an effect on reducing the usurpationary actions from the Moro armed groups? Arcand et al. (2010), as cited by Adriano and Parks (2013), argued that there is a decrease in MILF-related events which could be linked from the increase of projects that is working for the inclusion of the Moro people in local decision making and that it can be viewed from casual empiricism that the Moro inhabitants from the municipalities studied perceive 'a greater sense of empowerment, concrete improvements in access to government services and thereby a reduced sense of grievance towards the central government' .

Thus, it is working towards an inclusive growth that the country must work for. Inclusive growth may not mean a centralized government, but it must mean an inclusiveness of an improved socio-economic conditions. Inclusive development may begin with a better power-sharing arrangement where financial resource is not centrally strapped. Delving into the conflict of Mindanao, the socio-economic conditions of the present, and the long enduring exclusion of Moro in the past, the discourse of power-sharing is not entirely separate and so is the discourse of state-building. In fact, if it is understood, social inclusion of the Moro can better be achieved thru a better power-sharing where the Moro people can self-govern and freely practice their religion, culture, and traditions. As a recommendation, the government of the Philippines must eye the situation of ARMM by looking into the conditions

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and historical roots of the exclusion of the Moro group and from there, the government must double its efforts not only in providing services but ensuring inclusive growth thru inclusive and non-discriminative policies and programs.

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