



AL-GHAZALI'S SOCIO-POLITICAL ETHICS AND
ITS RELEVANCE TO THE BANGSAMORO
PROBLEM IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY

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ABSTRACT

The *Bangsamoro* (Moro Nation) of Mindanao, Philippines, has seen turmoil since the 1520s. In its history, the Philippines was colonized by 3 different countries, adversely affecting both its non-Muslim and Muslim natives, including the Sulu Sultanate. After the colonizers had left, the Muslim Filipinos continued to face threats, experiencing attacks, warfare, and annexation of their lands at the hands of their fellow countrymen. Lack of total support from the Philippine government and its own internal leadership problems have led the Moro nation to where it is now, with political feuds, poverty, instability, and skirmishes between the government and the Muslim separatists still existing in many of its areas in Mindanao today. A few leadership issues within the Moro communities (i.e., corruption, inaccessibility, responsibility (or lack thereof), and nepotism) were identified in this case study, which seeks to investigate whether the *Nasihah al-Muluk* (Counsel for Kings), an ancient text written by the great scholar, Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), can help solve leadership woes of the Moro nation. Through the use of the documentary analysis method, it has been discovered that Al-Ghazali's work pertaining to leadership conduct or administrative ethics can indeed be useful in resolving present leadership challenges of the Moro people. As Muslims themselves, the Moro leaders of today should seek more knowledge on good governance, both in practice and in theory, especially from Islamic sources, past and present, which are value-based. Therefore, it was recommended in the study that more Muslim leaders should strive to learn from the stories and wise sayings of this historical text by Al-Ghazali, a text whose foundation is from the Qur'an, *Hadith*, and Persian literary works. Other recommendations for the Moro leaders and for future research were also given at the end of the study.

خلاصة البحث

تواجه طائفة مورو الفلبينية (بانغسامورو) العديد من الاضطرابات منذ عام 1520. والمتابع للتاريخ الاستعماري في الفلبين يجد أنها استعمرت من قبل 3 دول مختلفة، مما كان له تأثير واسع على الشعب الفلبيني، المسلمين منهم وغير المسلمين، بما في ذلك سلطنة (سولو) العريقة. ولم يزل المسلمون في الفلبين يواجهون العديد من التهديدات حتى في فترة مابعد الاستعمار، فواجهوا العديد من الهجمات والحروب وسلب الأراضي والممتلكات على أيدي مواطنيهم من غير المسلمين. ولعل الأسباب الرئيسية التي أودت بحال طائفة مورو إلى ما هو عليه في وقتنا الراهن، هو قلة الدعم الكلي من الحكومة المركزية. أضف إلى ذلك الاضطرابات الداخلية بين قياداتها، حيث تولدت من تلك الأسباب عداوات سياسية، وانتشار الفاقة والفقر وعدم الاستقرار الأمني، ومناوشات مستمرة بين الحكومة والانفصاليين المسلمين في مناطق عديدة بإقليم (ميندناو). وتركز هذه الدراسة على بعض القضايا القيادية التي يواجهها مجتمع مورو، نذكر منها على سبيل المثال (الفساد، وصعوبة الوصول إلى المنطقة، ضعف المسؤولية ومحاباة الأقرباء). لذلك تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى البحث عما إذا كانت مخطوطة (نصيحة الملوك) للإمام الغزالي (1058-1111) قابلة للتطبيق في إيجاد حلول للاضطرابات القيادية بين طائفة مورو. ومن خلال استخدام منهج تحليل الوثائق، أظهرت الدراسة بأن مخطوطة الغزالي المتعلقة بالتصرفات القيادية، أو الأخلاق الإدارية، لم تزل مرتبطة بالتحديات القيادية التي تواجهها طائفة مورو. ويتعين على زعماء هذه الطائفة في عصرنا الحالي لكونهم مسلمون التعرف على المزيد من العلوم في القيادة الحكيمة بشقيها العملي والنظري لاسيما من المصادر الإسلامية القديمة والحديثة، والتي تأسست على القيم النبيلة، إضافة إلى اتخاذ الزعماء المسلمين الإيجابيين مثالا يحتذى له. لذلك فإن هذه الدراسة توصي زعماء المسلمين بالاستفادة والتعلم من القصص والأقوال الحكيمة المذكورة في المخطوطة التاريخية للإمام الغزالي، والتي تعتمد على القرآن الكريم والسنة النبوية وأعمال (الفرس) الأدبية. كما تضمنت الدراسة توصيات أخرى لزعماء مورو في نهاية البحث وذلك للاستفادة منها في الدراسات القادمة.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in World Muslim Issues.

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Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in World Muslim Issues.

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This dissertation was submitted to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and is accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in World Muslim Issues.

.....
Hassan Ibrahim
Dean, International Institute of
Islamic Thought and Civilization

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Mohammad S. Hajiri

Signature.....

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**AL-GHAZALI'S SOCIO-POLITICAL ETHICS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO
THE BANGSAMORO PROBLEMS IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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To my wife and son,

To my parents and siblings,

And to the future leaders of the Bangsamoro people

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Praise be to Allah (SWT), we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah (SWT) from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds. Whomsoever Allah (SWT) guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allah (SWT) leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah (SWT), the One, having no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad (SAW) is His slave and Messenger.”

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INTRODUCTION

This introduction will present a brief historical background of the study, highlighting some main points in the history of the Philippines and the former Muslim Sultanate of Mindanao. It also explains the statement of the problem and the significance of the research. Finally, it identifies the research methodology and the research questions of this study.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The history of the Muslims in the Philippines began in the Sulu Island, where the Sultanate of Sulu reigned and the Islamization of its inhabitants started. There are many different ethnic groups in Mindanao, also known as Southern Philippines and one of the three major islands of the country. The Tausug is just one of these ethnic groups.¹ It is a tribe which dominates the Sulu Island, located further south off the main island of Mindanao.

The Tausug people were polytheistic pagans who possessed various superstitious beliefs and worshipped many gods or deities. They also had their own *Adat* laws, originating from ancient Malay *Adat* law, the Indian (Hindu) law, and the *Shari'ah* law which was incorporated into their native laws, traditions, and customs after the coming of Islam.²

Islam came to the Sulu Island with the Muslim traders of its neighboring countries as well as from the Muslim-Arab missionaries who performed *Da'wah*

¹ W.K. Esmula, *Comparative Analysis of the Tausug and Pattani Muslims' Adat Laws*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. Southeast Asian Studies Program, 1990), p.19

² M.G. Jundam, *Tunggal Hulah-Duwa Sarah: Adat and Shari'ah Laws in the Life of the Tausug*, (Institute of Islamic Studies University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines: Vival Publishing House, 2005), p.11

(propagation of the Islamic faith). The Sultanate of Sulu, which was already established in the land, dealt with these Muslim traders and missionaries. The Sultan and his family members eventually accepted Islam and played important roles in the propagation of the new faith among their people. Currently, Islam is the dominant religion amongst the Tausugs although those in the provincial areas of Sulu still believe in ancient superstitious beliefs handed down from older generations³. They also continue to practice old Tausug customs, rituals, and traditions when it comes to matrimonial ceremonies.

During the reign of its Sultanate, the peaceful Sulu Island flourished and established good governance amongst its people. However, the Tausugs had to confront numerous challenges from foreign invaders, starting with the arrival of Spanish conquistadors and missionaries in the Northern Philippines, and then later in the Southern Philippines.

This invasion saw the suffering of many of the Philippine Islands' natives who were forced to accept Christianity and were oppressed by the Spanish priests, friars, and landlords who labeled the natives as *Indios* (Indians, implying primitive or uncultured) and *Indios chonggo* (Indian monkeys) which the natives resented very much. Dr. Jose Rizal, the national hero of the country, did not agree with the Spaniards and addressed his people saying:

Why should we resent being called Indios by the Spaniards? Look at the American Indians. They are not ashamed of their race. Let us be like them. Let us be proud of the name Indio and make the Spaniards revise their conception of the term. We shall become Indios Bravos!⁴

³ Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 40

⁴ Gregorio Zaide, *Jose Rizal: Life, Works and Writings*, (Mandaluyong City: National Book Store, 2003), p.138

While the term *Indios* was indicative of the natives who were not Muslims, the term *Moro*⁵ was reserved by the Spaniards for the Muslims of Sulu, Mindanao, and Borneo.

In its long history, the Philippine Islands were colonized by three invaders, starting with the Spaniards in the year 1521. Their arrival resulted in three-hundred and seventy-seven years of Spanish rule.⁶ Then there was the invasion of the Americans, whose occupation started in 1898 and ended in 1946 after forty-eight years of American control. The Japanese also briefly took control of the country from 1942 to 1945 until the Americans returned that year to recapture the Philippines.

These foreign colonizers never completely conquered the territorial stronghold of the Muslims of Mindanao and the Sulu Island, although there were many vicious and devastating attacks orchestrated against the Moros. These attacks eventually weakened the strength of the Moro society and combative prowess. Finally, in 1946, the Muslims felt defeated upon discovering that their homeland and ancestral domains were to be included in the territorial jurisdiction of the new Philippine commonwealth government. This inclusion of their territory was facilitated through the efforts and initiatives of the Americans before leaving the country in 1946.

Years after being granted independence by the Americans, the Philippine government continued their former colonizers' subjugation of the Muslims by allowing Christian Filipinos from the islands of Luzon and Visayas to engage in land-grabbing in Mindanao. The Philippine government also conducted other oppressive military measures against the Moros such as the Jabidah massacre in 1968, which sparked the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1972 as well

⁵ More information as to how the label *Moro* originated will be presented in Chapter II under the heading *Moro, Bangsamoro, and its Meanings*.

⁶ Leonard Davis, *Revolutionary struggle in the Philippines*, (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1989).

as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), an offshoot of MNLF, in 1977. Both groups struggled for the independence of Mindanao from the control of the national government. These groups had, and are still having, many encounters with the national military, to the detriment of the people, Muslims and non-Muslims, living in Mindanao.

After its long history of war, violence, and mistrust, the affected and displaced people of Mindanao could still be wondering who exactly should be blamed – the national government or their Moro leaders? After the fall of the Sultanate and Mindanao's annexation to the Philippine territory, its problems related to corruption, nepotism, tribalism, lack of responsibility and accessibility/accountability have been breeding in the land. Some may claim that the re-instatement of the Sultanate of Sulu at the reigns of Moro leadership could bring back the lost glory of the Muslim nation.

However, this study is concerned with the socio-political ethics of Al-Ghazali and how this discourse can be related to the leadership problems of the Bangsamoro people. Al-Ghazali, an ancient Muslim scholar, has developed numerous ideas regarding administrative ethics and the responsibilities of a leader to his subjects. This study intends to find out if Al-Ghazali's thoughts and ideas are applicable and relevant to the current problems and leadership woes of Mindanao in general, and the Tausug people of Sulu in particular.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What is happening today in the Muslim region of the Philippines can be traced back in history if we investigate the origins of its current conflicts and dilemmas. The collapse of the Sultanate left a negative impact for generations to come. Since then the Muslim communities in Mindanao and Sulu Island were often under threat of

occupation from foreign colonialists. After the period of colonialism the Muslim communities of Mindanao were again under threat from the then newly-established Philippine commonwealth government and its succeeding administrations.

The ancestors of the Moro people bravely fought off foreign and local invaders for their rightful homeland. Decades later, their descendants have continued to do so until today against the military forces of the national government. Unfortunately, this fight for independence has brought a negative image upon the Muslims of the Philippines. The criminal acts of the infamous Abu Sayyaff group in the South only added to the negative perception of the Moros. This exacerbated negative reputation based on the stereotypes of Abu Sayyaf's group is now affecting many ordinary Muslims in the country.

From the colonial era to the 1970's and the late 1990's, the Philippine government has often declared war on Muslim-populated areas in Mindanao, dropping bombs that have effaced many Muslim communities in Sulu. Other negative effects from the downfall of the Sultanate (i.e., poverty, social instability, underdevelopment, etc.) continue to be amongst the hurdles and challenges of the Moros and these will probably remain unless the national government brings socio-political stability and economic development to Mindanao.

Aside from the lack of complete support from the national government in developing Mindanao and the Sulu Island, the current issues in Southern Philippines are worsening as most of the Moro people are now losing trust and confidence in their Muslim leaders. In addition, there are many existing problems amongst the Muslims themselves which are preventing them from unifying themselves into one great Moro nation that can successfully challenge the national government. These leadership related and social problems (i.e., corruption, nepotism, tribalism, lack of responsibility

and accessibility/accountability) must be minimized, if not completely halted, if any further progress is to be made in Mindanao.

Many Filipinos, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, are aware of the on-going peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The educated Filipinos are also aware of the oppression and discrimination that Muslims have experienced - and are still experiencing - throughout the decades. However, only a few are aware of the social problems and injustices that are happening within the Muslim communities. Unfortunately, a portion of those who may have caused some of the grievances of the Muslim people are the communities' leading figures and officials, those who are corrupt, unqualified, and merely striving for self-interests.

It is not the purpose of this paper to condemn any leader of the Bangsamoro people. As part of the Moro people, the researcher does appreciate the leaders who have shown their contribution, dedication and struggle for justice and freedom. However, as humans who are bound to err or forget, many leaders tend to neglect the conditions of the poor or forget their purpose as public servants of the Moro people. Questions that one may ask now include the following: Are their contributions enough to uplift the lives of the Moro people from poverty? Did they work for tribal unity amongst the Moro people? Did they persuade the government to develop the poor rural areas, increase public funds or support livelihood opportunities? Did they implement other projects themselves for their people? Are they doing their part to fight corruption in the land? These are some of the questions that should be answered by the current Moro leaders because, after all that they have done, it would seem that their efforts have not been sufficient to meet the needs of the people.

The growing problems in the Southern Philippines require solutions that involve further improvement of the leadership and administrative ethics of their leaders. By referring to the administrative ethics of al-Ghazālī, the researcher believes that this can be one of the possible solutions to the political and administrative inefficiency within the Moro nation. Despite of al-Ghazālī *Nasīhāt al-Mulūk (Counsel for Kings)* being addressed to the rulers and officials of the *Seljuqi* period, particularly the Seljuq king *Sultān Muhammad Ibn Mālik Shah* hundreds of years ago, his writings can still be delivered to and studied by the modern leaders of today. This study intends to investigate the relevance of al-Ghazālī's ideas through his works to the current problems of the Moros in the Philippines in order to extract and deduce wisdoms required for good leadership advice and gain greater insights on leadership in general.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the leadership problems of the Bangsamoro people?
2. Why are al- of al-Ghazālī's *Nasīhāt al-Mulūk* and his other works still relevant to the leadership problems of the Bangsamoro people?
3. How can al-Ghazālī's socio-political ethics be relevant to the leadership problems of the Bangsamoro people?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is one of the two main types of research (i.e., quantitative and qualitative research) being utilized by researchers to conduct their investigative or explorative work. As a methodology, qualitative research has five different types of research study (i.e., a biography, a phenomenological study, a grounded-theory study,

an ethnographic study, and a case study).⁷ This research work will be using the research design of the case study category.

This research study may be considered as a case study (i.e., the case of the Bangsamoro people of Mindanao in the Philippines) because a case study is an exploration of a “bounded system” or a “case” or “multiple cases” over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.⁸ The “multiple sources of information” used in this study are documentary in nature. This study needed well-documented and historical references in order to provide the answers to the research questions stated earlier.

The views of prominent scholars from other related fields were also included in this study. In relation to this, the researcher utilized a *documentary analysis* method, also known as the library research method, throughout the research process for a critical evaluation of the literature (i.e., evaluation and analysis of the relevance of al-Ghazali’s ideas to the current Moro leadership problems).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Many studies have been written on several issues concerning the lives and struggles of the Moro nation since the Spanish invasion of the Philippines. There are various works explaining the considerable efforts of the Bangsamoro people in striving for their independence. There are also several extensive works which criticize the unjust conduct of the Philippine government towards the Bangsamoro people. However, there are only a few research studies which focus on the Moro leadership itself. This paper may be of interest to readers who want to know more about Moro leadership

⁷ John W. Creswell. *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five traditions*, (U.S.A.: Sage Publications, 1998), 61

⁸ Ibid.

problems and other issues of the multi-faceted problems besetting the Muslim people of Mindanao. These issues, past and present, need to be addressed and resolved by the current generation of Muslim Filipinos in order to obtain what the Bangsamoro people are ultimately striving for – justice and freedom.

This research is hoped to serve as a reminder for the Moro people and their leaders. It is for them to reflect on their failed attempts in attaining the ultimate goal of their struggle (i.e., independence from the neglect and oppression of the national government). This study could possibly be the first on Moro leadership which is linked to Al-Ghazālī's socio-political ethics. It will give its readers a sense of what is going on inside the Muslim community in Mindanao and its problems that are not as well-known to outsiders, in relation to its leadership.

This research can also be an interesting reading for the younger generation and for those who aspire to become future Moro leaders in their own towns and provinces in Mindanao. Apart from this, this research can also serve as an additional literature on the Mindanao conflict and could be useful for students, lecturers, and writers who are interested in pursuing similar topics of study for their theses, dissertations, or research articles.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL ROOT /ORIGINS OF THE BANGSAMORO PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

From the period of pre-Islamic Sulu to the arrival of Islam and Arab missionaries, from the time of Spanish conquistadors to the occupation by the Japanese military and the Americans who recaptured the Philippines, from the formation of the new Philippine commonwealth government to the secessionist era of Moro freedom-fighters, this chapter presents a more detailed historical account of the Moro nation in the Philippines from various related literature. It also includes a detailed and hopefully more precise definition of the terms Moro and Bangsamoro which are among the common terminologies used throughout this study.

PRE-ISLAMIC SULU

The history of Muslims in the Philippines began in the Sulu Island. Although there are several Muslim ethnic groups in Mindanao the Islamization of the various tribes started in the island of Sulu and the Tausugs are considered as the islands largest majority group. Other well-known ethnic groups in Mindanao include the *Maranaos*, the *Maguindanaos*, the *Kalagans*, the *Badjaos*, the *Iranons*, the *Yakans*, and the *Samals* amongst others.

The Tausugs, during the pre-Islamic period, believed in different faiths and worshipped trees, animals and other supernatural beings. Esmula explains:

The religion of the Tausug before Islam was on a primitive level; polytheistic and animistic-- a state which the Tausugs shared with the rest of the Malayan communities. The objects of pre-Islamic worship

were gods in the form of unseen beings, plants and animals, fetishes, and spirits of the dead. In particular, they regarded trees, caves and large stones as being inhabited by spirits. These natural phenomena were venerated and sacrifices in the form of animals were offered to them.¹

Similarly, Jundam supports that the Tausugs believed in the existence of a number of supernatural beings, deities and unseen spirits or the Jinns, all of which possess supernatural powers over human beings.² Unfortunately, even in today's Sulu, there are still Tausugs who practice polytheistic rituals and un-Islamic beliefs. Nonetheless, some of these practices are mixed with Islamic beliefs or other notions from the Islamic creed.

The former religion of the Sulu's Tausugs was of a *Hindu* origin,³ such that their polytheistic values signified the origin of their religion. In some remote areas in Sulu---though they call themselves Muslims---you can still find and observe such beliefs. Their beliefs deify the various phenomena of nature and assign the highest places in its pantheon to *Indra*, the sky; *Agni*, the fire; *Vayu*, the wind; and *Surya*, the sun. In fact, some *Adat* (customary) laws of the Tausug were akin to the *Indian* law.

The *Adat* law of the Muslims in the Philippines is traceable to: 1) ancient Malay *Adat* law; 2) *Indian* law (*Hindu*); 3) *Shari'ah* law. Of the three sources, only the ancient Malay *Adat* law appears indigenous to the Malay race. The other two are external influences, which, by virtue of constant practice, became assimilated into the mode of behavior of the Malayan community.⁴ The Tausugs have many similarities with the mainstream Malays concerning their physical features, culture and *Adat* laws. One case in the Tausug community that follows the *Adat* law is in the case of marriage. Some types of marriage under the *Adat* Law and the Tausug customs would

¹ W.K. Esmula, p.19

² M.G. Jundam, p.11

³ Najeeb Saleeby, *The history of Sulu*, (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, Inc., 1963), p.38

⁴ Esmula, p.20

most likely be prohibited under the *Shari'ah* law. Marriage under the Tausug customs is of several types as identified by Esmula:

In the case of the *Tausug* marriage, firstly, there [are] many types: *Magdakup* (elopement); *Magtiya-un* (mutual agreement between the parties), or *Magpangasawa* (with parental consent); *Magguyud* (abduction); *Magpasumbaih* (a union that proceeds after the man alone goes to the parents of the lady); *Magsarahakan* (unexpected search for an immediate wedding or *Kawin*); *Magtahakkim* (a virgin asks a pious man to marry her); and *Muwih Magbana* (a woman asking an ordinary man to marry her).⁵

In reality the process can be much more complicated. One of the most complicated kinds of marriage involves force and harassment on the woman. Of course, with the consent of the family of the woman, the man will abduct the woman to marry her. It is against her will and she cannot refuse if this abduction happens. It is unfortunate that this is still being commonly practiced in the rural areas of *Jolo, Sulu*.

However, many *Tausugs* are widely following the *Magpangasawa* or *Magtiya-un* type to commence their marriages and this type of marriage is in accordance of Islam. Although the *Tausugs* include some rituals in the marriage ceremony that may not be allowed in Islam, the observance of Islamic values are still present.

THE COMING OF ISLAM

A glorious period in the history of the Muslims and Islam in the Philippines was during the reign of the Sultanate of Sulu (13th century). It played a fundamental role towards the propagation of the Islamic faith and its teachings which gradually prevailed over the people's polytheistic faith.

⁵ Ibid., p.28

Since the coming of the Muslim-Arab missionaries and the Muslim traders from neighbouring countries, the Muslim Sultanate of the Tausugs had an impact on its own indigenous people who were mostly pagans and were ignorant about the religion and faith propagated by Prophet Mohammad (saw). Presently, Islam is the dominant religion of the Tausugs in the Philippines and of those who have immigrated to other parts of the world. However, some ancient customary rituals handed down from older generations are still being practiced and performed by a portion of the Tausugs, especially those residing in the provincial areas of Sulu.

The coming of Islam to Sulu suggests several meanings as described by Prof. Majul. It could mean the coming of the Muslim traders or the arrival of the Muslim missionaries, or even the advent of the Muslim chiefs or their adventures with the intention of founding a principality.⁶ Clearly, none of these alternatives necessarily imply the Islamization of a people,⁷ because there is no proper documentation on this event.

The first “Muslim” who set foot on the land of Sulu went by the name of Tuan *Masha’ika*. The researcher has put the word *Muslim* in quotation marks, because many people have questioned his creed.

The Sulu Genealogy says that during his time, the people of Sulu were not yet Muslims or, as the Islamic tradition states, the people did not yet belong to the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaah*.⁸ The Sulu Genealogy does not explicitly state that Tuan *Masha’ika* was a Muslim.⁹ However, his name implicitly showed and suggested otherwise – that perhaps he was one of those in the Malay-Arab lineage. On the other hand, other connotations could be suggested:

⁶ Majul, p.40

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p.56

⁹ Ibid.

The word *Masha'ika* is so written in the Malay text as to suggest its probable formation from two words: *Masha* and *Ika*. The Sanskrit word *Masha* means “pulse” or “plant.” *Ika or Eka* means “one”. On the other hand, *Masha-Ika* may represent the two parts of the Sanskrit *Mashika* which means “five *mashas*.” It may not therefore be improbable that *Masha'ika* refers to the subordinate deity which assumes the form of a plant or signifies the first man, whom the deity created from a plant. It is not an uncommon feature of Malay legends to ascribe a supernatural origin to the ancestor of the tribe, and *Tuan Masha'ika* probably represents the admission into the *Buranun* stock of foreign blood and the rise of a chief not descended from *Rajah Sipad* the Older. The *Tarsila* (Genealogy) adds that he married the daughter of *Rajah Sipad* the Younger, *Iddha*, and became the forefather of the principal people of Sulu.¹⁰

Saleeby specifically stated that, in all probability, *Tuan Masha'ika* was a Malay who came to Sulu from the West, and the dynasty established by *Masha'ika* must have exercised due influence on the *Buranun*.¹¹ However, in some writings, *Masha'ika* was an Arab who came to Sulu and married the daughter of Raja Sipad. Speculations of *Masha'ika's* beliefs and lineage were varied. Either way, the Sulu Genealogy describes only the possible people who brought Islam and who disseminated it through *Da'wah* – a successful phenomenon that led to the conversion of these primitive groups of people to Islam. The people who did the *Da'wah* possibly were the Arab missionaries who carried out their duty of propagating Islam. Majul states that:

Some time...there came Karimul Makdum¹²[*Makhdum*]. He crossed the sea in a vase or pot of iron and was called *Sarip*. He settled at *Bwansa*, the place where the *Tagimaha*¹³ nobles lived. There, the people flocked to him from all directions, and he built a house for religious worship.¹⁴

There is no exact account of this event, but some historians suggest that this event took place during the thirteenth century. These historical traditions, suggested

¹⁰ Najeeb Saleeby, p.39

¹¹ Ibid., p.42

¹² *Makhdum* is spelled as *Makdum* in the community

¹³ The group from Basilan who came to Sulu and settled near Buwansa

¹⁴ Majul, p.58