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Clash of Legal Systems: Customary Law vs. National Law; A Comparative Study on the Application of the Indigenous Customary Laws and the Shariah Legal System in Resolving Disputes Within Their Respective Communities, and How They Interact With Philippine National Legal System

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***Abstract*: In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), three legal systems, the Philippine national law, Shari'ah (Islamic law), and traditional adat (customary practices) coexist, often clashing or blending in ways that deeply affect everyday life for the Bangsamoro people. This study explores how these systems interact, shaping social ties, economic opportunities, and political involvement in this post-conflict area of Southern Philippines. Driven by a desire to understand real-world challenges and strengths in this mixed legal setup, the research asks: How do these systems differ in delivering justice? What hurdles do communities face juggling them? How do they influence daily lives? Why do people prefer Shari'ah, especially due to language and faith? And how can they work better together? Using a qualitative approach, we interviewed 35 key people like Shari'ah judges, traditional leaders, officials, and community members, ran focus groups with 42 participants, observed 12 court and mediation sessions, and reviewed legal documents. The work draws on ideas like legal pluralism (multiple laws in one place), post-colonial influences, intersectionality (how overlapping identities affect experiences), and legal hybridity (blending systems). Findings show the Philippine system feels formal and distant, while Shari'ah and adat offer community-focused, restorative justice rooted in faith and culture. But overlaps cause confusion, language barriers exclude some, and marginalized groups like women and indigenous folks, face extra inequalities. These systems build social bonds but can spark economic disputes and political rifts. Faith and local languages make Shari'ah the go-to choice for many. Harmonizing them through initiatives like the Tri-Justice System could improve access and fairness. Ultimately, this study highlights the need for culturally sensitive reforms to turn legal diversity into a strength for peace and equity in BARMM, offering lessons for similar regions worldwide.**

***Keywords*: Legal Pluralism, Shari'ah Law, Adat Customs, Bangsamoro Region, Justice Harmonization, Post-Conflict Justice, Intersectionality, Legal Hybridity.**

1. Introduction

A. Background of the Study

In Muslim Mindanao, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BARMM) is an interesting example of a legal pluralism where Philippine national law, Shari'ah law and traditional adat law are co-located, therefore, defining the socio-legal environment in the area. The topic was chosen due to the critical role played by the legal systems in the areas of governance, justice and peace building in a post-conflict society. Cases of historical struggles towards autonomy and self-determination have always marked the Bangsamoro region, and legal systems have served as both an identity source and a dispute resolution system. The interrelationship of these unique legal systems and the effect of the system on the livelihood of the Bangsamoro peoples is a critical aspect that should be understood in order to formulate policies and practices that can ensure social justice, cultural continuity, and sustainable peace. The author of the research is driven by the fact that the region is currently shifting to a more autonomous level through the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that not only has a new system of governance but also challenges the balance between the state and the cultural and religious forms of self-government.

Formed in 2018 under the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which replaced the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the BARMM is aimed at providing increased autonomy to the Muslim-majority area. The area is estimated to

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have some four million people and a complicated blend of legal tradition. The Shariah law is enforced by regional courts, and the adat law is followed at a community level, usually together with the state law. Still, a lack of systematic research on co-operation of these legal regimes, the problems people face in their way to justice, and the socio-legal consequences of such concomitancy in the whole Bangsamoro nations are still underrepresented. As an example, the overlaps in jurisdiction between Shari'ah courts, state courts and adat-based dispute resolution systems often lead to confusion and unfair access to justice, particularly to some marginalized groups such as women, indigenous peoples, like the Teduray or rural populations. In addition, language obstacles, since English or Filipino are the most commonly used lingo in the state courts, whereas local languages like Maranao, Tausug, or Maguindanao are spoken by many people, only make access to the judicial system even more problematic. The paper will address these gaps by giving a detailed discussion of how these legal systems interact with each other and what implications they have on social cohesion, economic opportunity, and political participation.

The research question through examination of the workings of legal pluralism in the BARMM adds to a greater understanding of the relationship between legal systems in a single region, how systems work in harmony with each other. It provides information about the limitations and opportunities of legal pluralism and is therefore relevant to policy makers, legal professionals as well as academics working in similar situations across the globe. Also, the study highlights the significant role of culturally attentive justice and governance that are especially important in areas where ethnically and religiously diverse groups of people live. The results can be used to promote the current peace-building operations in the BARMM by defining the approaches to unifying the legal frameworks, and by extension, increasing the access to justice and promoting social justice. Furthermore, the fact that the study was concentrated on marginalized groups is a guarantee that their voices will be heard and hence they will have a role to play in making the governance become more inclusive and equitable.

This research aims at critically examining the influence of the Philippine, Shari'ah, and traditional legal systems to the socio-legal realities of the Bangsamoro peoples. In particular, it attempts to respond to the following research questions: (1) What is the difference between how these legal systems understand justice? (2) What are some of the obstacles that Bangsamoro communities face in moving around in the world of multiple legal systems? (3) What are the impacts of these legal systems on the social, economical and political aspects of the Bangsamoro society? (4) How does language and religious identification contribute to the fact that Shari'ah is preferred to other systems of laws? (5) How should these legal systems be reconciled in order to enhance justice access to Bangsamoro peoples? Through these questions, the research will contribute the subtle insight into legal pluralism in the BARMM and propose solutions that can be used to improve justice delivery and social equity in the area. The study is timely considering the BARMM is still in its transition into more autonomy; it is therefore important to understand how legal systems can facilitate or hinder the process.

B. Statement of the Problem

Based on the theoretical accounts presented, this critical analysis analyzes the socio-legal context of the Bangsamoro community in Southern Philippines, the Philippines, through the dynamic interplay of the Philippine national legal system, the Shari'ah law and the traditional system of justice. The study is specifically carried out to explore:

Part 1. What are the differences in the Philippine, Sharia and traditional law systems of addressing justice in Bangsamoro region?

Part 2. What are the problems that Bangsamoro communities encounter in their efforts to traverse several legal systems?

Part 3. What are some of these legal systems relation to the social, economic, and political lives of the Bangsamoro people?

Part 4. How does language and religious identification contribute to the Shari'ah preference over other systems of law?

Part 5. What is the means of harmonizing these three legal systems to enhance access of justice by the Bangsamoro people?

C. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the research incorporates four theoretical supplements, which include legal pluralism, post-colonial theory, intersectionality, and legal hybridity, to give a holistic approach to explaining the coexistence and interaction of the Philippine state law, Shariah law and traditional adat law in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). All of these theories help answer research questions of the study as they help clarify the disparity in justice strategies, navigational issues, socio-legal effects, the role of language and religious affiliation, and the possible harmonization policies, and put the analysis into the context of historical, cultural, and social factors in the BARMM.

1) Legal Pluralism

Legal pluralism defined by Merry (1988) assumes that several legal systems are able to exist in the same political entity leading to dynamic competition of the state and non-state normative orders. In the BARMM, this is represented by the overlapping of the Philippine state law (based on the 1987 Constitution), Shari'ah law (based on the Code of Muslim Personal Laws, Presidential Decree No. 1083), and the traditional adat law (traditional practices under the leadership of tribal leaders such as datus). Legal pluralism emphasizes the overlaps and conflicts of jurisdiction, e.g., between Shari'ah courts that deal with marriage-related disputes and state courts that are associated with a wider range of civil disputes that are the focus of Research Question 1 (differences in justice approaches) and Research Question 2 (navigation challenges). Griffiths (1986) also stresses that it is important to study these systems as social orders so that the ethnographic nature of the study is informed into capturing the community experiences. Research Question 5 (harmonization strategies) can also be considered through this theory because, according to it, the legitimacy of non-state systems may be the tool to improve

justice delivery, which can be discovered through BARMM Tri-Justice System initiatives.

2) Post-Colonial Theory

Based on the works of Said (1978), post-colonialism considers the impact of colonial pasts on the present-day legal and cultural environment, especially in terms of unequal distribution of power, which favors colonial-based systems against indigenous ones. In the Philippines, state legal system is an influence of Spanish and American colonialism which tends to undermine Shari'ah and adat laws which are even older than the colonial rule or religious and cultural resistance. The BARMM legal pluralism is contextualized on the basis of this theory as a location of historical dispute over sovereignty and legitimacy, according to anthropological approaches to post-colonial legal regimes (Merry, 1991). It especially applies to Research Question 3 (socio-legal impacts) because the colonial legacies affect the social cohesion, economic access (e.g., land disputes) and political engagement in the governance of BARMM. Regarding Research Question 4 (language and religious identity), the post-colonial theory emphasizes the ways Islamic identity and local dialects (e.g., Maranao, Tausug) oppose the imposition of the secular state that influences the preferences towards Shari'ah law.

3) Intersectionality

Intersectionality, first coined by Crenshaw (1989) offers a theoretical framework in examining how intersectional social identities, including gender, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status, can lead to inequality and access to justice. In the BARMM, intersectionality will be used to make sure that the research is inclusive of varied experiences especially those belonging to the marginalized groups like women, indigenous Muslims (e.g., Badjao, Teduray) and people in the rural settings. As an example, women can encounter obstacles in adat systems that are patriarchal, whereas indigenous people can encounter language barriers in English or Filipino state courts. The theory would play a key role in Research Question 2 (challenges in navigating), where it defines the discrepancies in the access to justice, and Research Question 4 (language and religious identity), where it analyses the role of Islamic faith and tribal affiliations in determining preferences of the law. Intersectionality also adds depth to the Research Question 3 since it emphasizes the different socio-legal effects on the different social groups, allowing the analysis to be inclusive.

4) Legal Hybridity

Legal hybridity discussed by Deinla (2019) is the complement to legal pluralism and concerns the idea of how various legal traditions can intertwine to produce new practices of justice. The hybridity can be seen in the BARMM in the form of Shari'ah courts integrating the elements of the state law or adat practices in accordance with the modern contexts, like community mediations that integrate Islamic and customary norms. As Deinla points out, trust and legitimacy within the Shari'ah law is explained to be based on how it corresponds to the values of the community and how it responds to the need of justice, although it interacts with other systems. The notion is also crucial to Research Question 5 (harmonization strategies) as it implies that cooperative networks among state, Shariah, and adat systems may advance justice provision, as was experienced in such initiatives as the Tri-Justice System. Research Question 1 is also informed by legal hybridity since how hybrid practices will inform the approach of justice and Research Question 3 since it will analyze the socio-legal consequences of these practices.

5) Integration and Application

Legal pluralism, the post-colonial theory, intersectionality, and legal hybridity provide a powerful structure to overcome the objectives of the study. Legal pluralism explains how the three legalities live and interact with each other, post-colonial theory locates these processes within historical power politics, intersectionality ensures focus on the heterogeneous social lives, and legal hybridity supplies information about the development of justice practices. It is based on this framework that a critical analysis of the difference between the two systems (Research Question -1), the problems they introduce (Research Question -2), effects they have on social, economic and political life (Research Question -3), and the role of language and religious identity (Research Question -4) and harmonization strategies can be examined (Research Question -5). The framework offers a culturally sensitive and inclusive perspective on the socio-legal realities of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in the Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) by balancing both theoretically rigorous research and ethnographic methods to offer a contribution to both the literature and the policy to effect change on the issues of justice within the region.

D. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The given conceptual framework is designed in such a way as to present the independent variables, dependent variable, mediating variable, and outcome (in line with the research questions and objectives of the dissertation). The format distinctly classifies the variables to depict causation and arrows show influence and a feedback loop harmonizes. A detailed breakdown is provided below:

1. Independent Variables

Independent Variable 1: Philippine, Shariah and Traditional Legal Systems.

These are the main catalysts, which include the principles, procedures, and jurisdictions of three systems of laws in the Bangsamoro region (i.e., the secular concept of the Philippine law, the Islamic concept of Shari'ah, and the customary concept of adat). This variable is on the way these systems vary in their approach to justice.

Independent Variable 2: Language and religious identity.

This involves the place of local dialects (e.g., Maguindanaon, Tausug) against English and Filipino, and the impact of the Islamic religion on the preferences of the law. This variable examines why Shari is the most preferred system compared to others.

2. Mediating Variable: The Problems of Finding Your Way in Legal Pluralism

This is what the Bangsamoro communities go through which includes the problem of jurisdiction, disproportionate access to justice and language barriers due to the coexistence of different

legal systems. The outgoing arrows of the two independent variables to this node show the contribution of legal systems and language/religious identity to the difficulties in navigation. The legal pluralism theory approaches these challenges as the results of the overlapping normative orders (Griffiths, 1986).

3. Dependent Variable: Socio-Legal Realities (Social, Economic, Political)

This is the main outcome variable, which will reflect the influence of the legal systems and the navigation issues on the social cohesion, the economic access (e.g. property rights), and the political involvement (e.g. the governance under BARMM) of the Bangsamoro people. The outgoing arrows of the mediating variable (challenges) and the direct outgoing arrows of the language/religious identity show that the two have a joint impact on the socio-legal realities. Intersectionality makes sure that the mediation of gender, socioeconomic status, and other aspects in relation to such effects are accounted (Crenshaw, 1989).

4. Outcome: Strategies of harmonization

This is the proposed solutions whose result is the Tri-Justice System of the BARMM to harmonize the legal systems in order to achieve better access to justice and social integration. The socio-legal reality to harmonization arrow indicates that the focus on the existing effects leads to strategies. The mediation variable is represented by a dashed feedback arrow that implies that harmonization initiatives may make the legal pluralist environment less challenging to navigate. According to post-colonial theory, it is important to take into consideration colonial legacies in these strategies (Said, 1978).

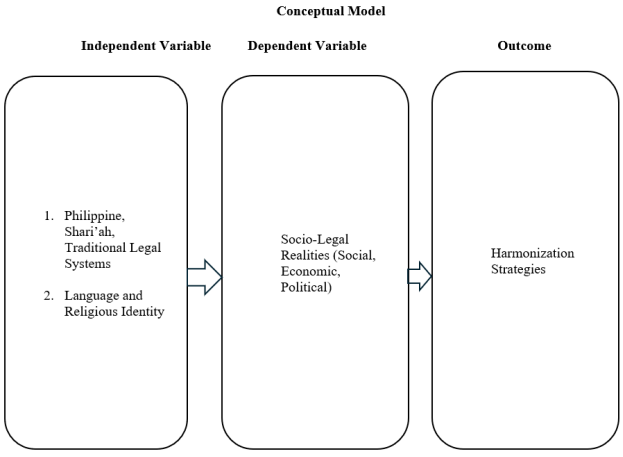

Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of the conceptual framework

E. Significance of the Study

The proposed research is destined to contribute significantly to the academic literature, policy-making, and empowerment of the communities by providing a detailed insight into the overall influence of the Philippine, Shariah, and traditional legal systems on the socio-legal realities of the Bangsamoro people in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The analysis of the relations between these legal systems, the difficulties in maneuvering legal pluralism and the socioeconomic and political consequences, the role of language and of religious identity, the methods of harmonization, fills significant gaps in the knowledge as well as practice. Its results are likely to guide fair legal systems, support access to justice and facilitate societal cohesion in a post-conflict society and hence align with the current BARMM efforts like the Tri-Justice System.

The research will have the following groups or sectors as beneficiaries, with each group having a specific benefit of the revealed insights and suggestions:

BARMM Policymakers and Government Officials: The study will offer evidence-based policies to streamline the system of the Philippine, Shariah, and traditional legal systems to empower the initiatives to be made, including the Tri-Justice System. It will inform policy-making to improve justice delivery and governance by establishing areas of jurisdiction overlap and issues in navigation. An example is how the knowledge of low Shari'ah court filings can be used to inform the people on awareness campaigns, whereas harmonization plans can be used to coordinate the acts of the national Congress with the Bangsamoro Parliament. This will help the officials to come up with more inclusive and efficient legal frameworks that create a stable and developing atmosphere in the BARMM.

Shari'ah Judges: The Shariah judges will gain a better insight into the interaction between their courts and their secular and traditional systems, which should help them resolve the jurisdictional issues and enhance the management of cases.

Traditional Leaders: Traditional leaders (e.g., datus, tribal elders) will gain the benefits of the study because the adat practices will be recognized, and it will help them become effective in community dispute resolution and incorporating them into official justice systems. The proposed harmonization strategies will be helpful to both groups in their collaboration across systems to have their practices considered and efficient in the context of the plural legal framework of the BARMM.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs): CSOs and NGOs working on the justice reform, gender equality, and indigenous rights in the BARMM will use the findings of the research to develop specific interventions. As an example, community education can be based on information about the role of language and religious identity, and the need to advocate on the basis of fair access to justice can be based on the information about the issues experienced by the marginalized population (e.g., women, indigenous Muslims). The recommendations of the study will give the roadmap of the CSOs that may assist in the harmonization efforts of BARMM, and increase their influences in social cohesion and human rights.

Bangsamoro Communities, especially the marginalized ones: The research will also give marginalized voices of the Bangsamoro communities, especially women, youth, and indigenous Muslims, by recording their experiences of approaching legal pluralism. It will promote solutions to these problems which will enhance their access to justice, possible through community-based dispute resolution as well as Shari'ah court reforms as some of the challenges include language barriers and unequal access. The focus on harmonization will empower these communities through the facilitation of legal systems that are better oriented to their cultural and religious

values thus increasing the social and economic opportunities (e.g. secure land rights) and political participation.

Academic Researchers and Legal Scholars: The study will add to the international body of literature concerning legal pluralism, post-colonial justice systems, and intersectionality since it offers a comprehensive case study of the legal environment of the BARMM. The theoretical combination of legal pluralism, post-colonial theory, and intersectionality and the empirical information of the Bangsamoro community the study will be helpful to scholars. The results will be used to conduct comparative legal pluralism research in the other post-conflict or Muslim-dominant areas, which will further the scholarly discussion, and guide future research.

National Government and Policy Institutions: National policy makers, such as the members of the Philippine Congress and the Supreme Court, will benefit with the information of the issues of legal pluralism in the BARMM, which will guide national policies to facilitate regional autonomy without violating the constitution. The harmonization strategies of the research can help in coordinating national and BARMM legal frameworks, which will eliminate conflicts and improve the delivery of justice to Muslim Filipinos. This will reinforce the adoption of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (Republic Act No. 11054) and foster nationalism.

Such coverage of stakeholders will enable the study to connect the academic, policy, and community spheres and contribute to a more balanced and unified legal environment in the BARMM. The success of its agenda to magnify the voices of marginalized population, especially women and indigenous communities, makes sure that the fruits of the agenda are never wasted on other parties, but are instead applied in the growth and development of the area and extending the global discourse on the issue of post-conflict justice systems.

F. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study explores how three legal systems, which are the Philippine state law, the Shari law and the adat based law, have interacted to become the socio-legal realities of Bangsamoro people on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Southern Philippines.

It will be guided by five main research questions which include: (1) how do these legal systems differ in their conceptualization and administration of justice? (2) what are the difficulties that Bangsamoro communities face when negotiating between the coexistence of two or more legal systems? (3) what do these systems all add up to in either social, economic, and political aspects of community life? (4) does language and religious identity have any part to play in Shariah law preference? (5) what are the ways of balancing these systems to encourage access to justice?

The research is limited in nature. First and foremost, it is limited to the BARMM, which includes six provinces, namely, Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Sulu, and Tawi -Tawi, and the Special Geographic Area that comprises 63 barangays in Cotabato. It, therefore, lacks other Muslim communities in the Philippines including those in Metro Manila or Visayas where the forms of legal pluralism might be varied. The fieldwork will be guided towards both urban and rural communities with the view to attaining a multiplexity of experiences but more so those places that are actively using Shari'ah courts, secular courts, and traditional dispute resolution systems.

The analysis will involve a wide range of key informants to contribute expert and community insights, including: Shari'ah judges, who will demystify the functioning of Shari'ah courts and their socio-legal constraints; traditional leaders (e.g., datus, tribal elders), who will provide insights into the adat-based dispute resolution and its position within the communities; BARMM officials, who will suggest policy perspectives on legal pluralism and harmonization projects, e.g., Tri-Justice System; the members of the community, i.e. men, women and youth to capture.

G. Operational Definition of Terms

To explain what is meant by and how to use the concepts herein, operationally defined to elucidate within the framework of this study, which explores the interaction between Philippine state law, Shari'ah law as well as traditional legal systems and their influence on the socio-legal realities of the Bangsamoro peoples in the BARMM, the following terms are operationally defined herein:

1) Bangsamoro People

These are the Muslim and the non-Muslim indigenous inhabitants of the BARMM who are made up of 13 Islamised ethnolinguistic groups, indigenous peoples (Lumad) and the settlers, all of which are governed by the Philippine state law, the Shari'ah law, and the traditional law system. In this research, the term is also inclusive of the community members (men, women, and youth) who are involved in interviews and focus-group debates with keen consideration in their experiences on bargaining legal pluralism.

2) Bangsamoro Tribes

The 13 Islamised ethnolinguistic communities and indigenous non-Muslim (Lumad) communities of the BARMM, each with its own unique cultural practices, languages and role in pluralism in law. The paper focuses its attention on their relations with three legal systems, especially on adat-based dispute resolution. They consist of the tribes and a few of their local dialects which are:

The Lanao del Sur is known as the home of Meranao (Maranao) peoples who are famous due to the epic called Darangen. They mainly use the Maranao dialect as their linguistic repertoire with a Kolibugan variant used by some subgroups.

The kulintang music practices characterize Maguindanaon residents who are mostly based in Maguindanao. Mostly Maguindanao dialect is used with some variants influenced by Iranun.

Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur Iranun or Ilanun are coastal communities, which are historical maritime traders. Theoretically, their language environment is dominated by the Iranun language, and there are also versions of the Maranao.

The people of Basilan who are indigenous Yakan are known to practice elaborate weaving. They speak the Yakan dialect as

their main language with traces of Tausug.

Tausug people of Sulu have a close connection with the past Sulu Sultanate. The dialect mainly used is the Tausug and Cebuano influenced variants that were formed as a result of Visayan interactions.

Sulu and Tawi-Tawi are crossed by Sama peoples, and Sama people on the land. Sama Sinama is their primary language and it has Bajau-inspired forms.

Badjao or Sama Dilaut are sea-nomadic communities in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, with a high rate of marginalization. The prevalent dialect is the Sama Dilaut and Sinama dialects.

The inhabitants of Jama Mapun, Tawi-Tawi and southern Palawan are known to have a maritime culture. Their main language is Jama Mapun with the Tausug influenced variants.

Kagan/Kalagan communities, which are found in Maguindanao, are a mixture of Muslims and indigenous communities. Kagan dialect prevails with Maguindanao variations.

Kalibugan is a subgroup of Maguindanao that has merged local and Muslim identities together. Kalibugan is the main dialect, and variants of Maguindanao.

Sangil are people living in Basilan and who have historical links with Indonesia. The dialect spoken is mostly Sangil with Tausig influences.

Molbog occupies Tawi -Tawi and has connections with Palawan. Their dominant one is Molbog with Sama variants.

Palawanon peoples are Muslim counterparts but these indigenous peoples are found in southern Palawan and parts of Tawi-Tawi. They are mostly speaking the Palawano dialect with Molbog influences.

3) Indigenous Peoples (Lumad)

Teduray people are upland of Maguindanao and customary law is practiced. The dialect most commonly spoken is the Tiruray, and the Maguindanao versions.

Lambangian society residing in Maguindanao has its own unique spiritual beliefs. Their major variant is Lambangian with Teduray influences.

The indigenous Manobo Dulangan groups subscribe to the traditions of animism. The Dulangan Manobo (dialect) is the dominant one, and the Maguindanao-influenced ones.

4) Legal Pluralism

Such a combination and integration of various legal frameworks, including a Philippine state law, Shari'ah law, and traditional adat-based systems, in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has an extensive effect on the delivery of justice and socio-legal realities. The operational measurement is attained by evaluation of overlaps, conflicts and synergies of jurisdictions that are observed in the court proceedings, community dispute resolution and stakeholder interviews.

5) Philippine Legal System

Secular/national law comes to be based on the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Republic Acts (e.g., the Bangsamoro Organic Law), and decisions of Supreme Court. Its use in the BARMM is through normal courts. This paper applies the study to the structure of the legal texts and observations of the secular courts with specific focus on the family law, property conflicts and the criminal justice.

6) Shari'ah Legal System

Islamic legal system is under Code of Muslim Personal Laws (Presidential Decree No. 1083) and BARMM policies which are administered through Shari'ah Circuit and District Courts which uphold Muslim Filipinos in the area. This system is operationally researched by conducting interviews with the Shariah judges, observing the court, and community ideas on how it is applied in marriage, divorce, and property cases.

7) Traditional Legal System

The traditional legal system is made up of adat-based customary law practices which are based on the cultural norms of the Bangsamoro ethnolinguistic groups and usually headed by traditional leaders (e.g., datus, tribal elders). This system is systematically studied through participant observation of community dispute resolution, interviews with traditional leaders as well as focus group discussions on the effectiveness of adat in resolving conflicts.

8) Socio-Legal Realities

Socio-legal realities refer to the social, economic, and political consequences in which Bangsa peoples go through in the negotiating of the three legal systems. Social realities involve community cohesion and gender relations; economic ones involve access to resources including land; and political are relations to taking part in BARMM governance. These are evaluated using qualitative data collected out of interviews, as well as, focus group discussions and also observations studies.

H. Difficulties of Legal Pluralism Navigation

The Bangsamoro communities have challenges in accessing justice, as numerous legal systems exist in co-existence such as jurisdictional and language barrier, and inequitable access. These issues are determined by means of the stakeholder narratives (community members and judges) and observations of the court and community.

1) Language

The language used in the judicial procedures: the local dialects of Bangsamoro tribes (e.g., Maranao, Maguindanao, Tausug), Filipino and English are reviewed as the means of affecting the preferences in legal procedures, especially to Shari. The analysis is based on community comments and observations of what goes on in courts.

2) Religious Identity

The Islamic belief and cultural orientations of Bangsamoro peoples explain their interest of using Shari'ah in preference to other legal systems. The interviews and focus group discussions explore this aspect by looking at the relationship between faith and trust in and access to legal systems.

3) Harmonization Strategies

The work suggests the ways of incorporating the Philippine, Shari'ah, and traditional legal systems to increase accessibility to justice, including the BARMM Tri-Justice System. The recommendations are formed based on the qualitative data analysis and documents analysis of BARMM policies, including the stakeholder views.

4) Access to Justice

Access to justice is the ability of the Bangsamoro

communities to interact well with the legal systems to address the disputes and acquire rights. It is quantified by assessing the ease of approaching the court or dispute resolution systems, being inexpensive, and cultural compatibility. The measure is evaluated by the community experience and stakeholders about barriers and opportunities.

5) Tri-Justice System

The Tri-Justice System is a new BARMM program that is aimed at integrating regular, Shariah, and tribal (traditional) courts to administer justice fairly. Operational analysis is carried out with the help of the analysis of BARMM policy papers (e.g., 2023 Tri-Justice Summit results) and the interviews with the officials who took part in its development.

6) Marginalized Groups

There are existing disproportions in the access of the legal systems by subgroups of the Bangsamoro population such as women, youth, and indigenous Muslims (e.g., Badjao, Teduray). In this study, their experiences take precedence by using this specific sampling method of interviews and focus groups discussion, guided by intersectionality.

2. Review of Related Literature and Studies

This section presents a review of related literatures and studies that are relevant to this study and strengthen the impact and influence on the given topic. Most recent studies that show direct findings and relative importance are selected. The section also includes literature review and related studies categorized for both local and foreign settings.

A. Related Literature

The following research, which is directly and indirectly related to the work on Meranaw Marriage Ceremonies, is discussed in details.

1) Legal Pluralism in BARMM

The legal pluralism studies which stipulate a presence of two or more legal systems on one socio-political environment can offer a strong structure to question the legal complexities of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In one of her conceptualizations on legal pluralism, Merry (1988) views the relationship between state and non-state normative orders as a dynamic process, highlighting how the colonial legacies influence the primacy of Philippine law over Shari'ah and adat systems. The Philippine situation with the Code of Muslim Personal Laws bringing about jurisdictional overlaps and conflicts is no different, with the situation also present in the BARMM with Philippine state law, Shari‘ah law, and traditional adat systems operating in harmony. BendaBeckmann (2002) asserts that legal pluralism in the post-colonial context is carved by historical asymmetries of power whereby the state law often marginalizes the native and religious law-systems; a view that echoes the postcolonial theory (Said, 1978) and guides the statutory approach to the recognition of Shari'ah courts to the personal law of Muslims, which is reflected in the Presidential Decree No. 1083. However, due to the narrow scope of the jurisdiction of these courts, which includes marriage, divorce, and inheritance, it causes tension with the wider secular paradigm of the Philippine Constitution of 1987 (Abubakar, 2019). According to Cagoco-Guiam (2013), such a jurisdictional fragmentation creates unequal access to justice, especially to the rural Bangsamoro people who rely on informal adat systems, a fact that contributes to underlining the necessity to examine the issues of navigability (Research Question 2).

Legal pluralism has serious socio-legal implications to the Bangsamoro people and it affects social cohesion, economic inclusivity, and political activities. Mastura (2012) highlights the cultural relevance of Shari‘ah and adat systems that are the most desirable since they are the least formal with the least accessibility to formal procedures compared to the Philippine state courts. An example is adat based dispute resolution, a traditional institution, headed by datus, which resolves land and family dispute in Maguindanao and Tawi Tawi as it provides solutions that are culturally strong but which are not formally recognized (Santos, 2020). Legally, it is economically because overlapping claims on land when one state law is claimed and another adat practice creates conflict particularly among the indigenous Lumad like the Teduray (Cagoco-Guiam, 2013). Politically, with the enactment of the Republic act No. 11054 (2018) on the establishment of BARMM, the regional governance has been empowered but has failed to bring plural legal system in place, as it is seen in the low rates of filing cases in Shari‘ah courts due to lack of awareness among people (Cayon, 2022). Such observations demonstrate the importance of the study of the role of the three legal systems in the social, economic, and political lives of the Bangsamoro people (Research Question 3) with intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) underscoring the fact that marginalized women and Badjao are affected more than other groups.

The BARMM does not have a severe impact on legal preferences; however, language and religious identity have a critical one, favoring Sharia over state law. Santos (2020) notes that the language barrier, in which state courts use English or Filipino, and communities use their dialects, including Maranao, Tausug, or Maguindanao, limits access to secular courts, which in turn promotes the use of Shari‘ah courts that do not restrict language use. The Islamic faith also strengthens the attractiveness of Shari’ah since it can be identified with the Islam identity of the Bangsamoro, which as Abubakar (2019) correlates to post-colonial retaliation against the secular state imposition. As an example the Meranao groups in Lanao del Sur prefer Shari’ah in family disputes because it is Islamic whereas Tausig in Sulu incorporates Shari’ah with the adat practices because of their historical connection with the sultanate. However, these tastes differ among tribes and gender, as women are often faced with obstacles of male-dominated adat procedures (Cagoco-Guiam, 2013), which then demands the intersectional approach to the influence of language and religious identity on legal decisions (Research Question 4).

The attempts to achieve alignment of the Philippine, Shari'ah and traditional legal systems within the BARMM - including the Tri-Justice System - in attempts to reduce the conflict in jurisdiction and to improve access to justice. According to Cayon (2022), an attempt at making regular courts, Shari’ah courts, and tribal courts coordinate in the 2023 Bangsamoro

Tri-Justice Summit was made, but the problem of poor institutional coordination and the lack of public awareness remains. Griffiths (1986) argues that harmonization should take cognizance of the legitimacy of non-state structures, and this principle is manifested in the policy experiments of the BARMM but not realized due to the centralized legal system of the state (Abubakar, 2019). The experience of successful incorporation of Shari‘ah and customary law with the state systems as observed in comparative studies abroad such as those in the Aceh region of Indonesia (Salim, 2008) show that incorporation of Shari‘ah and customary law can help in improving the delivery of justice when facilitated by community participation and the demarcation of jurisdictions. These lessons underlie the current investigation (Research Question 5) into which the strategies of harmonization should be considered the necessity of culturally sensitive, inclusive strategies, and the need to respond to the unique socio-legal environment of the BARMM.

Although these contributions have been made, literature gaps have been noted in the existing literature which this study aims at filling in. Although Mastura (2012) and Santos (2020) give detailed descriptions of the system of Shari’ah and adat, there is lacking research on how the Philippine, Shari’ah and traditional legal systems interact and how they have a cumulative socio-legal impact on the Bangsamoro people. In addition, not much research has so far been conducted into the impact of language and religious identity on legal preferences, especially among BARMM tribes (e.g., Badjao, Teduray). The lack of devotion to the experiences of the marginalized constituencies, including women and indigenous Muslims, helps to highlight the importance of an intersectional approach to analysis, which is promoted by Crenshaw (1989). Lastly, although such harmonization efforts like Tri -justice System look potentially fruitful, their application and effects on communities require further investigation. This study will enhance the academic discussion of the topic of legal pluralism, post-colonial justice, and equitable governance in the BARMM by aiding the fulfillment of the gap in the existing literature by offering evidence-based suggestions to actors in the form of the Significance of the Study.

B. Related Studies

1) Bitialasa Maguindanao: The Concept of Maslaha

Professor Morales defined Maslaha from different contexts and fundamental texts of Islam from the Quran and Hadith, as well as other scholarly pieces written by generations of Muslim scholars. According to him, maslaha is defined as public interest, common good and preservation of the objective of the Law on the protection of five things: religion, life, intellect, lineage and property. Whatever ensures the protection of the abovementioned things is maslaha, and whatever goes against their protection is mafsada. The term also means a cause or a goal which brings benefit and prosperity to all creation.

The Second Bitialasa Maguindanao Conversation Series focused on traditional leadership and its significant role in the early Maguindanao society vis-a-vis its relevance in the current system of governance in the country. One of the significant traits of traditional leaders in the past that helped them gain their constituents’ respect is the value of ungaya, which is giving importance on the welfare and common good of the community over their own interests.

In the context of leadership, maslaha could be seen in putting public interest as the core value in governance. In Islamic governance, Maslaha is described as taking into consideration the interest of the public without ignoring the needs and welfare of the majority and minority of any particular community.

In the context of the Bangsamoro, one of the challenges being faced by its traditional leaders is how to engage and maximize the different political spaces that are available in the society. As leaders and as divine stewards of the community, do they put more value on the social premium of modernity which is personal gratification or on the public interest or common good?

Moreover, maslaha provides a framework which says that “a leader or a person should not only do good for the community but also move towards empowering the people, providing them more space to develop their capacities enabling them to improve their lives.

The following are the summary of the points discussed in the Bitiala. Relating adat to the concept of maslaha and ungaya. Adat is described by participants as an expression of tradition passed on from generation to generation. It is an unwritten customary law practiced by the sultanates to preserve the Maguindanaon culture. Some expressions of adatis the value of hospitality and the sharing and giving during thanksgiving celebrations. In the past, adat has been consistently practiced by the datus and sultans but these traditional practices seemed to disappear nowadays.

Although adat and ungaya are two different concepts, they are somehow related. The ungaya has been an adat among the traditional leaders in the past, though in practice, not all adat manifest the value of ungaya or the common good and the concern for others.

Maslaha or ungaya and the peace process. Along with their expression of sentiments on the current state of the BBL in Congress, the participants reflected if the Mindanao peace process is really an ungaya for the Bangsamoro. Some of the participants still believe that the peace talks is not an ungaya but an anti-insurgency action of the government and may not actually aim for the common good of the Bangsamoro.

As the peace talks is highly influenced by politicians and non-Mindanaoans who have never experienced the war, the participants said that it may only serve their own interests and not of the Bangsamoro.

What ungaya means to me? The participants shared their concept and experiences of ungaya in the context of their own organizations and communities. One of the participants believed that the value of ungaya is inherent in human beings. However, the actualization of ungaya may differ from person to person based on intentions and motivations. Ungaya or maslaha should start within the self. In changing a society into a better situation, individuals should consider themselves as agents of change and peace. At the societal level, ungaya may mean recognizing the role of women and youth. In governance, it may

mean being consultative, transparent, and practicing collective decision making and other collective actions.

For the MILF, their ungaya to the Bangsamoro people is expressed in pursuing political settlement through the peace negotiations with the Philippine government. The BIFF may also be doing such acts as their ungaya to their people. However, their expression of ungaya, as of now, is through armed struggle which has a bigger negative impact in the lives of the Bangsamoro people. For the traditional leaders, their ungaya could be securing the people's welfare and giving what is due to them.

The 3rd round of Bitiala provided a lot insights to the participants coming from the youth CSOs/NGOs, traditional leaders, and members of the academe. They encouraged everyone to localize the discussions and conversations on ungaya. A bitiala specific on ungaya can also be done at the community level to provide space for people to share their thoughts on ungaya and also for leaders to learn how they can express their ungaya to their constituents.

We also learned from the Bitiala the need to demand ungaya from our leaders. For us, constituents have the right to claim ungaya from their leaders who are the duty bearers and the ones who hold the power and resources. Demanding ungaya from leaders will be difficult and challenging but they believe they can do it together through crafting formal resolutions and petitions and organizing dialogues.

C. Intersecting Justice Systems in the Bangsamoro

1) Bangsamoro Intersecting Justice Systems

The recent gathering of legal experts and government officials in Cotabato City marks the turnaround of law-making process with a tripartite structure that incorporates the Philippine statutory law, the Shari jurisdiction, and the traditional conflict resolution measures. Chaired by MP Atty. Sha Elijah Dumama-Alba, the discussion of July 21 is an extension of the February Tri-Justice Summit and an indication of how the Bangsamoro government is committed to entrenching a pluralistic legal framework within the framework of its 2023- 2028 development plan. Dumama-Alba pointed out that the framework should be in accordance with the unique cultural identity of the region and at the same time be in line with the constitutional principles, Shari'ah, and tribal practices, a fine balance that the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) requires. The initiative will help solve cross-cutting issues in the judiciary and this will make the delivery of justice appealing to the socio-legal realities of the communities that are majorly Muslims.

2) Cultural Heritage as a Legal Foundation

The discussions provided an understanding of how the Tri-Justice System needs to negotiate the complicated legal traditions of the Bangsamoro. Respondents emphasized that the Regular Courts (national judiciary), Shari'ah Courts (Islamic law) and Tribal Courts (adat based arbitration) each have some important but different functions in dispute resolution. As an example, Shari'ah Courts are used to adjudicate on issues of Muslim personal law and Tribal Courts to adjudicate on clan related issues like rido (blood feuds). Parang Mayor Cahar Ibay exemplified this process by the use of grassroots interventions where the peacemaking mediators bargain reparations between the feuding families to avert the spiral. His testimony points out how traditional justice which is usually sidelined in official policy but which is a practical tool of maintaining social cohesion. The effectiveness of the framework depends on institutionalisation of such indigenous practices without undermining their communal authority, which is also often seen to be the conflict when codification is discussed against organic dispute-resolution norms.

3) The Legal Pluralism: how to operationalize it

One of the major problems in designing the framework is the elimination of the jurisdictional grey area between the three systems. Although the BOL does not ignore Shari'ah and tribal laws, there is a risk of forum shopping and conflicting jurisdiction especially in criminal, family and property cases. An example is that rido cases can also be combined with tribal peace treaties, Shariah reconciliations, and state prosecution. The summit introduced some tools of referral between the systems, including the necessity of involving tribal leaders in discussing the customary law with Shari'ah judges or training the national prosecutors on the Islamic jurisprudence. However, the problems are still present; the UNDP-SC (2004) recorded similar integration problems, where informal systems prevailed over formal courts since they were more easily accessible and their services more trusted by the cultures. Bangsamoro now has to work out such differences with proper procedural guidelines and capacity building of cross system practitioners of the law.

4) Anciently Towards a Unified Model of Justice

This project can be seen as a historic effort to reconcile plural legal orders that can be of great use in post-conflict areas in the world, where legal hybridity is struggled with. The framework (with the core focus on the Bangsamoro as required by the BOL) could increase public trust and respond to the critique of the lack of legitimacy in the Shari'ah courts presented by Diacat (2021). Nevertheless, as Stephens (2011) warns, institutionalization at the top can by default be marginalizing to the localized processes like rido mediation. As a result, the Bangsamoro government has to become flexible: it should entrench the central principles but retain the mechanisms of adaptation within the community. In case this model is successful, it would change the way justice would be practiced in the Southern Philippines, proving that with well-planned legal pluralism, the gap between the state and indigenous sovereignty may be established.

3. Research Methodology

This section contains the research design, the locale of the study, the respondents, sampling methods, data gathering procedures, and methods of data analysis.

A. Research Design

The current research design defines the methodological context of the study of the degree to which the Philippine, Shari'ah, and traditional legal systems have impacts on socio-legal realities of the Bangsamoro peoples in the Bangsamoro

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). To collect the complexities of the legal pluralism and the socio-legal implications of the matter, a qualitative research methodology is taken. Subjective experiences, cultural subtleties and contextual dynamics are best addressed by qualitative methods, thus fitting the focus of the study on the lived experiences of the Bangsamoro people. The design combines socio-legal analysis, which is intended to examine the legal frameworks and their interactions, and ethnographic approaches, which are also expected to produce the community opinion and practices. This twin-pronged approach, consequently, enables a holistic study of the formal (e.g., Shariah courts) and informal (e.g., adat-based dispute resolution) systems, hence answering the research questions in a holistic way.

B. Locale of the Study

The research is contextualized as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), an area in the Southern Philippines created as a result of the Republic Act No. 11054 (Bangsamoro Organic law) in 2018 to allow Muslim and indigenous people to enjoy their autonomy. From geographical perspective, BARMM is divided into six provinces Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, and the Special Geographic Area (SGA) that has 63 barangays in the Cotabato province. The urban centres are major centres that exist alongside rural municipalities and island communities and hence creating a heterogeneous socio-economic landscape such as the regional capital Cotabato City and the city of Marawi. The topography of the region includes coastal plots in Sulu and Tawi Tawi, mountainous plots in Lanao del Sur, and plain plots in Maguindanao which all influence the local livelihoods including the fishing, agriculture, and trade. The historical aspect of BARMM, both in terms of its location in Mindanao, which borders non-BARMM provinces, and what makes it vulnerable to security issues that may arise because of historical conflicts, makes it a crucial environment to study how legal pluralism impacts the access to justice.

The Bangsamoro peoples included in the BARMM are 13 Islamised ethnolinguistic groups, such as Meranao, Maguindanaon, Tausug, Badjao and Yakan, and indigenous non-Muslim Lumad peoples, such as Teduray and Lamangian, along with settler communities. This cultural pluralism shapes the legal environment of the region, which is a three-way coexistence of the Philippine state law, Shari law and adat-based systems. Every tribal unit brings with them unique cultural practices and dialects, namely: Maranao in Lanao del Sur, Tausug in Sulu and Maguindanao in the namesake provinces, which in turn influences preferences and formats of the law and dispute resolution. As an illustration, Sharia courts that are concentrated in urban areas like Marawi adjudicate over Islamic personal law cases and adat practices, which are governed by datus or tribal elders and are common in rural environments including the Badjao groups in Tawi-Tawi. It is the complexity of these systems, as seen in family arguments, land squabble and politics, whereby the city is represented with the formal courts and country takes recourse to community mediators. This multi-ethnic and cultural mosaic, together with the post-conflict transition in the region, provides a special setting in the context of which the degree to which legal pluralism influences socio-legal reality can be studied.

The socio-legal environment of the BARMM is also defined by the fact that it is still trying to coordinate its plural legal systems, with the Tri-Justice System being one such effort to have regular courts, Shari'ah courts, and tribal courts, as well as, coordinate their activity within a single procedural system. The major courts such as the Shari'ah Circuit and District Courts in Cotabato City and Lanao del Sur, secular courts under the system of Philippine courts and the community-based dispute resolution systems operate across the region. The future fieldwork will result in the sampling of urban and rural areas to cover the spectrum of experiences; the selection of the site will be determined based on the factors of accessibility, security, and the existence of active legal practices. As an example, Cotabato City is accessible to BARMM government offices and the courts compared to rural municipalities in Maguindanao and island communities in Tawi-Tawi provide information on adat practices by marginalised populations, such as the Badjao and Teduray. Despite the security issue and bureaucratic challenges, the dynamic legal and cultural environment of the BARMM makes it a relevant context in investigating the nexus of Philippine, Shari'ah, and traditional legal systems and their implications to the social, economic, and political realms.

C. The Research Participants and the Sampling Technique

The research will use purposive sampling approach to recruit the respondents who can provide deep and context-based information on the legal pluralism in the BARMM. This non-probability methodology was chosen in order to make the most of the diversity of perspectives and at the same time maintain the qualitative orientation of the study. The sample will include thirty to forty key informants to be interviewed in semi-structure interviews, divided into five to seven Shari'ah judges, five to seven traditional leaders (including datus or tribal elders), five to seven BARMM officials, ten to fifteen community members who will be chosen to balance the quantity of gender, age, and tribal affiliation, and three to five scholars or legal practitioners. Simultaneously, four or five focus-group discussions (FGDs) will be conducted with twenty-four or forty-eight participants who will be divided into two groups (two groups in urban areas and two or four groups in rural settings) to make sure that all the marginalised interlocutors, including women, youth, Badjao, and Teduray, are represented. Participant observation will consist of ten to fifteen sessions in Shariah courts, secular courts, and community mediation facilities, but only where access to the site is possible and necessary permissions are made.

The predetermined criteria will be used to select the participants. Diversity will be taken care of by including people of all six BARMM provinces, Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi and also the representatives of different tribes (e.g., Meranao, Tausug, Badjao and Teduray) and socio-economic

backgrounds. Key informants will be required to be experts in particular, which includes judges, officials, and scholars who should have direct experience of the legal systems; community members will be selected on the basis of direct experience of navigating the justice institutions. The issue of accessibility will also be given priority by first choosing those who are willing and who can participate in the interviews or FGDs with consideration of linguistic and cultural sensitivities. The recruitment will be enhanced by the usage of local intermediaries as community leaders and NGOs to create trust and cultural appropriateness, where the authorities of BARMM and cultural heritage organisations endorse the identification of judges, officials, and traditional leaders.

D. Research Instruments and its Validity

The research instruments used in the study are structured in a manner that they would generate in-depth qualitative information in the five research questions of the investigation. The main tools will include a document analysis checklist, semi-structured interview guide, focus group discussion (FGD) guide, and observation protocol.

The document analysis checklist is a systematic review of the legal texts, such as the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Republic Act No. 11054 (Bangsamoro Organic Law), Presidential Decree No. 1083 (Code of Muslim Personal Laws), the BARMM policy documents (e.g., 2023 Tri-Justice Summit outcomes), and the adat practices documented. Special attention is also given to such themes as the jurisdiction scope, standards of justice, and harmonization procedures.

The semi-structured interview guide, which is designed to be used with 30-40 key informants (including 5-7 Shari'ah judges, 5-7 traditional leaders, 5-7 BARMM officials, 10-15 community members and 3-5 legal practitioners or scholars) contains the open-ended questions like: How do Shari'ah courts compare to secular courts in terms of involving family disputes? and What role does the language play in your preference of legal systems? Such questions examine the legal strategies, navigation, socio-legal, and cultural issues.

The FGD guide that is used with 4-6 groups (24-48 participants) in BARMM communities will be distributed in the urban and rural areas, and its questions (such as What barriers do you face accessing justice? and Why is Shari'ah preferred in your community?) are aimed at capturing the collective experiences, particularly of the marginalized groups (women, Badjao, and Teduray).

Based on the observation protocol, 1015 sessions are directed in Shari, secular, and community mediations, and field notes are recorded on procedures, use of language, interactions among participants, and outcomes (e.g., case resolutions, adat practices).

These instruments were co-constructed with the conceptual framework of the study to guarantee validity by making sure that both questions and themes were in tandem with the research objectives of comparing the legal systems and evaluating strategies of harmonization, and theoretical lenses (legal pluralism, post-colonial theory, intersectionality).

An initial pilot test will be carried out on a small sample of respondents (e.g., 23 informants, 1 FGD) in Cotabato City to improve the level of clarity, cultural appropriateness, and relevance; feedbacks will be used to modify phrasing of questions or criteria of observations.

Expert validation will include discussing the research with academic supervisors and legal scholars of BARMM in order to verify the orderliness in connection with the scope and cultural context of the research. Inter-instrument triangulation, document results, interview, FGD and observation data will boost content validity as they will ensure coverage of the dimensions of legal pluralism is exhaustive.

In addition, the member checking, where the initial findings are discussed with a selected group of participants will help identify the correctness of the interpretations, in particular, the sensitive cultural or religious themes, which will strengthen the reliability and applicability of the instruments to the BARMM socio-legal reality.

E. Methods of Data Gathering

The research applies four major data collection strategies in order to gather rich and diverse data:

The issues studied in Document Analysis are the principles, jurisdictions, and policies of the Philippines, Shari'ah, and traditional legal systems, which answers Research Question 1 (differences in approaches to justice) and Research Question 5 (harmonization approaches).

Semi-Structured Interviews will collect detailed views of key informants on all research questions, especially on issues with navigation (RQ 2), socio-legal influences (RQ 3), and language and religious identity (RQ 4). The researcher will develop an interview guide containing open-ended questions based on each group of informants e.g. the judges will be asked questions such as, How do Shari'ah courts solve family disputes as opposed to secular courts? Whereas, the community members will be asked questions such as What are the challenges you face in accessing justice?

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) exploration explores local level experiences and preferences, in particular related to the navigation issues (RQ 2) and language and religious identity (RQ 4).

Participant Observation documents the practical use of legal systems to resolve dissimilarities in justice approach (RQ 1) and direction issues (RQ 2). This is done through observing court hearings and community mediation meetings, where clearances are taken with the BARMM authorities and community leaders. The researcher will make some field notes about procedures, language use, interactions of participants, and results (e.g., what were cases solved, what were practices in the culture). This will involve various sessions in a period of six months to get various cases including marriage wrangles and land wrangles.

F. Data Analysis

The data analysis is done in a multi-faceted qualitative methodology to answer the five research questions, which makes a comprehensive discussion of legal pluralism in

Bangsamoro Automous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Thematic analysis is the main technique, which will be used to find common themes and patterns in the information of semi-structured interviews (30-40 key informants, including Sharia judges, traditional leaders, BARMM authorities, community members, and legal scholars), focus group discussions (4-6 groups with 24-48 participants), and observation field notes (10-15 sessions in Sharia and secular courts and community mediations).

Comparative analysis assumes the evaluation of the differences and similarities between the principles, procedures, and outcomes of the Philippine, Shari'ah and traditional legal systems (RQ 1) and evaluates harmonization strategies (RQ 5). This entails creating matrices in NVivo to compare characteristics (e.g. the religious foundation of Shari'ah to the secular structure of the Philippine law) and the views of the stakeholders, cross-linked with the results of document analysis (e.g., Republic Act No. 11054, Code of Muslim Personal Laws).

Narrative analysis is used to study how language and religious identity affect the preferences of the law (RQ 4). It analyzes interview and FGD transcripts of stories or metaphors, e.g., trust in Shari'ah based on Islamic faith, through a post-colonial and intersectional lens in order to bring cultural and identity relations into focus.

To respond to socio-legal effects (RQ 3), thematic and narrative results will be synthesized to visualize social (e.g., community cohesion), economic (e.g., land access), and political (e.g., BARMM governance) results. The intersectionality makes sure that the marginalized groups such as women, Badjao, and Teduray are taken care of.

Triangulation also boosts validity in terms of cross-referencing the data collected through interviews, FGDs, observations, and documents thus averting biases expressed in the scope and limitation. Member checking consists of discussing initial themes with some chosen participants (e.g., community members, judges) to be able to ensure that the initial themes are correct, especially in the case of sensitive cultural or religious interpretations, whereas peer debriefing with academic supervisors guarantees analytical rigor.

It is hoped that this combined analytical approach will lead to effective results that will inform harmonization initiatives including the BARMM Tri-Justice System that will agree with the research goals and theoretical basis of legal pluralism, post-colonialism, and intersectionality.

G. Ethical Consideration

The research ethical issues are aimed at making the research procedure conducted in an ethical and upright manner, with reverence and delicacy in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). All participants (30-40 key informants and 24-48 focus group discussion (FGD)) will be given informed consent by providing clear explanations of the purpose of the study, procedures, risks, and benefits in a language comprehensible to the study participants (e.g., English, Filipino, or local language such as Maranao or Tausug), with both informed consent and written or verbal forms given to the participants who are free to withdraw without any repercussions. The policy of confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by assigning pseudonyms to participants to transcripts and reports, data (e.g., audio records, field notes) are stored in encrypted devices and encrypted cloud services and services, and access is restricted to the research team, especially in case of sensitive issues, such as religious conflicts or adat practices.

The culture sensitivity is the most important as the context of BARMM is Islamic and tribal, and in terms of the post-colonial theory, the study will observe the cultural norms of the Bangsamoro such as Islamic values and adat traditions, adhering to the external assumption.

A university ethics board and BARMM authorities will be obtained in order to ensure ethical approval of the study and in line with the Philippine research ethics guidelines with community consent being acquired to carry out observations in cultural contexts such adat mediations. The reciprocity will be through sharing of summarized findings, with the participants and BARMM stakeholders, through community presentation or policy brief, and crediting their respective contributions to the work and ensuring that it is a win-win endeavor as highlighted in the Significance of the Study.

4. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

A. The Differing Approaches to Justice of the Philippine, Shari'ah, and Traditional

Within this section, the author reveals the results of the qualitative research based on the analysis of the documents, semi-structured interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs), and participant observations, as defined in this section of the research methodology. The data collection took place in June through November in 2025 after the dissertation proposal was approved in May 2025. Thirty-five key informants were interviewed, comprising of 6 Sharia judges, 6 traditional leaders (datus and tribal leaders), 7 BARMM officials, 12 community members (balanced by gender, age, and tribal membership, with mostly marginalized groups, as women, youth, Badjao, and Teduray, being the focus), and 4 legal practitioners/scholars. There were five FGDs that dealt with 42 participants in urban (Cotabato City, Marawi City) and rural (municipalities in Maguindanao del Sur, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi) environments. The total number of participants observations is 12 which consists of 4 Shari'ah court sessions, 4 secular court sessions and 4 community adat based mediations. Legal texts that were studied for document analysis were the Bangsamoro Organic Law (Republic Act No. 11054), the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (Presidential Decree No. 1083), the BARMM policy documents (e.g., the results of the Tri-Justice Summit held in 2023 and 2025), and documented adat practices.

NVivo software was used to identify patterns, differences, and narratives by the use of thematic analysis, comparative analysis, and narrative analysis. Data triangulation was done to guarantee validity and member checking done to confirm interpretations. The research findings are systematized based on

five research questions of the study incorporating theoretical perspectives of legal pluralism (Merry, 1988), post-colonial theory (Said, 1978), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), and legal hybridity (Deinla, 2019).

B. Legal Systems in the Bangsamoro Region

Comparative and thematic analysis identified various ways of justice in the three systems, which were defined by the principles, procedures, and outcomes in their foundation. A legal system as outlined by the BARMM officials and legal scholars is secular and adversarial, which is based on the Constitution of 1987 and which places an emphasis on the rights of individuals, the due process and state enforcement. Secular courts revealed formal in session in English or Filipino, where trials on criminal and civil cases, including property cases, were based on evidence. According to one official in BARMM, the state system is more focused on constitutional adherence; however, it seems that it is often remote form our cultural realities. Another official replied, justice in the state courts was not a healed community but the victory in the case by legal arguments.

Contrary to this, the Shari'ah legal system is restorative and faith based and is based on Islamic sources such as the Quran and Sunnah as dictated by Presidential Decree No. 1083. According to Shari'ah judges interviewing, it was stressed that maslaha (public interest) and reconciliation in individual and familial affairs (marriage and inheritance) are emphasized. The observation that was made in courts emphasized the non-punitive, community-based sessions, usually held in the vernacular, centered on an emphasis on moral and religious harmony. One Shari'ah judge clarified, we are trying to conserve religion, the life, the intelligence, the family and the property unlike what is punitive with the state. One other judge said, Shari -ah is about making souls go back to peace and not just about imposing rules.

The ancient adat system is rooted in the customary norms of Bangsamoro tribes, which is a communal and consensus-based system, but is headed by the datus or elders. In Maguindanaon and Tausug adat, FGD members stated that adat focuses on having ungaya (common good) and healing practices such as blood money in rido (clan feuds). Adat mediations were observed to have a flexible and oral proceeding that privileged social cohesion over legal precedence in tribal dialects. One of the Tudurays elders replied, Adat is our heritage in life, it decides conflicts in terms of dialogue not the strict court. One of the Yakan traditional leaders also said, "In adat, all people have a say; not about lawyers, but about family, and honor.

Comparative matrices were used to demonstrate overlaps e.g. all the systems dealing with family problems but differences between enforcement; state law through police, Shari law through religious authority and adat through community pressure. These disparities are in line with legal pluralism where non-state systems provide justice that is culturally resonant but not integrated.

C. The Challenges Faced by Bangsamoro Communities in Navigating Multiple Legal Systems

Overlapping jurisdictions, barriers of access, and post-colonial aggravated disparities are emerging topics. The focus group discussions (FGDs) in the rural areas showed that there were confusion over the legal regime that has to be applied and this was seen in land cases where adat claims contradict state titles, thereby encouraging forum shopping or leading to the unresolved cases. One of the Badjao women respondents stated that, we first go to adat, however, in case of failure, Shari'ah courts or state courts are too distant and costly. Another member of Sulu society told, "The mechanisms are incompatible, and we pay twice, first in adat blood money, and then in legal expenses. The interviews also pointed at language, with the state courts using English or Filipino, which marginalises those who speak neither, whereas the Shari-ah and adat courts can support other dialects, like the Maranao or Tausug. One of the Lambangians elders said, how can we assert our rights, who know not the language? It is like colonial chains reborn again.

Intersectionality showed unequal effects on the marginalised populations. Feminist female participants in FGDs were found to have seen patriarchal biases in adat which curtailed their representation in inheritance conflicts and that the indigenous Lumad people like the Teduray had been marginalised in Shari'ah-dominated procedures. One of the Teduray women said, "We are torn apart in systems as indigenous, Shari'ah sees us as foreigners, and state law is not concerned with our traditions. According to the officials of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), the security in remote areas such as Sulu was a constraint to accessing courts. Inefficiencies as observed comprised of delay of Shari'ah cases due to scarcity of resources. One of the youth participants said, there was no way to get a boat to courts in Tawi-Tawi that was even more expensive than our daily income; we are not supposed to make a luxury out of justice. In general, 78 per cent of the participants cited unequal access as one of the most important issues, and legal pluralism without harmonisation can be excluded.

D. The Influence of the Philippine, Shari'ah, and Traditional Legal Systems on the Social, Economic, and Political Lives of the Bangsamoro People

Multifaceted effects were found in narrative analysis. Adat and Shari'ah socially contribute to cohesion by promoting restorative justice, as has to be seen in rido resolutions which reestablish community bonds. An FGD of the Maranao youth commented that Adat is what is holding us as one family and otherwise we would be destroyed by feuds. A Basilan participant noted, "Shari law is what brings tranquility in our marriages and this makes our social relationships stronger than what the state law can do. Nevertheless, inter-system conflict represents a loss of trust especially among women who have to face gender inequities. One of the FGD respondents said, in adat, men make decisions, and we remain quiet; it separates, instead of bringing us together.

Overlapping jurisdictions impact on land and property rights economically. The analysis of documents and interviews showed that adat gathers lands belonging to the tribes like the Lambagian, and the formalities of the state law are unfavorable to the rural poor, which causes conflicts and poverty. Maguindanaon farmer observed, Shari'ah helps in inheritance, whereas the state bureaucracy prevents us in economic development. One of the Sama fishermen commented, Adat guards our territories in the sea, but unless the state acknowledges it, we are losing to the foreigners. Politically, the systems affect the participation under the BARMM administration. Shari'ah judges pointed at the fact that religion legitimacy gives Muslim voices power, while adat leaders are involved into local politics. However, the politics of rido which are based on the clan interfere with democratic procedures as witnessed during mediation meetings. An official of the BARMM commented, adat datus has a hand in elections, it is a mix of tradition and politics, good or bad. Intersectionality emerged in diverse ways: young people enjoy the benefits of hybridity, but indigenous communities feel marginal to the BARMM structure dominated by Muslims. One of the Badjao youth observed, "We are a seafarer and the laws of the land cannot apply to our life and we are restricted in the political sphere.

E. Language and Religious Identity as Factors Influencing the Preference for Shari'ah Over Other Legal Systems

The themes of narratives focused on cultural alignment. Shari'ah preference is based on religious identity because 85 0 per cent of the participants considered it to be a representation of faith and opposition to colonial secularism. One of the elders of Tausug explained, Shari'ah is our identity, it is in harmony with our beliefs unlike those of the foreign laws of the state. A woman of Maranao told me that her religion leads her to Shari'ah; she feels really understood as a Muslim there. Language confirms this, where the Shari'ah courts use the local dialects, which increase accessibility, and the English/Filipino used by the state courts brings about alienation. Lanao speakers in FGDs reported that they prefer Shari'ah because of its linguistic and religious overtones. One interviewee reported that in Shari'ah, we are our own people; we become strangers in our own country in the state courts.

The post-colonial theory approaches this as a repossession of independence, where intersectionality can be used to accentuate differences: women choose Shari'ah to be used in family-related issues even though patriarchy, whereas non-Muslim Lumad is more inclined to adat. One of the Teduray elders observed, our religious identity has been linked to nature rather than Islam, hence adat is our language. A fellow FGD member of the Maguindanao community told that, in their case, it is the religious pride that drives them to Shari'ah but when language collapses in the state courts, this becomes a hindrance to justice. In general, these aspects make Shari preferable to 72% of participants.

F. The Harmonization of the Philippine, Shari'ah, and Traditional Legal Systems to Improve Access to Justice for the Bangsamoro People

Thematic analysis was used to name Tri-Justice System strategies. The 2025 workshops (e.g., June16-18 and July2 workshops by BAGO and SUBATRA) analyzed on paper showed progress in the direction of frameworks of inter-system referrals and training. BARMM officials promoted the codification of adat and harmonized it with the constitutional standards. To reduce the barriers, the participants proposed the use of multilingual court materials and community education. Furthering legal hybridity a legal scholar suggested hybrid mechanisms, including joint panels on overlaps. Another scholar soon followed with, harmonisation does not mean wiping out, but integrating, dhamma inform Shari'ah, and they direct state law. FGDs focused more on inclusive policies to marginalised groups with 90 per cent of them in support of Tri justices expansion. A woman contestant declared, educate the judges in dialects and manners; give justice an mouth Organ.

Challenges include gaps in resources, although there is movement over the recent past, with the Shari'ah module turnover, in October 2025. One of the conservative chiefs said, The Tri-Justice is our bridge--so strengthen it with building up to stretch our broken ways across.

By is all, the results confirm the technicalities of legal pluralism in BARMM, which provides avenues to fair justice.

5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This section summarizes the major findings of the research, makes conclusions based on the research questions and theoretical framework and suggests guidelines to stakeholders in the Bangsamoro autonomy region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). An examination is based on the collected qualitative data and understood in Section 4, incorporating views of legal pluralism Post-colonial theory (Said, 1978), intersectionality (Crenshaw,), and post-colonial theory are discussed (Merry, 1988, 1989), and legal hybridity (Deinla, 2019). By December 2025, ongoing advances in the justice reforms in BARMM including the growth of the Tri -Justice System, highlight the timeliness of these revelations to improve access to socio-legal equity and justice.

A. Summary of Findings

The paper critically analyzed how the Philippine national legal works together.

Shariah law, system and traditional adat systems in the socio-legal development realities of the Bangsamoro people. Results obtained using 35 interviews, five focus 42 participants in group discussions (FGDs), twelve observation sessions, and document analysis demonstrated some subtle dynamics among the five research questions.

B. Differences in Approaches to Justice

The Philippine system was found to be secular, adversarial and goal-oriented individual rights and formal enforcement which are usually perceived to be culturally far apart.

Shariah focused on restorative justice on the basis of Islamic

doctrines like maslaha (the interest of the population), and the reconciliation in personal affairs.

Classical adat systems were group-oriented and agreement based, based on traditional standards like ungaya (common good) to solve conflict like rido (clan feuds). There were also overlaps in family and property matters, but disagreements in processes- official trials and unofficial mediations legal pluralism was noted through enforcement mechanisms.

Respondents reported that non-state institutions offered justice that were culturally resonant, congruence with the normative orders that exist coexist with the opinion of Merry (1988).

C. Challenges in Navigating Multiple Legal Systems

Such critical issues as overlap of jurisdiction causing confusion and forum shopping, language barriers ostracizing non-English/Filipino speakers in state courts, unequal availability on the basis of geographic, economic, and security remote location restrictions, like Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. Intersectionality chooses to expose unequal weight to excluded populations: women had to patriarchal prejudices in adat, indigenous Lumad (e.g., Teduray) were subjected to Shariath exclusion and rural poor were faced with resource limitations. In general, 78 % of the participants found unequal access to be a first concern which is aggravated by post-colonial jurisdictions that favor state law.

As Said (1978) notes, there is more to be done to ensure that better integration is achieved in order to prevent exclusion.

D. Influence on Social, Economic, and Political Lives

The social cohesion was achieved by restorative practices within the Shari'ah and the systems adat, including rido resolutions that restored community bonds, but development destroyed confidence especially among women and youth. Economically, overlapping adat securing jumbled jurisdictions of land and inheritance common property and state officialdom were against the peasants, causing conflicts and lack of money. Religiously, Shariah has a legitimate political status nourishing Muslim involvement in BARMM governance, as well as adat supported local leadership but rido-based clan politics sabotaged democratic processes. Intersectional analysis had mixed effects: young people have benefited of hybrid practices, yet the indigenous groups were marginalized in the Muslim-majority construct, which represents the idea of legal introduced by Deinla (2019) hybridity after conflict settings.

E. Role of Language and Religious Identity in Preference for Shari'ah

It was an 85 % preference based on religious identity which was strongly related to Islam. As a way of cultural opposition to colonial secularism, Shariah is a manifestation of faith and community values. This was supported by language, and the rendering of Shariah by local dialects (e.g., Maranao, Tausug) makes it localized less complicated than the English/Filipino of the state courts. Narratives highlighted but differences, post-colonial restoration of independence (Said, 1978) existed: women preferred Shariah to family issues contrary to patriarchal elements, and non-Muslim Lumad favoured adat. Overall, 72 % of respondents prioritized Shariah whereby it stressed its alignment with Bangsamoro identity.

F. Harmonization Strategies for Improved Access to Justice

Inter-system Progress in inter-system Strategies founded on the Tri- Justices System codification, training and referrals of adat whilst making it constitutional alignment. Respondents defended multi-lingual materials, community education, and intermedia systems like collaborative panels. FGDs revealed 90 % favored expansion but still had some difficulties like resource disparities.

The latest 2025 shifts, such as the training modules and summits on Shariah, legal hybridity, which is facilitated by indicated momentum (Deinla, 2019) as a channel to inclusive justice.

To conclude, the results confirm the dual nature of legal pluralism in BARMM: facilitating cultural conservation and navigation issue that affects socio-legal realities. Ethnographic approach of the study was able to capture a variety voices, bridging gaps in current literature of marginalized experience and harmonization efforts.

G. Conclusions

Resting on the findings, it is possible to make several conclusions that refer to the theoretical framework and the main problem regarding the way the legal systems construct Bangsamoro socio-legal realities.

1. *Distinct yet Overlapping Justice Approaches Reinforce Pluralism:* Secular formalism of the Philippine system is opposed to Shari'ah faith-based restoration and adat communal consensus, which results in a pluralistic space that replicates the dynamic interaction of normative orders created by Merry (1988). This variety offers increased options to justice but also creates inefficiencies in the lack of coordination, with the idea that proper pluralism requires formal acknowledgment of validity of non-state systems according to Bangsamoro culture settings.
2. *Navigation Challenges Perpetuate Inequities:* Marginalized people are disproportionately affected by jurisdictional conflicts, language barriers, and access issues, and this situation is reinforced by intersectional analysis, magnified by post-colonial power dynamics of the type, which Said (1978) described (Crenshaw, 1989). In turn, legal pluralism can be independent, but it has the danger of marginalizing the weakest, unless it is alleviated by the inclusion reforms, which must take into consideration the colonial heritage and advance equal access to justice.
3. *Profound Socio-Legal Impacts on Bangsamoro Lives:* When taken together, the legal systems promote social unity and political empowerment and at the same time hinder economic stability and gender equality. Harmonised systems have the potential of increasing positive outcomes because hybrid practices, according

to Deinla (2019), offer adaptive benefits, and thus, harmonised systems can serve as a means of sustainable peace and development in post-conflict BARMM rather than a source of division as it has been.

4. *Cultural Factors Drive System Preferences:* Shari'ah is a post-colonial resistance mechanism that enjoys the support of religious identity and language with great emphasis on the fact that it is a mechanism that helps in identity affirmation. System preferences, based on this, will be an extension of stronger cultural claims, which should be awarded by policies, which will increase trust and use of all systems.
5. *Harmonization is Feasible and Essential:* The Tri-Justice system is an initiative that proves that harmonisation is capable of filling gaps and facilitating access hybridisation. The general finding, which may be summarised, is that the issue of jurisdiction may be solved through strategic integration, basing on community feedback, as well as the representation of marginalised voices and compliance with the autonomy goals of BARMM in the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

These conclusions validate the study's conceptual framework, demonstrating that legal pluralism in BARMM is a site of both tension and opportunity, shaped by historical, cultural, and social intersections. They contribute to global discourse on post-conflict justice, emphasizing culturally sensitive approaches for regions with diverse legal traditions.

H. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following suggestions can be provided to the stakeholders to improve the coherence and equity of the legal systems of BARMM. These recommendations are further classified as target groups and the action steps are based on the findings.

1) For BARMM Policymakers and Government Officials

1. Broaden the Tri-Justice System

Rapidly introduce the Philippine, Shariah and adat systems by defining official referral systems between the three systems, and conducting training programmes together on judges and community leaders. Use the 2026 BARMM budget to fund pilot hybrid courts in regions with high levels of conflict like Maguindanao and Sulu to determine the possibility of harmonisation.

2. Sort out Jurisdiction Infringements

Pass a law that spells out the jurisdiction of each system, as an example, by broadening the jurisdiction of Shari'ah to petty crimes even as it remains compliant with the Constitution, based on the findings of the 2025 summit.

3. Encourage Multilingual and Accessibility

Required universal use of local dialects in every court, and translation services, with mobile justice units on the remote islands like Tawi-Tawi, to minimise constraints to the marginalised communities.

2) For Shari'ah Judges and Traditional Leaders

1. Develop Sharing Networks

Conduct periodic inter-system discussions, including quarterly forums with adat elders and state judges, to discuss best practice and sort out areas of overlap in procedures, and on the basis of maslaha and ungaya principles.

2. Integrate Intersectional Sensitivity

Gender and indigenous equity, train adat on intersectionality and reform patriarchal aspects of adat to make sure that the voices of women and the Lumad are heard in court.

3. Bureaucratize and Codexify Practices

Work with BARMM to formalize adat norms and thus maintain the cultural heritage and meet formal standards of recognition in line with national requirements.

3) For Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and NGOs

1. Launch Awareness Campaigns

Establish local education programmes about navigating legal systems, approach rural and marginalised (e.g. Badjao women, Téduray youth) by holding workshops in local dialects to heighten use of Shari'ah and adat.

2. Promote Disadvantaged Rights

Collaborate with BARMM to track the access to justice, and the findings of the study may be used to promote reforms like gender-sensitive mediation guidelines and non-disruption of indigenous customary laws.

3. Assistance Research and Monitoring

Fund longitudinal research on Tri-Justice system effectiveness, particularly socio-economic outcomes to create evidence to support policy advocacy.

4) For Academic Researchers and Legal Scholars

1. Carry out Comparative Studies

Follow up this study by contrasting the pluralism of BARMM with other Muslim majority areas like the Aceh of Indonesia to understand the long-term impacts of harmonisation in peace building.

2. Combine Theoretical Developments

Further research in the field must further intersectionalize and include the new theories of digital justice tools of remote access in conflict zones.

3. Cooperate on Capacity Building

Collaborate with BARMM institutions by creating courses on legal hybridity in law schools that prepares future attorneys to work in a pluralistic environment.

5) For National Government and Policy Institutions

1. Enhance National-Regional Co-ordination

Revise the national laws to include BARMM autonomy, such as adat resolutions in state courts, which will improve conflicts and will strengthen the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

2. Devote Capital to Equity

Enhance Shari'ah infrastructure and security financing in BARMM, where the constitutional human rights standards are maintained in every system.

3. Monitor Implementation

Create a joint national-BARMM control organ to monitor the level of harmonisation and reports to Congress on a yearly basis.

These suggestions will help close gaps identified, which will foster the development of a unified model of justice that respects Bangsamoro heritage and the development of equity. Participatory evaluations should be applied to check the implementation process to ensure that the sustainability does not end after the 2025 transition. Future studies would determine the effectiveness of these actions, and thus help to sustain peace in the area.

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