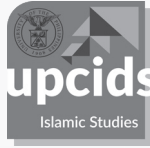


PROCEEDINGS OF THE
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ON
**PHILIPPINE MUSLIM
HISTORY**



OCTOBER 26, 2020 • 10:00 AM TO 12:00 NN
VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCING



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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PROCEEDINGS

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INTRODUCTION

This is a documentation of a focus group discussion (FGD) with Philippine Muslim historians and teachers held on October 26, 2020 via the videoconferencing platform Zoom. The FGD was organized by the Islamic Studies Program (ISP) of the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS).

The FGD aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To know the status of Philippine Muslim history (PMH) education;
- (2) To update the participants on the development of PMH;
- (3) To familiarize the participants with existing and emerging literature on PMH; and
- (4) To establish networks among historians and teachers towards coordination in teaching history in colleges and universities and sharing of resource materials on PMH.

Assistant Professor Darwin J. Absari and Dr. Carmen A. Abubakar of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies (UP IIS) served as the moderators and facilitators of the FGD, while Ms. Camille Lucille A. Bello, also of the UP IIS, served as documenter.

PARTICIPANTS

The FGD was participated by eleven (11) historians and faculty from colleges and universities offering courses on the history of Muslims in the Philippines:

- Associate Professor Macrina A. Morados
(Dean, UP Institute of Islamic Studies and Convenor, UP CIDS Islamic Studies Program)
- Professor Julkipli M. Wadi (UP Institute of Islamic Studies)
- Bernardita R. Churchill, Ph.D.
(President, Philippine National Historical Society)
- Carmen A. Abubakar, Ph.D. (Former Dean, UP Institute of Islamic Studies and President, Research Association for Islamic Social Science)
- Associate Professor Samsiya D. Mayasa
(Mindanao State University–Maguindanao)
- Assistant Professor Fatima Alliah Janani (Sulu State College)
- Assistant Professor Mohammad Nur A. Kadil
(Ateneo de Zamboanga University)
- Juvanni Yahya A. Caballero, Ph.D. (Mindanao State University–Iligan Institute of Technology)
- Tirmizy E. Abdullah, Ph.D.
(Mindanao State University–Marawi City)
- Mansoor L. Limba, Ph.D. (Ateneo de Davao University and Al Qalam Institute for Islamic Identities and Dialogue in Southeast Asia)
- Assistant Professor Al-Rashir C. Kulani
(Mindanao State University–Sulu)

WELCOME REMARKS

Associate Professor Macrina A. Morados

Dean, UP Institute of Islamic Studies and
Convenor, UP CIDS Islamic Studies Program

Dean Macrina A. Morados of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies (UP IIS) formally opened the FGD by welcoming the participants and sharing the objectives of the discussion. Dean Morados shared that the FGD was a response to President Rodrigo Duterte’s call to correct historical injustices against Muslims in the Philippines. Another basis for the discussion was Republic Act No. 10908 or the Integrated History Act of 2016, which directs the integration of the history, culture, and identity of Filipino Muslims and indigenous peoples in the study of Philippine history in basic and higher education.

She also stressed the importance of the Philippine Muslim history (PMH) as a potential instrument to bridge cultural and religious gaps and promote national unity. She likewise stated that there is a need for history teachers to improve their teaching methodologies and for resource materials for teaching and learning to be upgraded and updated. Hence, the UP CIDS Islamic Studies Program (ISP), through its “The Moro Story” component, organized the FGD with the aim of producing well-informed history teachers, targeting especially those who are handling PMH courses in universities and colleges.

Dean Morados concluded her welcome remarks by enjoining the participants to build a partnership with the UP IIS, as this

could strengthen the assessment and development of resources on PMH. Through this discussion, the participants will be able to explore possibilities for and contribute to the development in teaching PMH “across the country, gearing towards nation-building and achieving an inclusive approach in understanding Philippine history.”

OPENING MESSAGE

Bernardita R. Churchill, Ph.D.

President, Philippine National Historical Society and
Chair, Technical Committee for History, Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Churchill expressed how honored she was to be with the other scholars to discuss matters on enhancing the study and teaching of PMH. Aware of the status and challenges in the study and teaching of Philippine history, she shared how she tried to remedy these as a teacher and an administrator. On a personal level, she shared how she studied the neglected parts of Philippine history and shared them with her students and fellow historians and scholars. On the other hand, as Chair of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)'s Technical Committee for History, she took part in adding courses on Muslim and indigenous peoples' history in the curriculum.

Dr. Churchill went on to discuss the passage of Republic Act No. 10908 mandating the revisions of the curriculum by presenting the multiethnic and multicultural diversity that characterizes Philippine society and culture. These revisions include the discussion of the history of Muslims and indigenous peoples, in view of presenting a total history of the peoples of the Philippines. She affirmed that the FGD is a first step in finding the means and ways to fully implement these policies.

In closing, Dr. Churchill emphasized the need to support and reinforce these policies "to make us all one country and nation, respectful of our varied histories, cultures, and heritage in the only

country we have.” She also believed that Muslim scholars are in the best position to write PMH, with vital support from the CHED and the Department of Education (DepEd).

PRESENTATION

“PHILIPPINE MUSLIM HISTORY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS”

Assistant Professor Darwin J. Absari

Faculty, UP Institute of Islamic Studies and
Research Fellow, UP CIDS Islamic Studies Program

UP IIS faculty and UP CIDS ISP Research Fellow Asst. Prof. Darwin J. Absari began his discussion by recalling the first roundtable discussion on PMH where the group discussed the importance of history in bridging religious and cultural gaps to achieve national unity. Because of this goal, he shared that the study and teaching of PMH is now being recognized as an essential component in the study of Philippine history.

Asst. Prof. Absari went on to discuss how Muslims were able to maintain their historical narrative, but suffered in its relation to Philippine national history. In Philippine history, Islam came as the third stage in shaping the Philippine civilization. However, with the coming of Spaniards, a bipartite historical production was promoted with the idea of Islam as a false religion and that Muslims are savage. The pre-Hispanic era was also labeled as a dark age and it was during the Spanish evangelization of the archipelago when the polarization between Christianized natives and Islamized peoples in Mindanao took place.

Asst. Prof. Absari discussed further that during the Spanish period, there was an awakening initiated by the Propaganda thinkers like Jose Rizal and Juan Luna, who promoted the tripartite

historical vision—a native historical version to rectify Spain’s bipartite historical production. The tripartite historical vision resurfaces the pre-Hispanic heritage by highlighting the country’s previous interactions with China, Japan, and other Southeast Asian countries. This historical vision was even integrated into the Katipunan initiation rites. Although there was a sense of envisioning of Filipino society, there was a fundamental difference between the visions of the Propaganda and the Katipunan movements. For the Propaganda movement, the country would remain under the Spanish government’s control, but reforms to the Catholic Church will be instituted, mainly by transferring the power of Spanish friars to native priests. For the Katipunan, the aim was total liberation from Spain’s control and the recognition of the diversity of Philippine society, culture, and religion. However, this tripartite historical vision did not materialize as Rizal and Andres Bonifacio, the leader of the Katipunan, were executed.

Asst. Prof. Absari then talked about the American period, which saw how the Americans asserted to save the Philippines from Spain and to educate and train the Filipino people towards self-government. However, this resulted in the miseducation of the Filipino people, mainly with the imposition of the English language as a medium of instruction. Moreover, the American government also tried to assimilate the Muslims and make them subordinate to Christian Filipinos. During this period, the Islamic heritage was further sidelined and buried in the consciousness of the Filipino people.

Asst. Prof. Absari further discussed how the Commonwealth Government carried on with colonial historical narratives and continued the colonial policies of assimilating the Muslims while leaving Islamic heritage insignificant in the national consciousness. In the 1960s, a movement towards the indigenization of knowledge took place. During this period, nationalist Filipino scholars started to challenge the relevance of Western thoughts in understanding the Filipino way of life. This highlighted the importance of PMH as part of the nation’s history. One of the earlier efforts were

through former President Ferdinand Marcos' Letter of Instruction No. 1221, which indicated the need to enhance the nation's Islamic heritage. Efforts were also made by succeeding administrations until its culmination with the passage of the Integrated History Act of 2016.

Asst. Prof. Absari also presented the current status of PMH and highlighted that the Moros were able to maintain their own historical narrative and their way of life through oral literature. However, much of indigenous manuscripts were burned down during the Spanish conquest of Sulu. Thus, the writing of PMH is still a continuous process and there is a need to explore more indigenous sources in order to shed more light on Islamic heritage and culture.

He expressed that at present, the study and teaching of PMH is not yet organized and its goal is not yet well-established. Apart from this, it is also being challenged by Islamic radical ideologies. For example, anti-Sufism challenges the centuries-old established narratives of PMH and imposes strict rules, such as prohibitions for Muslims from celebrating Valentine's Day and Christmas with Christian neighbors and relatives. According to Asst. Prof. Absari, this affects the present process of the healing of the nation and the promotion of national unity.

Asst. Prof. Absari concluded his presentation by emphasizing that through the FGD, the UP CIDS ISP hopes to see how PMH is being taught, what sources and methodologies are being used, and how to empower teachers to teach PMH effectively in order to achieve national unity.

DISCUSSION

The FGD was facilitated by Dr. Carmen Abubakar, former Dean of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies and President of the Research Association for Islamic Social Sciences (RAIS).

Dr. Abubakar started the discussion by instructing the participants to share their experiences and methodologies in teaching PMH. This will allow the group to have an idea of the different content and methodologies used in teaching PMH in their respective education institutions. Specifically, she raised the following questions: (1) “How do we teach Philippine history or Muslim history?” and (2) “What are we teaching about Muslim history?”

Tirmizy E. Abdullah, Ph.D.

History Department, College of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Mindanao State University–Marawi Campus

Dr. Adbullah shared that determining the content to be included in the course syllabus was one of the challenges that he experienced in teaching PMH. Apart from teaching the history of Muslims in the Philippines, he also teaches indigenous peoples’ history (IPH), which makes it difficult to cover all important topics in a one-semester course.

He also shared that the availability of resource materials on PMH are still limited and hopes that apart from books, other audio-visual materials (such as documentaries and films) will also be made accessible to aid in the teaching of PMH.

Lastly, he shared his difficulty in determining the goal of teaching PMH. According to him, it is important to establish this

goal, as this will help teachers find an area of focus in teaching and enable them to provide accurate answers to students' questions.

Juvanni Yahya A. Caballero, Ph.D.

History Department, College of Arts and Social Sciences,
Mindanao State University–Iligan Institute of Technology

Similarly, Dr. Caballero shared his difficulty in covering all the topics related to PMH and IPH in one semester and in determining the goal of teaching these courses. He noted that in MSU Marawi, where he used to teach, the faculty does not have a common syllabus for the PMH course. There were also some non-Muslim teachers who handle the course, but they tend to limit the topics covered and even blame the Moros for events in the past. He also suggested that one possible area of research is on the level of awareness and knowledge of non-Muslim teachers on PMH.

Dr. Caballero also shared that teachers tend to get overwhelmed by the large amount of information from the works of scholars such as Cesar Adib Majul, Peter G. Gowing, Rudy B. Rodil, Jamail A. Kamilian, and Samuel K. Tan. He further noted that at times, the problem lies on how to synthesize the topics and make them more digestible, while ensuring the reception and understanding of non-Muslim students to these would not create further divisions.

Furthermore, Dr. Caballero mentioned that in MSU–IIT, where he currently teaches, faculty members have started working on harmonizing syllabi for PMH and IPH in order to fit within one semester. This initiative was supported and funded by Hiroshima University and the University of Hawai'i. However, the support for this project was not sustained given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, Dr. Caballero remains hopeful, especially with the FGD serving as an opportunity for teachers and experts to benchmark materials and resources used in teaching these courses. He also suggested for experts to assess and review these materials and to identify areas for improvement.

When asked about the possibility for MSU teachers to convene and discuss commonalities and challenges in teaching PMH, Dr. Caballero responded positively by saying that faculty from across the MSU System have already conducted FGDs to discuss the challenges in teaching the course History 3 (“History of the Filipino Muslims and the IPs of MINSUPALA”). However, these efforts were not sustained due to financial constraints, numerous school events and activities, and the question of which MSU campus will start and lead this initiative.

Assistant Professor Mohammad Nur A. Kadil

Religious Studies Department, School of Liberal Arts,
Ateneo de Zamboanga University

Asst. Prof. Kadil shared that way back in 2002, one of the core courses for Muslim students at AdZU was a course on Muslims in the Philippines. Like Dr. Caballero, he mentioned how he experienced teaching using limited materials and noted that he was dependent on the works of Majul, Gowing, and Dr. Najeeb M. Saleeby.

With the changes brought about by the K to 12 curriculum, Prof. Kadil shared that the courses to be offered by the Religious Studies Department were reduced to only two. Hence, the faculty focused on the religiosity of Islam, rather than its history. Though there are history courses offered in the university, these are focused mainly on broad Philippine history and the teachers who are handling these courses are non-Muslims.

Assistant Professor Fatima Alliah Janani

School of Arts and Sciences,
Sulu State College

Asst. Prof. Janani mentioned limited resource materials and the lack of a common syllabus as primary concerns in teaching history courses. Citing their own context in SSC, she shared how the reference materials in their library is very limited.

Bernardita R. Churchill, Ph.D.

President, Philippine National Historical Society and
Chair, Technical Committee for History, Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Churchill shared that the problem with the availability of materials in studying history is not just common in Mindanao, but even in Manila as there is difficulty accessing sources from Mindanao.

As the current Chair of CHED's Technical Committee for History, Dr. Churchill emphasized the need to determine common courses to be taught in different universities and schools in Mindanao. She also stressed the importance of having a standard syllabus for such courses. Hence, she suggested to conduct a survey to know the courses offered in universities, references and sources used, and materials available to both teachers and students. This would help create a standard syllabus that is easy for teachers to handle and for students to understand. Apart from this, she added that teachers should be given workshops in order to properly apply the syllabus in their classes.

Dr. Churchill suggested to begin looking on the syllabus for the Philippine History course and discuss how to include PMH in the discussion of national history.

Tirmizy E. Abdullah, Ph.D.

History Department, College of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Mindanao State University–Marawi Campus

Following the suggestion of Dr. Churchill, Dr. Abdullah reiterated the need to start teaching PMH at the lower grades and to map out how it can be taught in different universities. According to him, starting at the lower grades will provide students an early healthy exposure to the diversity of peoples in the Philippines, including Filipino Muslims. This will also help students in developing an appreciation of cultural and religious diversity and will prepare them for PMH and IPH courses in higher education.

Dr. Abdullah also suggested to coordinate with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) with regard

to current efforts in strengthening the teaching of PMH with the CHED. This is to ensure that such efforts will be truly beneficial to the BARMM.

In response, Dr. Churchill emphasized that what scholars and teachers hope for is an inclusive history which features all Filipinos, including IPs and Muslims. She stressed that even universities and schools outside Mindanao should tackle the history of IPs, Muslims, and other marginalized sectors in Philippine culture and society.

Associate Professor Macrina Adjerol Morados

Dean, UP Institute of Islamic Studies and
Convenor, UP CIDS Islamic Studies Program

Dean Morados responded to the points raised by Dr. Churchill, Dr. Abdullah, and Dr. Caballero by pointing out that the UP IIS, the Research Association for Islamic Social Sciences (RAIS), and the Islamic Studies Program (ISP) of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) had already organized exploratory discussions towards the organizing of a workshop on PMH. The prospect of obtaining funding from CHED on capacity building projects for PMH teachers was also previously discussed.

On the challenges previously mentioned, Dean Morados shared that there is a big need to strengthen PMH and Islamic Studies in various academic programs, such as in the Philippine Studies graduate programs at the UP Asian Center. She suggested to form a core group which will facilitate the formulation of project proposals and proposals for funding from CHED. She also added that a proposal to organize national workshops for PMH teachers from private and public academic institutions across the country is underway.

Adding to the suggestion of Dean Morados, Dr. Caballero mentioned the conduct of a survey to provide the core group with baseline data needed formulating proposals. The survey should begin with academic institutions in Mindanao before expanding to

other parts of the country. He also shared that CHED had been conducting consultations with higher education institutions in the past. In these consultations, one of the challenges that were identified in capacitating history teachers was the identification of expert historians who will serve as resource speakers for workshops. He also added that the MSU System could not afford to integrate courses on PMH across its campuses because it will entail additional workforce, expertise, and funding for teachers' salaries. Hence, the integration will only be applied by the teachers on their own.

Likewise, Asst. Prof. Absari added that the UP CIDS ISP plans to network with various universities and colleges offering courses on PMH so that they can be linked together for communication purposes and for other initiatives. Dr. Abdullah also invited the discussion group to be connect with other historians and teachers of history courses.

Professor Julkipli M. Wadi

UP Institute of Islamic Studies

Prof. Julkipli Wadi shared four important points on issues and challenges in teaching PMH. First, he emphasized that the call for an inclusive history should be geared towards national unity. Hence, the initiatives that will come out of the FGD “should not just be an endeavor of Muslim historians, but must include Filipino historians in general and their willingness to participate in the writing of Philippine history.” Second, the problems with the preoccupation of Muslims to their own history are quite apparent. Muslims tend to be more concerned only with Muslim history or Lumad history. While the idea of national unity sounds like an important goal, there has to be something above it. According to Prof. Wadi, if the goal is anchored on the identity formation (such as Moro, Lumad, and Muslim), there will always be gray areas or even tension because of the 1898 paradigm of the Philippine nation-state, which seemed to be the major feature in the writing of Philippine history. This can be traced back to the

16th century, when the spread of Christianity through Spanish colonialism sidelined Islamic faith in the Philippines. He also raised questions on a framework that will go beyond identity formation towards building national unity. He further asked if there is a need to have national heroes, a national language, or a national flag for the Bangsamoro. The direction of identity formation among Muslims will have an effect in the writing of PMH.

Third, Prof. Wadi also stressed the need to determine what transcendence the group is looking for, as it has not been discussed by previous historians such as Saleeby and Majul, who focused on addressing state-centric history. Hence, their writings on Muslim history was a response to the state-centric perspective of history perpetrated by the Spanish, Americans, and the early Filipino nationalists. Prof. Wadi urged the group to determine their goal that will gear more towards an integrative history leading to national unity. Having this transcendence would give clarity and a proper understanding of Muslim traditions and heritage. Lastly, Prof. Wadi highlighted that understanding history is about surfacing the truth, and the methods to surface truth include stories, such as the Qasas in Tausug and Kissa in Moro dialect, among others. It is necessary to address the subjectivities in addressing the truth. As an example, Prof. Wadi mentioned Ibn Khaldun's works, which became a universal masterpiece that cuts across traditions, religions, and philosophies. It is not anchored on identity—whether one is a Muslim, Christian, or Lumad; there is rather no representation in that space as it simply concerns about the revelation of truth. According to Prof. Wadi, “historians should all be truth-seekers and have the ability to contain the individual subjectivity of precommitments; that way, they can become genuine truth-tellers.”

Prof. Wadi concluded by stressing that this initiative should not merely be a project for the Muslims; this should be a project that will be mainly participated by all historians. The goal of “national unity should not just be the efforts of the Muslims but

[also about] the willingness of others to open up space, so that we can all become united in an environment where truth prevails and not necessarily subjectivities in our own precommitments.”

Assistant Professor Darwin J. Absari

UP Institute of Islamic Studies and
Research Fellow, UP CIDS Islamic Studies Program

Asst. Prof. Absari responded to the points raised by Prof. Wadi, mentioning that there are two trajectories before reaching out to the wider Philippine society. First, there is a need for the regions, particularly PMH teachers and historians in Muslim areas, to come together and level off to discuss the enhancement of methodologies and capacity building initiatives for PMH teachers. In that way, they could tap into the broader community of Filipino historians in view of the implementation of the Integrated History Act. The second is the fulfillment of history’s vision as truth revealing as explained by Ibn Khaldun.

For the steps forward, Asst. Prof. Absari went on to mention that regional workshops and seminars for PMH teachers will be conducted. There will also be a discussion with the faculty of MSU-IIT to know how the teaching of PMH is conducted in the university. He concluded by stating that networks with various institutions in Mindanao are essential before going beyond regional boundaries.

Mansoor L. Limba, Ph.D.

Islamic Studies Department, School of Arts and Sciences,
Ateneo de Davao University • Al Qalam Institute for Islamic Identities
and Dialogue in Southeast Asia

Dr. Limba shared that AdDU offers courses on the history of Mindanao and on PMH, but only Muslim students can enroll in these courses. According to him, one challenge in teaching the history of Mindanao is the lack of available materials; thus, teachers have to gather materials from different sources to become up-to-date with contemporary developments. In terms of methodology,

a chronological and thematic approach is employed to make the topics more relatable to students.

Asst. Prof. Absari announced that an initial listing of resources available at the UP IIS Library and in other libraries in Mindanao will be shared with the group. The participants were also enjoined to share the materials in their databases, given due copyright and privacy protocols. These materials will also be shared online to make them more accessible to interested individuals and institutions.

Isnira A. Baginda, Ph.D.

Department of Islamic Studies, College of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Mindanao State University–General Santos City

Dr. Baginda shared that one challenge that she observed in teaching PMH is that some teachers are not graduates of MSU and do not have the experience in handling the course on PMH. Some non-Muslim teachers no longer tackle the history of the Muslims in the Philippines in their courses and focus on IP history instead. Dr. Baginda suggested that MSU administrators transfer the mandate of teaching the said course from the History Department to the Islamic Studies Department and to only allow non-Muslim teachers to handle the course if they have proper training.

Moreover, Dr. Baginda stressed that the biggest problem lies in methodology, which is consequently anchored on outdated general content. She noted that, for instance, there is lack of content on the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) or the BARMM and that there is a need to include recent historical accounts in discussions on PMH. In terms of sources, she shared that most faculty prefer to use the summarized book of Gowing than that of Majul.

Assistant Professor Al-Rashir C. Kulani

Islamic Studies Department,
Mindanao State University–Sulu

Asst. Prof. Kulani shared that in SSC, history is taught starting with the Sultanate of Sulu several centuries before the arrival of

Spaniards. This pre-Hispanic period is a potential period to study in order to foster national unity in the study and teaching of PMH. He further said that the exploration of Filipino identity and nationality of the Filipino people should not be based just on the impacts and influences of colonization.

In terms of resources, Prof. Kulani shared that they do not rely on a single source material, and instead, they included oral traditions in the discussions on PMH. According to Prof. Kulani, if the goal of teaching PMH is to achieve national unity, there is a need to have a national identity. This could be done by investing in research focusing on periods prior to the coming of the Spaniards and in accessing records from international, national, and local academic institutions. Through research, vital data will be gathered and information from oral tradition will be verified, which would then give a clearer picture of PMH.

Associate Professor Samsiya D. Mayasa

College of Social Sciences,
Mindanao State University–Maguindanao

Assoc. Prof. Mayasa emphasized the necessity of the exchange of ideas between and among history teachers, especially those from Mindanao, so that they could impart their knowledge and experiences in teaching PMH with teachers from other parts of the country. This is to address the challenges that the latter face in teaching about Muslim identity.

She also shared that they have been using varied materials in teaching Philippine history and that there is a need for wider access to resources that could supplement existing materials, such as resources on PMH at libraries abroad.

CLOSING MESSAGE

Bernardita R. Churchill, Ph.D.

President, Philippine National Historical Society and
Chair, Technical Committee for History, Commission on Higher Education

After listening to the group discussion, Dr. Churchill offered her support by committing to provide materials that could aid in the teaching of PMH. The materials will be derived from online sources from other countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, and France, among others. In addition, these can be requested from various individuals, particularly those who have done research on the Philippines. Teachers may also get more online resources through the Library of Congress and the National Archives. Furthermore, Dr. Churchill is also making her own materials available, including her lectures for the Philippine National Historical Society (PNHS). These lectures highlight her journey in studying history and emphasize the importance of going back to our Southeast Asian roots. She believes that her lectures are likewise significant for the study of Mindanao.

Dr. Churchill concluded her message by emphasizing that as a people in an archipelago, “water is not a hindrance to contacts between peoples and culture; it is the passageway for a lot of things that went within this area” and that we should “look at ourselves as part of Asia [and] Southeast Asia, especially because we have a lot of common with them.”

SYNTHESIS

Assistant Professor Darwin J. Absari

Faculty, UP Institute of Islamic Studies and
Research Fellow, UP CIDS Islamic Studies Program

Asst. Prof. Absari recalled the essential points from the discussion on the status and challenges of teaching PMH in universities and colleges in Mindanao. It was revealed from the discussion that there is a lack of a unified methodology to guide teachers and that there is a need to foster creative approaches in teaching PMH. There are also limited references and sources to aid the teaching of PMH, which is a common dilemma of academic institutions in Mindanao. Furthermore, it must be made clear that the goal of teaching PMH is to bridge, rather than deepen, religious and cultural gaps among Filipinos.

He then presented the ways forward in addressing the challenges and constraints faced by PMH scholars and teachers:

There is a need for baseline data and leveling-off among Muslim and non-Muslim teachers in Mindanao in terms of methodologies and objectives in teaching PMH.

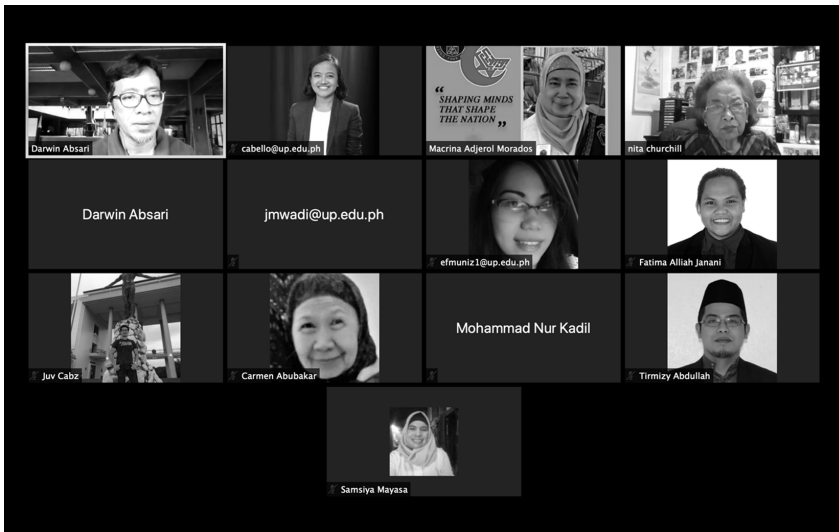
There is a need to transcend regional boundaries to enable collaboration with Filipino historians in view of the implementation of the Integrated History Act.

There is a need to transcend the state-centric framework in both regional and national histories.

There is a need to establish a direction for an integrative and truth-revealing holistic history wherein Muslims can also learn from the history of the peoples from other parts of the country.

Asst. Prof. Absari concluded his synthesis by reminding everyone to continue the discussion through the group's communication channels. He also noted that one of the future initiatives for PMH is the building of a core group to work on projects such as regional workshops to capacitate teachers and upgrade resources. He finally thanked the participants for their vital inputs and for a fruitful sharing of experiences.

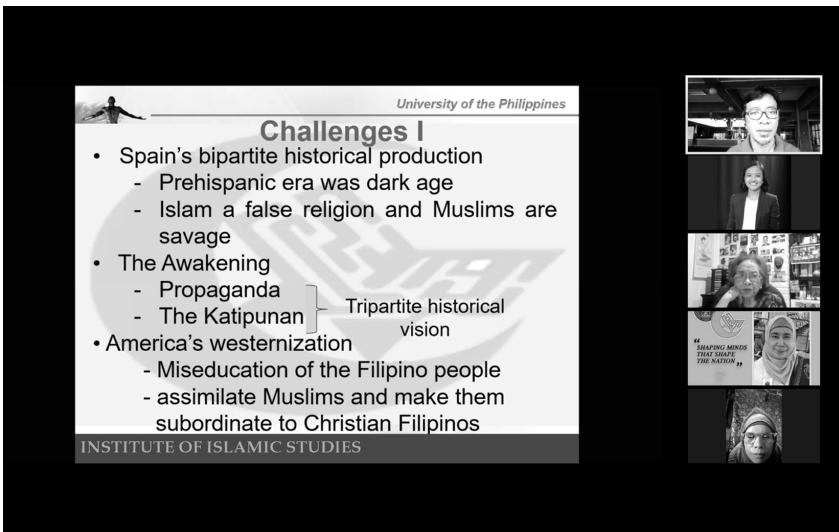
PHOTOS



Asst. Prof. Darwin J. Absari of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies welcomes the participants and shared the objectives of the focus group discussion



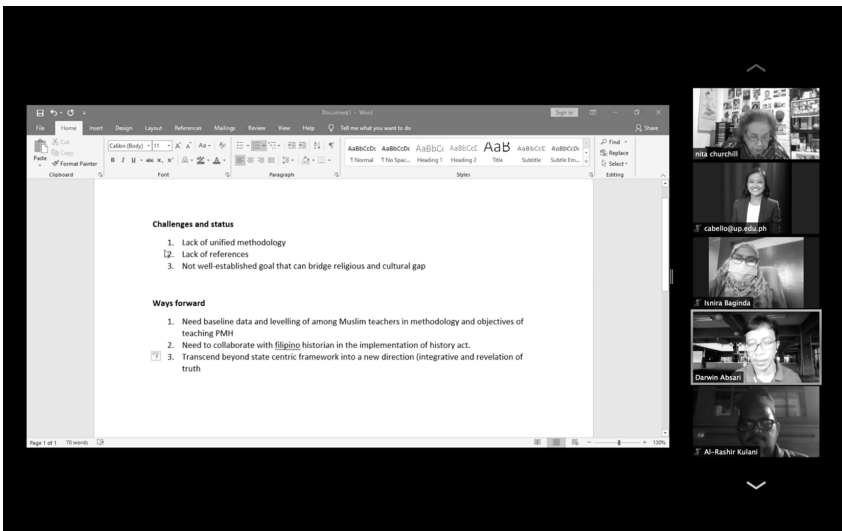
Dr. Carmen Abubakar of the Research Association for Islamic Social Sciences served as the facilitator of the focus group discussion



Asst. Prof. Absari discusses the status of and challenges in teaching Philippine Muslim history (PMH)



Dr. Mansoor Limba shares his experiences in teaching PMH at the Ateneo de Davao University



Asst. Prof. Absari provides a synthesis of the discussion and presented the group's plans and recommendations

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The **Islamic Studies Program (ISP)** of the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) seeks to advance the critical and strategic role of Islam in nation-building to move communities toward a deeper understanding and appreciation of Islam and to establish appropriate responses to Islamophobia.

The Program's primary research components are the Historical and Islamic Knowledge for the Modern Age (HIKMA) project; research on Shari'ah courts and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines; and The Moro Story, which covers topics such as the Philippine madrasah system, Islamic art, countering violent extremism, and the transition to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), among others.



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