

# The Lanao Sultanate Political Structure in the 17th Century: Its Traditional Leaders Appointment, Qualifications and Functions

Sohayle M. Hadji Abdul Racman<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mindanao State University, PHILIPPINES [sohaylehadjiabdulracman@gmail.com](mailto:sohaylehadjiabdulracman@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

The Lanao *datus* (chieftains) founded the *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* (The Four-States of Lanao) in 1616. The Four-States of Lanao had evolved into a sultanate which now the Lanao Sultanate. The traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate consist of several *sulutan* (sultans), *bai-a-labi* (sultanas), *radia-muda* or *datu-a-kabugatan* (ministers), *m'babaya ko taritib/pagawid* (governors), *radia-laut* (army and naval commander), *kalis* (judges), *imāms* (prayer leaders), and *pananalsilas* (genealogists). Studies dealing with the whole spectrum of the political structure of Lanao Sultanate in the 17<sup>th</sup> century until today is not represented in Philippines literature, in fact there is no published work dealing with the appointment, qualifications and functions of the said traditional leaders of the said sultanate. To fill in this research gap, this paper explores in-depth the appointment, qualifications and functions of the traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate.

## Keywords:

Lanao Sultanate; sultan; Maranao; appointment; qualifications; functions.

## INTRODUCTION

The *Pat a pangampong sa Ranao* or the four-states of Lanao refers to the four states of Lanao Sultanate, namely, Bayabao, Unayan, Masiu, and Baloi; collectively called the Confederation of the Four Lake-based Emirates. These emirates had 43 confederate mini states.

The Sultanate of Lanao is a collective leadership promoting unity and strong brotherhood and the equality of the Maranaos. It is also a consultative monarchy which is equivalent to monarchical democracy. The Lanao Sultanate was divided into division and each division was then divided into sub-division. There were 15 sultanates which were ruled by 15 *panoroganan/pagawidan* (high-ranking sultans) of the 15 royal houses of Lanao Sultanate. The sub-division of the Lanao Sultanate were ruled by the 28 sultans of the 28 *pagawid* (supporting) states. These sultans were also governors. The 15 *panoroganan* sultans were being assisted by the 28 sultans of the *pagawid* states. These 28 sultans were also the policy makers of the 43 confederate states of Lanao Sultanate. These *pagawid* sultans were collectively called the houses of peers whose main function is to legislate local customs, traditions and laws but subject to the joint concurrence of the royal houses, council of elders and the board of advisers. The council of elders and the boards of advisers are both advisers to the royal houses and the houses of peers. The decision-making process in the Lanao Sultanate is not a monopoly of the sultans but it is based on the consensus of the council of

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elders and the boards of advisers and other traditional leaders. The ruling clans of the four states of Lanao Sultanate, namely, Bayabao, Masiu, Unayan, and Baloi traced their line of ancestry from Sharif Kabunsuan and his brother Sharif Alawi. Sharif Kabunsuan was the first sultan of Magindanao Sultanate (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2021, & Hadji Abdul Racman, et al., 2021a, 2021b).

The researcher expects that the results of this study will (1) Show the whole spectrum of political structure of leadership of Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century. (2) Show the appointment, qualifications and functions of the traditional leaders of the Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century. (3) Show broadly how applied Islamic governance shaped the civil and religious lifeways of the Maranaos in the Philippines in the 17th century. (4) Provide original inputs for the state policy makers for the promotion of better Islamic governance in the Muslim dominated areas in Mindanao, Philippines. (5) See from this research findings of its relevance to the communities of Lanao Sultanate, thus, its incumbent sultans and traditional leaders may reflect on the research findings to enhance their leadership, and by so doing, hopefully it affects social, cultural, political and religious construct of the Muslim community. This might lead to the cooperation between the sultans and the local government units in Muslim Mindanao areas.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This study seeks to answer these research questions:

1. What were the practices of the Lanao Sultanate Royal Court on the appointment, qualifications, and functions of sultans, sultanas, ministers, provincial governors, army and naval commander, judges, prayer leaders, and the genealogists of the ruling clans of Lanao Sultanate?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this study is to highlight the practices of the Lanao Sultanate Royal Court on the appointment, qualifications, and functions of sultans, sultanas, ministers, provincial governors, army and naval commander, judges, prayer leaders, and the genealogists of the ruling clans of Lanao Sultanate.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in filling the research gap in literature on the holistic structure of leadership of Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century. This study is also significant in filling the research gap on the appointment, qualifications, and functions of the traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate.

This research serves as a reference material for the researchers whose interest is on the sultanates in Southeast Asia particularly in the Philippines. It will promote open and constructive debates on how applied Islamic governance had facilitated the development of the civil, social, and religious life of the Maranao tribe in the Philippines in the 17th century. This paper will provide inputs that can be used by the policy-makers in promoting a better Islamic governance in the Muslim regions in the Philippines. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia as well as on the significance of the Lanao Sultanate to the lifeways, culture, politics, and religion of the Muslim Maranao communities in the Philippines.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The first study that dwells on the political structure of Lanao Sultanate is the research of Hadji Abdul Racman, et al., (2021), entitled: *The Lanao Sultanate Today: Its Adat Laws and Islamic*

*Law on Fornication with Special Reference to the Islamic Perspectives of al-Māwardī*. This explains that the Lanao Sultanate has 15 supported sultans who were assisted by the 28 sultans of the 28 *pagawid* states, aside from this, this sultanate has other traditional leaders. Overall, this study does not explain the appointment, qualifications, and functions of the traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate.

Next is, the work of Hadji Abdul Racman (2018) entitled: *The Islamicity of Lanao Sultanate, Philippines in the 17th Century as a State*. This research narrates that the Lanao Sultanate has the council of elders, house of board of advisers, house of *bais* (ladies), *imāms* (prayer leaders), *kalis* (judges), *gurus* (teachers), *askars* (army), *pananalsilas* (genealogies), defence units headed by a *radia-laut* (naval and war commander), and the 43 sultans who ruled the *pagawidan* (supported) states and *pagawid* (supporting) states. Apparently, this work does not discuss the appointment, qualifications, and functions of the traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate.

Another research that touches on the political structure of Lanao Sultanate is the research of Hadji Abdul Racman (2021) entitled: *The Islamicity of the Lanao Sultanate's Land Grant with Special Reference to the Political Thought of al-Māwardī on Land Grant*. This research discusses that the Lanao Sultanate had the Four Lake-based Emirates. It is independent of external control and had organized government to which the citizens recognized the authority of the sultans and other royal authorities. It also had the four basic elements to make a state, namely, the people which is the demography comprising of the Muslim Maranaos; the territory consisting of the Lanao lands, mountains, hills, forests, resources, valleys, rivers, the Lake Lanao, the Moro Gulf, and Illana Bay; the government which is the Lanao Sultanate, an established consultative Islamic monarchy, and the sovereignty or independence from external control. The Lanao Sultanate had a robust military defense that resisted against the Spanish, Americans, Japanese, and the Christianized Filipinos. Overall, this work does not dwell on the appointment, qualifications, and functions of the traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate.

Another work that deals with the traditional leaders of Lanao is the Ph.D. thesis of Birte Brecht-Drouart (2011) entitled, *Between Re-traditionalization and Islamic Resurgence. The Influences of the National Question and the Revival of Tradition on Gender Issues Among Maranaos in Southern Philippines*. This discusses some of the traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate, however, it does not discuss the whole spectrum of traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate, and more broadly their selection process or appointment, functions, and qualifications.

Sultan Monsing Macabando, in his books entitled: *Brief History of the Maranao Mindanao*, *Maranao Salsila (Genealogy) Their Origin*, and *Brief History of the Balindong Dynasty of the Dominion State (Sultanate) of Pangampongan-a-Masiu*, explain the foundation of Lanao Sultanate its traditional leaders, however, these books failed to highlight the appointment, qualifications, and functions of the traditional leaders of Lanao Sultanate entirely as reflected in the abstract.

## The Political and Geographical Structure of Lanao Sultanate

1. PANGAMPONG/STATE OF BAYABAO					
District Divisions	Founders	The 15 <i>pagawidan</i> states ruled by Panoroganan sultans	Current Locations	The 28 <i>Pagawid</i> states ruled by Governors, the law-makers or <i>m'babaya ko taritib</i>	Current Locations
Poona-Bayabao	Umbaor	1. Bansayan of sultan Umparo 2. Taporog of sultan Amidbunol		1. Talagian of sultan Sheik 2. Bubong of sultan Omilang 3. Bualan of sultan Onawal	Poona-Bayabao

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		3. Rogan of sultan Aribu	Poona-Bayabao	4. Lumbak-a-inged, Sisianun of sultan Ayong	
Lumba-Bayabao	a. Apha b. Okoda c. Ibango d. Digoa	4. Borocot of sultan Apha 5. Minitupad of sultan Okoda 6. Maribo of sultan Ibango 7. Bacolod of sultan Digoa	Lumba-Bayabao	5. Galawan of sultan Domaraag 6. Botod of sultan Dikaizadan 7. Taluan of sultan Alapang 8. Maguing of sultan Mamintal	a. Lumba-Bayabao b. Wao
Mala-Bayabao	Ottowa	8. Romain of sultan Akari 9. Ditsaan of sultan Olok	Romain-Ditsaan	9. Marawi of sultan Gomisa 10. Marantao of sultan Gomising 11. Buadipuso-Buntong of sultan Macadiar 12. Antanga-Didagun of sultan Mayaman	a. Marawi b. Marantao c. Romain-Ditsaan d. Saguwaran
<b>2. PANGAMPONG/STATE OF UNAYAN</b>					
Butig	Barakat	10. Butig in East Unayan of sultan Barakat	Butig	13. Ragayan of sultan Didaitun 14. Timbab of sultan Subor 15. Malalis of sultan Labiolan 16. Dolangan of sultan Ditucalan	Butig
Domalondong	Borowa	11. Pagayawan in West Unayan of sultan Arobiro 12. Bayang in West Unayan of sultan Diwan	a. Pagayawan in West Unayan b. Tatariken, c. Bayang	17. Binidayan of sultan Baudi 18. Pualas of sultan Lawango 19. Padas of sultan Sandab II 20. Boribid of sultan Matanog II	a. Binidayan b. Pualas c. Tubaran d. Tatariken
<b>3. PANGAMPONG/STATE OF MASIU</b>					
East Masiu & West Masiu	Balindong-B'sar	13. Masiu of sultan Racmatullah  14. Datu-a-Kabugatan sa Masiu of sultan Dialaloden, brother of sultan Racmatullah	Taraka	21. Lumasa of sultan Cadayon 22. Malungun of sultan Madayao 23. Pitakes of sultan Abagat  24. Lima-inged/five county: (a) Wato, (b) Tugaya, (c) Kalawi-Bacolod, (d) Madalum, and (e) Madamba of sultan Pondag.	a. Bacolod b. Taraka c. Balindong d. Madalum
<b>4. PANGAMPONG/STATE OF BALOI</b>					

Baloi	Alanak	15. Baloi of sultan Alanak	Baloi	25. Basagad of sultan Papas Anas 26. Matampay of sultan Radiali 27. Kabasagan of sultan Atongao 28. Lumbak of Bae-sa-Lumbak	a. Baloi b. Matunggao c. Baloi c. Baloi
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**Figure 1:** The Political and Geographical Structure of Lanao Sultanate

## METHODOLOGY

The historical narratives for this research were obtained through library research, government documents and archives. Secondary data sources i.e. books, theses, dissertations, and journals were used.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Appointment of Sultans and sultanas, Their Qualifications and Functions

The appointment of the sultan finds basis in the Lanao *salsila* or genealogy where the ruling clans of Lanao Sultanate referred to. Brecht-Drouart (2011) states,

[The] leadership of the royal houses in Lanao [sultanate] takes its legitimation from two main lines of ancestry. One is that of the *Sharifs* (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who stayed in Mindanao, and in particular Sharif Kabunsuan, who brought the sultanate system to Magindanao and who is said to have been a descendant of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). In some Maranao genealogies, the line of Sharif Kabunsuan is traced back to the twelve *imams*, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and Adam and Eve. The second line of importance is the one of local *datus* and Rajah Indarapatra, the first ruler in Lanao, who originally came from Mantapoli, an ancient state in Malaysia. Rajah Indarapatra is sometimes traced back to the Sultan of Istanbul, now part of Turkey and the Sultan of Istanbul to an ancestor of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Some sultans also refer to Alexander the Great as their ancestor, similarly to the royal houses in Aceh, Indonesia (Ibid.).

The qualifications and the descent line of a person to be crowned are not sufficient bases for electing him/her as a sultan, etc. According to Abdullah Madale (1996, p.140), there are other criteria used in selecting a sultan, *bai-a-labi* (sultana), and leader to be followed such as:

1. Does he/she come from a royal family that is entitled to the royal title he/she is aspiring for? 2. Is this royal family entitled to this rank or title at this time? Or is it the turn of this royal family to get the title or rank? 3. Is the applicant the most qualified, capable, and appropriate member of his/her family? 4. Does he/she possess the personality, the intelligence, and the wealth necessary to perform the duties, responsibilities, and authority inherent in the title or rank? 5. Is he/she supported by most, if not all, other royal families? 6. Will the Council of Elders give him/her their blessing and approval? (Ibid.).

If the above criteria are mostly met by a prospect, then his/her name will be enlisted among those to be enthroned. The new set of titled *datus* (male leader) and *bais* (female leader), however, has still to get the approval from the 15 supported *panoroganan/pagawidan* sultans and the 28 *pagawid* (supporting states) “who traditionally send their representatives to the enthronement ceremonies in order to give their imprimatur to the coronation” (Madale, 1996, p.140). This means that the individuals who are aspiring to assume a royal title in the

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Lanao Sultanate shall undergo an extensive screening process of their lineage, family background, personal qualities, desired values, and moral inclination before their election to assume a royal authority. This process is part of the established values and protocol of the *taritib* and *igma* (customary laws) of the Lanao Sultanate.

What are other qualifications of a ruler? According to Brecht-Drouart Birte (2011, p. 246) the qualifications of a ruler are: a Muslim, have reached the age of puberty, wise, member of the royal family, who behaves in a decent manner, honest, trustworthy, patient, active, intelligent, well-behaved or disciplined, decent, have a pleasing personality, have strong faith in Allāh, considerate, have perseverance, brave in defending his people and community, and knowledgeable. In addition to this, there are other general requirements and functions of sultan:

1. The sultan must be the one who is primary leading his nation and the making his nation and its people prosper and flourish;
2. He solves the societal problems and brings to an end the *fitnah* (shame or social problems) of the nation;
3. He should be a just ruler who dispenses command to attain the well-being of the people;
4. He commands the people to do good and forbids them from evil doings;
5. He will be questioned before Allāh in the hereafter on how he governed his people;
6. He is the vicegerent of Allāh on earth, i.e. Allāh's representative on earth in dispensing of decision and in guiding the people to the right path;
7. He stands before Allāh and follows the commandments of Allāh;
8. He takes good care of his people in utmost measure and he is trustworthy;
9. He is a just ruler and patient in times of hardship;
10. He possesses wisdom and he is kind;
11. He is merciful and beneficent;
12. He should be able to persevere, endure, and forgive, and he stands firm in times of severe difficulty and able to survive against all odds;
13. He knows how to investigate facts, and knows how to distinguish facts from falsehood;
14. He is brave and able to face his foes for his people; and,
15. He is respectful, great in camaraderie; and he listens to others attentively, and he is down to earth (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2018 & 2020).

### **Other Functions and Personal Qualities of Sultan**

According to Sultan Monsing Macabando (2008, pp.84-85) there are general functions and other personal qualities of a sultan, these are as follows:

1. He is a paragon, model of excellence, someone who is regarded with high reverence;
2. He is the *amir* (supreme head) of his sultanate;
3. He can approve or disapprove any law;
4. He has the final say on any law which the law makers and other *datus* have legislated;
5. He takes care of the community and its subjects and he closely monitor the activities of the people;
6. He can implement decisions according to *taritib* and *igma* and the laws of Islam;
7. He is the supreme authority of his domain;
8. He provides the welfare of his people and he safeguards its land from the incursions;
9. He commands his subjects to do good deeds and prevents them from sinning;
10. He provides means to destitutes;
11. His decision is firm when he renders justice to the victims of injustices;
12. After receiving any legislated laws from his legislative bodies, he then consults the *datus* from his domain and the other *datus* from other sultanates if such laws are affecting those sultanates;
13. He represents his sultanate to other sultanates whenever he visits such sultanates for social and religious gatherings;

14. He may or may not approve any unconsolidated matters made by his subjects; and He asks the judge to deliberate family feud/s in the community to dispense justice.

The qualifications and functions of sultans are quite comprehensive which directs him to contribute to the well-being of the Muslim societies, spiritually, culturally, and socially. This shows that the sultans in the Lanao Sultanate were not just symbolic leaders but they had a specific functions to render to the society which they rule. The sultanas, like the sultans also have qualifications and qualities, according to Brecht-Drouart (2011, p.247),

Her qualities are not said to be much different from those of a sultan. She should be Muslim; have the descent, a certain character, the means, social connections, and knowledge of *taritib* and *igma*; should participate in the concerns of the community; and should be recognized by the community and be confirmed by the twenty-eight [*m'babaya ko taritib*] and the originally fifteen now sixteen [*panoroganans*] or their representatives. Since there are many claimants for one title, it might be that the person is chosen according to the amount of high-ranking claims from different descent lines: for example a person who could become *bai-a-labi* in Masiu as well as in Ramain... (Ibid.).

One of the unique characteristic of Lanao Sultanate is that its Royal Court has given powers and authority to women. The *bai-a-labis* are not simply symbolic leaders but they perform functions in their respective community as the sultan did. Brecht-Drouart (2011, p.253) explains, "the general obligation of each female title was said to be the same: to serve the community, peacekeeping, and to support the *bai-a-labi* backing up the sultan. The *bai-a-labi* is said to be responsible for the women in the gender segregated community: she is the role model for the women." This means that in the Maranao society, women had special rights and were given authority to lead the community gatherings where women are dominant in numbers. According to Brecht-Drouart (2011, p.253),

She [*bai-a-labi*] also crowns those *bais* from her sultanate ranking below her. As important as these prerogatives are, a male representative of the [fifteen] now sixteen royal houses or the twenty-eight [law-makers] should still be present during this coronation. The sultan normally makes the main decisions, for example, whether a mosque is to be built in a community. Women are ideally consulted and can contribute their ideas and suggestions, though this depends on the arrangements of the single sultanates (Ibid.).

We see the application of Islamic practice i.e. consultation in decision-making process in the Maranao societies. The Maranao women have been consulted by the sultan or *datu* in the implementation of community activities and projects that are very important to the social, cultural, and religious aspects of the community for their holistic well-being. Brecht-Drouart (2011) says:

Titleholders of both sexes are expected to share certain expenses (construction of a mosque, weddings, funerals, bride price, blood price, etc.). They tend to contribute according to their status. There are several events when titleholders can show their gratitude to their relatives. The sultan and the *bai-a-labi* might be expected to contribute to a feast for the community at *Eid al-Adha* (festival of sacrifice) and *Eid al-Fitr* (the festival that marks the end of Ramadan) as well as at the birth and death day of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Since giving celebrations on these dates is prestigious, other people of means will invite people to their place.

The social, cultural, and religious progress of the Maranao society lie in the hand of the cooperation of people, the traditional leaders, the sultans and *bai-a-labis*.

### **The Appointment of *radia-muda/datu-a-kabugatan/wazis* (minister), His Qualifications, and Functions**

According to Hadji Abdul Racman (2018 & 2020), the appointment of minister is similar to the appointment of the sultan as mentioned above. His qualifications are also similar to the qualifications of the sultan which are explained earlier. The *radia-muda* (minister) is *kaluwasan* (heir-apparent). After the reign of a sultan, the *radia-muda* will take over the throne of sultan. The sultan usually takes advice from the *radia-muda*. The sultan also secures advice from the houses of peers. The *radia-muda* and the sultan usually organize the state. Together they make changes in their state and draft policies and implement them. Generally, the sultan takes advice from *radia-muda* and the council of elders.

The minister gives advice to the sultan as his main function. According Musib Buat (1977, p.104), the sultan appoints a deputy such as *radia-muda* and *datu-kali* (head of judge) to assist him in settling judicial matters. This means that the minister also assist in settling judicial cases. The sultan and *radia-muda* and other traditional leaders share common descent lines.

### **The Appointment of *M'babaya ko Taritib* (Provincial Governors), Their Qualifications and Functions**

Sultan Monsing Macabando (2005, pp.85-86) says, the provincial governors of the Lanao Sultanate were the 28 *m'babaya ko taritib* who were also the policy makers or legislative bodies of the Lanao Sultanate. They occupied 28 states where they governed, hence governors. They were also called *pagawid* sultans. Their appointment and qualifications are similar to the process of appointment and qualifications of sultan and *radia-muda* (minister) as explained earlier. Their functions, power and duties are as follows:

1. They uphold the implementation of the *taritib* and *igma* within their own sultanate with due consideration of the other sultanate's legislated laws;
2. They can amend the *taritib* and *igma* as long as any amendment is based on their consensus and the consensus of the other sultanates as well their elders;
3. They maintain the power and prestige of the four sultanates;
4. They preside proper decorum along with the other sultans who are attending in social gathering and activities;
5. They are entrusted with the application of the *taritib* and *igma* on the succession of leadership and on the relationship of community and individual;
6. They draft the *taritib* and *igma* of Lanao, they organize and create other administrative positions, and they determine *adat* (norms) and the rules and regulations of the state;
7. Once the *igma* and *taritib*, and the rules on leadership, and the rules on conduct of state affairs have been violated, the *m'babaya* (legislative bodies) call for assembly and secure the advice of the '*ulamā*' so that they can issue a *fatwah* on such violation;
8. They uphold the truth, the keeper of power and authority of the sultans;
9. They maintain the norms of the four states of Lanao Sultanate; and
10. They set rules on succession, on leadership, and on social gatherings wherein such rules must be based on old norms of the *taritib* and *igma* and the consensus of the people in the community' (Ibid.).

The functions, power and duties of the 28 governors of the Lanao Sultanate are very comprehensive as explained above. The Lanao Sultanate has prospered until the 21st century. Today, there are many titled *datu*s, sultans and *bai-a-labis* of the Lanao Sultanate who are also government officials. They used their powers as government officials to render support to their respective communities.

## The Appointment of *Radia-Laut* (Naval Commander) and *Askar* (Army), Their Qualifications and Functions

The appointment, functions, and qualifications of war or army commander of the four states of Lanao was rarely noted in the history of the Philippines. Historically, Sultan Kudarat served as *radia-laut* (naval commander) of the four states of Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century. Mamitua Saber (1980, pp.22-29) says,

Sultan Dipatuan Kudarat of Magindanao was ready for the defense [against Spanish forces]. With warriors armed with assorted weapons of Malay-made cannons and fighting blades, the sultan had a series of *kotas* (fortifications) in the settlements of Ramitan and Ilian, north of Malabang, Lanao, then an old territory common to Magindanaon, Iranon and Maranao who were allies for a united defence (Ibid.).

The military defense and arm forces of the Magindanaons, Iranons and Maranaos in Mindanao were united to fight the Spanish arm forces which were attacking their territories. Mamitua Saber (1980, p.22) says, the several series of Maranao-Spanish encounters took place between 1637 and 1640. These encounters were headed by a Spanish conquistador, Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera. He was a governor general during the colonial era in the Philippines. His expeditions in Lanao areas was motivated to expand over the Muslim territories in the Southern Philippines and to colonize the Maranaos in Lanao and to spread the Christianization there.

Sultan Monsing Macabando (2008, p.10) says, the invading Spanish forces were met by fierced resistance by the defending Maranao warriors lead by Datu Paskan of Unayan, Amiyalongan Simban of Masiu, Datu Popawan of Bayabao, and Datu Alanak of Baloi. This means that aside from the warriors led by Sultan Kudarat, there were other Lanao *datu*s who led arm defence against the Spanish invading forces. The Maranao warriors usually go for military expeditions as far as the Islands of Luzon, and to the different Islands in Visayas, the central part of the Philippines.

Mamitua Saber & Mauyag M. Tamano (1986, pp.25-26) say, "Like any other system, there is a reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers in the sultanate. The former protect their followers who in turn serve as the human "fortification" to guard person and authority of the former. Historically, the Lanao Sultanate had a military function to defend its territory and institutions." *Radia* is Maranao rendering for *raja*, it is an Indian term for king, while *laut* is a Malay term for ocean. From this context, the meaning of *radia-laut* is king of ocean. For Maranaos, *radia-laut* means war and army commander on land and in the ocean.

Shinzo Hayase (2007, p.68) argues, in the 17th century, Sultan Kudarat and his army used *caracoas* (ocean-vessels) in raiding the different islands in Visayas in the central part of the Philippines. Slaves were used to labour in the farm as well as for rowing the *caracoa*. The ancestors of the Maranaos had maritime power that reached Visayas in the central part of the Philippines and Luzon in the Northern part of the Philippines. They were trying to reduce the number of the Christianized Filipinos who were used by the Spaniards as their army. The Spaniards used them in raiding the villages of the Muslim communities in Mindanao in the Southern part of the Philippines. The Spaniards policy at that time was to subdue the numerous Muslim tribes in Mindanao and then to convert them to Catholicism. Consequently, the Lanao *datu*s and their fleet of sea-faring warriors ventured to Visayas and Luzon to run after the Spaniards and the Christianized Filipinos by raiding them and then selling them for slavery. In addition, the other economic activities of the Maranaos were farming and trading, and they traded with the people living in the nearby islands in Mindanao.

The brave warriors of the four states of Lanao had navigated the Islands of Luzon, and the Islands of Visayas for military and naval expeditions. These expeditions played a significant role in preservation of the Islamic religion of the Maranaos and their homeland. Their military and naval expeditions were aimed to reduce the numbers of the Christianized Filipinos who lived in Cebu, Bohol, Romblon (these are Islands in Visayas), and Batangas, Bicol and Albay (these places are in Luzon). These Christianized Filipinos were used by the Spanish colonizers. The Spanish and Christianized Filipinos attacked several times the

## *The Lanao Sultanate Political Structure in the 17th Century: Its Traditional Leaders Appointment, Qualifications and Functions*

Muslim territories in Mindanao and in Sulu Islands to subdue the Muslims and convert them to Christianity.

The qualifications of the *radia-laut* and *askar* are: brave, Muslim, and have a strong sense of nationality as Maranao, the people of Lake Lanao. They are willing to sacrifice their lives for the preservation of the sovereignty of the four states of Lanao Sultanate. Their main functions were: to safeguard the Islam, their territory, and to protect their nation from the enemies of Islam. Their appointment was based on *kaplokes* (descent line), their clans sent them to serve as army of the Lanao Sultanate. Dansalan Quarterly (1987, p.154) quotes from Madki Alonto (1960, p. 241.) who says, the resistance of the Maranao Muslims to the Spanish invaders during the colonial era in the Philippines was due to many reasons, such as political, economic, religious, as well as cultural reasons. This resistance was expressed in the speech of Sultan Kudarat he delivered in 1623 to the Maranao traditional leaders and Maranao people in Lanao. It narrates the speech of Sultan Kudarat as follows,

You men of the lake [Lanao], forgetting your ancient liberty, have submitted to the Castellians [Spanish]. Such submission is sheer stupidity. You cannot realize to what your surrender binds you. You are selling yourselves to slavery to toil for the benefit of these foreigners ... Note how abject is the misery to which their peoples are now reduced. Behold the condition of the Tagalogs and the Visayans whose chiefs are trampled upon by the meanest Castellians. If you are of no better spirit than they, then you must expect similar treatment. You like them, will be obliged to row the galleys. Just as they do, you will have to toil at the ship-building and labor without ceasing on other public works. You can see for yourselves that you will experience the harshest treatment while thus employed ... Be men. Let me aid you to resist. All the strength of my [Magindanao] sultanate, I promise you, shall be in your defense (Dansalan Quarterly quoted Alonto) (ibid.).

The chieftains of Lanao strong sense of patriotism to defend Islam convinced them to appoint Sultan Kudarat to head the Lanao army and as war or naval commander of the Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century. Hadji Abdul Racman (2018 & 2020) says, the appointment of Sultan Kudarat of Magindanao as *radia-laut* of Lanao Sultanate was also based on his blood relations with the ruling clans in Lanao Sultanate. The noble intention of Sultan Kudarat to protect the Lanao Sultanate from the Spanish colonizers gave him way to become the war or army and naval commander of the Lanao Sultanate.

Using simple and crude weaponries, the Maranao warriors preserved their religion, Islam. Mamitua Saber & Mauyag M. Tamano (1986, p.19) say that the Maranaos have many traditional types of weaponries used for defense and warfare which are common to all groups of Muslim in the Philippines. "These include the *lantakas* (brass cannons), *kampilan* (sword), *kris* (dagger), spear, and other variety of small blade-weapons. The customary carrying of a weapon is expressive of the bearer's masculinity as well as a symbol of his rank of authority. Formerly, the male's dress was incomplete if he did not carry a *kris* (dagger)." The Maranao traditional weaponries were no longer in used, and most of them can only be seen in the Aga Khan Museum in Mindanao State University, Marawi City, and in the Philippines National Museum in Manila.

### **The Appointment of *Kali* (Judge), His Qualifications and Functions**

The traditional laws of the Maranao people had been developed when Islam was introduced to the Lanao areas. Mamitua Saber & Mauyag M. Tamano (1986, pp.116-117) argue, the Maranao term *kokoman* is a loan word from the Arab which is *hukum*. *Kokoman* is colloquially applied to the Agama (State) Court of the Maranaos as well as to the personnel of justice serving in the Maranao Agama Court. This means that the existence of a Maranao word *kokoman*, meaning law, indicates that the Maranao people had laws which they applied in times of settling disputes and criminal offenses.

In the Maranao society, there were designated people of ranks who were responsible for settling criminal offenses and disputes between people. The people responsible for settling criminal offenses and disputes were the *kali*, (Arabic *qāḍī*, for judge). The appointment, qualifications, and functions of *kali* are critical to the efficacy of the functions of the state, the *agama*. Since, the *kalis* are important personnels of the state, therefore, it is important to know who appoints them (Hadji Abdul Racman, et al., 2021a).

In the Maranao society, the appointment of the *kali* was not an exclusive function of the sultan but the people of the community participate directly in appointing the *kali*. The Maranao community comprises of different clans within the *agama/pangampong* or sultanate/state. The *kali* is not only a judge but also a spiritual leader of the state. His judicial functions include adjudicating civil and criminal cases as well as settling of disputes. The socio-political ranks in the state were represented among different clans. There were clan who took the rank of a *kali*, and there were clan who took the rank of an *imām*. In the past there were few people who were knowledgeable in Islamic law, so not all people could become *imām* or *kali*. Each clan must be represented in the political hierarchy of the *pangampong* (Ibid.)

It is likely that the wide-ranging socio-political ranks in the Maranao society in the past were equally represented among various clans in the community. Those who took political power, rank or title was elected based on social and cultural practices of the Maranaos. In the case of a *kali*, aside from his qualifications, culturally, he was at the same time representing his clan in the wider-scale of various socio-political order of the Maranao society. Each clan sent representatives to assume the various socio-political ranks or titles in the community. In the case of the qualifications of a *kali*. A *kali* must be well-versed in the Qur'ān, and must possess sound knowledge on the Ḥadith as well as on the *taritib* and *igma* of the Lanao Sultanate. Specifically, a *kali* should learn Islamic knowledge from the '*ulamā*'. It is likely that the Agama Court had its own organized institution that was responsible for teaching the tenets of Islam. According to Sultan Monsing Macabando, in the past there was no such thing as *madrasah* (Islamic school) in the community but the residence of the '*ulamā*' served as a school where the individuals go to learn Islam (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020). Today, the *kalis* are replaced by the Shari'ah Counsellors. They studied Islamic Studies and Shari'ah (Islamic laws). They are required to take the Shari'ah training courses of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, and take the Shari'ah Bar Examination administered by the Supreme Court of the Philippines. The passers of the Shari'ah Bar Examination become Shari'ah Counsellors.

### **The Appointment of *Imām* (Prayer Leader), His Qualifications and Functions**

The Qur'ān says in Sūrah An-Nisa, 4:36, "*Perform As-salat to believe in singularity/oneness towards the worship of Allāh Subhanahu wa Ta'ala to be humble and be wholeheartedly under His mercy.*" Performing of the five daily prescribed prayers is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a religious obligation that every Muslim must perform on a daily basis. The Lanao Sultanate in the past and today have their *imāms* in every mosque in each respective community. "The administration of organized religious activities is one of the several functions of an *agama*, although it can be observed that there is a separation of powers between the temporal and spiritual officers on 'pure' theological and 'pure' secular matters, Mamitua Saber & Mauyag M. Tamano (1986, p.64)."

Like every Muslim society, the *imām* performs spiritual functions. In the Maranao society, the *imām* leads the five daily prescribed prayers in the mosque, and other spiritual functions in the society. Mamitua Saber & Mauyag M. Tamano (1986, p.64) say, "the mosque is primarily a place of worship but at times a place to discuss some secular affairs belong to the community which people built under the leadership of both clerical and secular officers." This means that the mosque serves not only as a place of the devout to do their daily worship but also a venue where the devout can meet to discuss religious, social and worldly affairs. Primarily, the *imām* leads the people in the community on spiritual matters.

The appointment of *imām* is no different from the appointment of *kali*. In the Maranao society, the different socio-political ranks in the Lanao Sultanate were specifically designated

among different clans in Lanao. There were clans who among their family members took the position of a *kali*, and there were clans who among their family members took the position of an *imām*. The position of *imām* is designated by their respective family members based on their knowledge and qualifications (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020).

Peter G. Gowing (1965, p.240) quotes Melvin Mednick, “among the Maranaos, the choice of *imām*, *khatib* and also the *kali/qādī* is determined generally by descent lines within the *agama*.” Hadji Abdul Racman (2018 & 2020) says, the qualifications of *imām* were scrutinized by the sultan and his family members. The qualifications of *imām* are Muslim, and he is trustworthy, he is a learned person, and he is well-versed in the Qur’ān, and he can memorize all the verses in the Qur’ān, and he is well-versed in the *taritib* (customary laws) and *igma* (traditional laws) of the Maranaos. It is likely that the qualifications of *imām* are very important factors in choosing him to take the position of *imām* so that he could convey religious and cultural matters to the people. Culturally, he must be knowledgeable on the *taritib* and *igma* of the Maranao society. Such knowledge guides him in relating well with people and other leaders of the state. In other words, he must be well knowledgeable with the protocol, social graces, and cultural practices of the Maranaos.

One of the functions of *imām* is to lead the Friday congregation prayer in the mosque. He has to attend the five daily prayers which is very crucial function of the *imām*, and it is the prerogative of the *imām* not to miss any of the five daily prayers. The *imām* does the solemnization of marriages. He may also ask the ‘*ulamā*’ to solemnize marriages. He performs all the Islamic rites to be performed on the dead person and burying of the dead. He delivers sermon during Friday congregation prayer, and do everything that is required by the Islamic law and the *adat* law in that community (Ibid.).

According to Peter Gordon Gowing (1965, p.63), “the *imāms* of the mosque, together with the *qādīs*, some *hadjis*, and other men in the community recognized as well-versed in Islam, make up the local ‘*ulamā*’ to whom important questions of religion and customs are referred to.” The *imāms* and other learned men on Islam served as spiritual teachers. The *imām* sustains the spiritual and cultural needs of the community. The wide-ranging jobs of *imām* are crucial to the spiritual and cultural needs of the people and the cultural growth of the people. Hence, the *imām* leads the *agama* spiritually and culturally. Practically, he transmits spiritual and cultural knowledge to the people who are under his direct supervision.

### **The Appointment of *Pananalsilas* (Syndics of the Nobility) of the ruling clans of the Lanao Sultanate, Their Qualifications and Functions**

According to Nagasura T. Madale (2002, p.3) the Lanao Sultanate has the *pananalsilas* who recites, writes, and keeps the genealogies of the ruling clans of Lanao Sultanate. The qualifications of the *pananalsila* are: wise, literate, and knowledgeable of the *taritib* and *igma* of the four states of Lanao. Melvin Mednick (1965, p.145) states that, it was mainly women who guards or keeps the *salsila*. He writes: “The actual recording of genealogical details in the form of a *salsila* is the task of those who are felt to be *maongangen* (wise). These are older persons and most usually are female.” One of the major functions of *pananalsila* is to record the details of genealogy of the ruling clans of Lanao. Casan Labay (1980, p.124) explains, from time to time the *pananalsilas* are consulted to explain the genealogy of their respective sultanate especially during the ascendancy to the throne. Sultan Monsing Macabando (2008) & Hadji Abdul Racman (2020) say, the *pananalsilas* are appointed by their blood relatives who were members of ruling clans of the Lanao Sultanate. The *pananalsilas* are able to read and write Arabic and English. The *pananalsilas* must be well familiar with the *taritib* and *igma* of Lanao Sultanate. Sultan Monsing Macabando is one of the recognized *pananalsilas* in Lanao. He is as well as incumbent sultan of Marinaut, Marawi City, and chairman of the Marawi Sultanate League.

## CONCLUSION

The Lanao Sultanate in the Philippines in the 17th century had the traditional leaders namely, sultans, sultanas, ministers, governors, war commander, judges, *imāms*, and genealogists. The Lanao Sultanate has laws i.e. the *taritib* and *igma* or the adat laws, and Shari'ah (Islamic laws). The traditional leaders of the Lanao Sultanate were elected based on their qualifications, lineage, and the quality of their characteristics. Each of the traditional leaders of the Lanao Sultanate were elected to perform their functions. The leaders of the 43 clans ruled the *pagawidan* (supported) and *pagawid* (supporting) states. The supported states were ruled by 15 sultans who were the executive bodies of the 15 royal houses of the Lanao Sultanate. The *pagawid* states were ruled by 28 sultans who were also governors. They were also the legislative bodies of the four states of Lanao Sultanate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **For Muslim Filipino researchers:**

The Muslim Filipino researchers and scholars who are interested in studying Islamic leadership during the colonial era in the Philippines and the current political set-up of the Philippine must examine the relevance of the wide-ranging contributions of Islam to the civilization of the Muslim Filipinos in order to understand how the current political set-up of the Philippine affect the traditional leadership of the Muslim Filipinos today. The traditional leadership of the Muslim Filipinos is unique, advance, and older than the modern political set-up in the Philippines. Thus, it is recommended to the researchers and scholars to examine extensively how Islamic leadership today could help uplift the Muslim societies through using the national government policies for Muslim Filipinos.

### **For the Philippines policy-makers:**

The Philippines policy-makers, including the legislators i.e. the senators must have a better understanding of the dynamics of the culture and traditional leadership of the Muslim Filipinos so that they could make policies which address the needs of the Muslim Filipinos. The Philippines policies must be geared towards serving both the needs and aspirations of the Muslim Filipinos. All these can make the Muslim Filipinos feel not alienated and neglected by the national government.

### **For Muslim Filipinos serving local government:**

Those who are serving in the local government unit of the Philippines must have thorough knowledge on the dynamics of Islamic leadership and traditional leadership so that they could develop a leadership style suitable for the Muslim Filipinos. Thus, it is recommended that they should study Islamic leadership through the lens of traditional leadership, in addition to peace building, justice, unity in diversity, and cooperation of people and the leaders geared towards achieving a better society and shared destiny.

### **For Muslim Filipinos serving the national government:**

Those who are serving in the national government unit of the Philippines must study the historical context of traditional leadership of the Muslim Filipinos particularly that of the Maranaos so that they could implement leadership style based on the Islamic governance so that the wide-ranging social problems faced by the Muslim Filipinos are addressed. Islam condemns any form of corruption, through which, the life of the Muslim Filipinos shall flourish and develop.

**For the Maranao traditional leaders:**

It is recommended that the incumbent Maranao *datu*s, sultans and bais must reflect on the glorious past of the Lanao Sultanate and on the objectives of Islamic leadership in the past so that their leadership today could become meaningful, dynamic, productive, and functional, where the Muslim Ummah could benefit from their leadership.

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