| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Give Change A Chance: Lived Experiences Of Moro Rebels Turned Public Servants

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| ABSTRACT

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), formerly known as the New Moro National Liberation Front, is an Islamic separatist organization based in the southern Philippines. It seeks an independent Islamic state or autonomous region for the Filipino Muslim minority, known as the Moro people, who live primarily in the Philippines' Mindanao region. The MILF is chiefly located in central Mindanao and is the Philippines' largest separatist group; it is also considered the strongest group in Mindanao (Macasalong 2014). This study delved into the lived experiences of the Moro rebels turned public servants, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) through a qualitative research method. The informants of this study were the ten (10) former or surrendered members of the MNLF or MILF. All informants were subjected to an individual in-depth interview. The findings of this study are described in emergent themes. Seven (7) emergent themes described the positive and negative experiences of the informants as a former Moro rebels to becoming public servant. For the positive experiences, three (3) emergent themes were developed, namely *Fulfillment in Serving the Community, Positive Impact on Community Peace,* and *Societal Recognition and Acceptance.* For the negative experiences, four (4) emergent themes were also developed, to wit: *Facing Social Judgment and Stigma, Struggling with the New Responsibilities, Adjusting to Bureaucracy and Conflict of Ideals,* and *Emotional Struggles in Role Transition.* Meanwhile, two (2) emergent themes were formulated to explain how the informants address the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties as public servants, namely: *Building New Networks and Relationships* and *Leveraging Past Experiences.* Similarly, two (2) emergent themes were formulated to illustrate the strategies employed by the informants to address the problems encountered in the performance of their duties, namely: *Seeking Guidance and Support* and *Emphasizing Communication and Collaboration.* Finally, two (2) emergent themes were formulated to described the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of the performance of their duties as public servants, namely: *Enhancing Skills and Education* and *Improving Community Relations.* Based on the emergent themes identified, it is necessary to assist the former Moro rebels in transitioning to civilian life to enhance their overall well-being. A reintegration support program can be implemented to provide vocational training to cultivate a sense of community, resilience, and hope.

1. Introduction

Numerous individuals all through history have selected to revolt against specialist or societal traditions in arrange to battle for what they feel is right. Whereas a few rebels select to proceed their way of resistance and contradiction, others have found a way to channel their vitality and energy into helpful alter, getting to be community specialists and pioneers in their claim right.

Nelson Mandela, who started his career as a rough extremist engaging apartheid in South Africa, is one illustration of this alter. He has risen as a statesman and peacemaker after being detained for 27 years, directing the nation through a serene move to popular government and attempting to advance compromise and harmony among all South Africans.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), formerly known as the New Moro National Liberation Front, is an Islamic separatist organization based in the southern Philippines. It seeks an independent Islamic state or autonomous region for the Filipino Muslim minority, known as the Moro people, who live primarily in the Philippines' Mindanao region. The MILF is chiefly located in central Mindanao and is the Philippines' largest separatist group; it is also considered the strongest group in Mindanao (Macasalong 2014).

The MNLF was formally divided into two opposing structures: political and military. The side of politics had a system of province and village committees, a central committee, and several bureaus. The Bangsamoro Army, the military branch, had a regional field marshal and an overall field marshal, municipal police officers, and zone commanders. Multiple attempts were made to stop the MNLF-led skirmishes. Whatever the case of the innumerable battles, attacks, and rebellions, The MNLF now views this nonviolent approach as a crucial potential remedy to eradicate the Bangsamoro identity fight back against oppression, and marginalization, and fight for individual autonomy (Galeriana & Ragandang, 2018).

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front was initially an MNLF splinter organization. In the initial phase of the conflict, MNLF vice-chairman Salamat Hashim, the movement's founder and ideologue, was the head of international policy. Hashim and Misuari, the two leaders, had collaborated closely. Hashim even aided Misuari in obtaining the position of chairman. However, because of divergent philosophies and styles of leadership style, the two leaders started to diverge on practically every topic (Macasalong, 2014). Hashim began to argue and raise doubts about certain matters, and choices that, in his opinion, were not Islamic.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao comprises five provinces: Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur, and Maguindanao. A region within the southern Philippines has been tormented by outfitted strife for decades. The battle involves a variety of well-equipped groups, including the Abu Sayyaf Assembly, the Moro National Liberation Front, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The conflict has resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians and various victims and human rights violations; many of them were forced to live in overcrowded evacuation centers and live with their relatives in neighboring regions such as Region IX, Region 11, Region 10, Region 12, and even fled to Caraga Region.

For almost half of the century, there also hundreds if not thousands of members of the secessionist group in the Bangsamoro Region who were killed in battle, or some laid down their weapons and submitted themselves to judicial proceedings as one of the essences of democracy. Some were able to enjoy the privilege to reintegrate into the community and continue their lives as ordinary citizens and some turned into community servants. As humans persist in imperfections, a chance to change is deserved by everyone.

For these reasons, the researcher is urged to conduct this study to find out the lived experiences of the former Moro rebels, it also determines their coping mechanisms in surpassing the challenges of being a rebel, and lastly, this Study will be able to identify the aspirations of the former MILF and MNLF members in changing lives, turning into a public servant.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored on the following theories, namely: Anomie Theory of Durkheim (1893), Marxist Theory (1859), and Social Control Theory (1969).

Anomie, according to Durkheim, refers to a state of normlessness or a breakdown of social norms and values within a society. Durkheim (1893) argued that anomie occurs when there is a disjunction between the cultural goals of a society and the legitimate means available for individuals to achieve those goals. In other words, when societal expectations for success become disconnected from the means by which individuals can attain that success, it creates a state of anomie.

The theory of anomie is deeply rooted in his analysis of the division of labor in society. Societies evolve and become more complex. There is a shift from mechanical solidarity (based on shared values and norms) to organic solidarity (based on interdependence and specialization). However, rapid social change and economic upheaval can lead to a breakdown in organic solidarity, resulting in anomie. Highlighted that anomie can be particularly prevalent during times of rapid social change, such as periods of economic instability or industrialization (Durkheim, 1893).

Furthermore, associated anomie with social disorganization and increased rates of deviant behavior, including crime and suicide. He argued that when individuals feel disconnected from the social fabric and lack clear guidelines for behavior, they may resort to deviant means to achieve their goals or may experience feelings of despair and hopelessness. Durkheim's theory of anomie remains influential in understanding the relationship between societal structures, cultural values, and individual behavior, providing valuable insights into the consequences of social change and the importance of maintaining social cohesion and solidarity.

Marxist Theory, a towering figure in the history of social and economic thought, developed the Marxist theory that sought to understand the dynamics of capitalism and advocate for its overthrow. At the core of Marx's theory is the concept of historical materialism, which posits that the driving force of historical change is the struggle between different social classes over control of the means of production. Marx famously stated, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels, 1848).

Capitalism is characterized by the exploitation of the working class, or proletariat, by the capitalist class, or bourgeoisie, who own the means of production. This exploitation is inherent in the capitalist mode of production, where workers are paid less than the value of the goods and services they produce, leading to surplus value accruing to the capitalist class (Marx, 1859).

Furthermore, Marx (1859) argued that capitalism inevitably leads to crises due to its internal contradictions. As capital accumulates in the hands of a few capitalists, the mass of workers is left with increasingly less purchasing power, leading to overproduction and economic downturns. Marx famously predicted that capitalism would sow the seeds of its own destruction, as these crises would eventually lead to the proletariat revolting against the bourgeoisie in a revolution. Marx and Engels declared, "What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own gravediggers" (Marx & Engels, 1848).

In Marx's vision, the ultimate goal of this revolution is the establishment of a classless society where the means of production are collectively owned and controlled by the workers. This communist society, Marx believed, would abolish the exploitation of man by man and create a society based on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (Marx, 1875). However, Marx did not provide a detailed blueprint for the transition from capitalism to communism, leaving this task to the revolutionary struggles of the working class itself. Marx's theory continues to inspire movements for social change and critique of capitalism around the world, as his analysis of the contradictions inherent in capitalist society remains relevant to understanding contemporary issues of inequality and exploitation.

Another support theory is the Social Control theory by Travis Hirschi (1969). It proposes that individuals obey societal norms and rules because of the social bonds they form with institutions, such as family, school, and community. According to Hirschi (1969), people naturally tend toward deviant behavior, but social bonds act as constraints, preventing individuals from engaging in activities that violate societal expectations. He argued that when these social bonds are weakened or broken, individuals are more likely to engage in delinquent or criminal behavior. These bonds include attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Attachment refers to the emotional connection individuals have with others, such as family and peers. Commitment involves an individual's investment in conventional activities like education or career goals. Involvement refers to participation in legitimate activities that leave less time and opportunity for deviance. Finally, belief pertains to an individual's acceptance of societal values and norms.

The theory suggests that individuals who lack strong social bonds or who experience disruptions in these bonds are more prone to deviance. For instance, adolescents who lack strong attachments to their families or schools may be more susceptible to peer pressure and delinquent behavior. Likewise, individuals who do not feel committed to conventional goals or who have low involvement in lawful activities may have fewer reasons to refrain from deviant acts. This theory has been widely influential in criminology and has been applied to various contexts (Hirschi, 1969).

Social control theory has implications for understanding and preventing criminal behavior. By strengthening social bonds and promoting attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in societal values, communities, and institutions can potentially reduce the likelihood of individuals engaging in deviant acts. This can be achieved through various means, including strengthening family relationships, enhancing educational and vocational opportunities, fostering community engagement, and promoting positive peer influences. Additionally, interventions targeting at-risk individuals, such as mentoring programs or counseling services, can help reinforce social bonds and deter delinquent behavior (Hirschi, 1969).

The legal basis of this study anchored with Proclamation No. 1090, February 05, 2021, granting amnesty to members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) who have committed crimes punishable under the revised penal code and special penal laws in furtherance of their political beliefs.

The amnesty is granted to members of the MILF who have committed crimes in pursuit of their political beliefs, whether punishable under the Revised Penal Code or special penal laws, including but not limited to Rebellion or insurrection; Conspiracy and proposal to commit rebellion or insurrection; Disloyalty of public officers or employees; Inciting to rebellion or insurrection; Sedition; Conspiracy to commit sedition; Inciting to sedition; Illegal assembly; Illegal association; Direct assault; Indirect assault; Resistance and disobedience to a person in authority or the agents of such person; Tumults and other disturbances of public order; Unlawful use of means of publication and unlawful utterances; Alarms and scandals; Illegal possession of firearms, ammunition or explosives, provided that these crimes or offense were committed in furtherance of, incident to, or in connection with the crimes of rebellion or insurrection; and Those charged, detained or convicted of common crimes but who can establish by substantial evidence that they have actually committed said crimes in pursuit of political beliefs;

This study also referred to Republic Act No. 11054, also known as an act providing for the organic law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The purpose of this Basic Law is to establish a political entity and provide for its basic structure of government in recognition of the justness and legitimacy of the cause of the Bangsamoro people and their aspiration to chart their political future through a democratic process that will secure their identity and posterity and allow for meaningful self-governance.

The idea that struggles can lead to rebellion is based on the premise that people are more likely to rebel when they face significant challenges or hardships that they perceive as unjust or unfair. These struggles can be social, economic, or political and can affect individuals or entire communities (Ahmed, 2012). One example of this can be seen in the Arab Spring uprisings that began in 2010. In countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, people faced high unemployment, corruption, and repression from their governments. These struggles led to widespread protests and, in some cases, armed conflict as people sought to overthrow their

governments and establish more democratic and just systems. Another example can be seen in the Black Lives Matter movement, which began in the United States in 2013 and gained momentum in 2020. The movement emerged in response to the unjust treatment of Black people by law enforcement and the criminal justice system. The struggles faced by Black people in the U.S., including systemic racism, police brutality, and economic inequality, have led to widespread protests, activism, and demands for change.

Research has also shown that economic struggles can lead to rebellion. According to a study by Acemoglu & Robinson (2000), countries with high levels of income inequality are more likely to experience political instability and violence. The Study suggests that when economic inequality is high, those at the bottom of the income distribution are more likely to engage in collective action to demand change. Governments can be a factor in rebellion when they fail to address the grievances and needs of their citizens or when they engage in repressive or corrupt practices. When people feel that their government is not representing their interests or is actively working against them, they may turn to rebellion as a means of seeking change or redress.

Rebels in the Philippines have existed for many years, and their motivations for rebellion are complex. The country has a long history of conflict, ranging from colonial rule by Spain, the United States, and Japan to more recent internal conflicts involving various insurgent groups. Steinberg (2018) said that the roots of rebellion in the Philippines can be traced back to colonial rule, which began in the 16th century. During this time, the Spanish imposed their culture, religion, and political system on the indigenous population, leading to widespread resistance and rebellion. This resistance continued even after the Philippines gained independence from Spain in 1898 and became a US colony.

Various insurgent groups have emerged in the Philippines, including the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), which has been active since the late 1960s. The NPA's stated goal is to overthrow the Philippine government and establish a socialist state. Other groups, such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), seek greater autonomy or independence for Muslim-majority regions in the southern Philippines. (Hutchcroft 1998) explained that the roots of rebellion in the Philippines can be traced to a range of factors, including economic inequality, political corruption, and exclusion of marginalized groups. These factors have contributed to a sense of grievance and relative deprivation among some segments of the population, making them more susceptible to joining rebellious movements.

Sidel (2006) argued that the persistence of rebellion in the Philippines can be attributed in part to the weaknesses of the state, including its inability to provide basic services and protect citizens' rights. This has created a space for rebel groups to operate and gain support from local communities. There are several social, political, and economic elements that contributed to the genesis of the Moro insurgents in the Philippines, and their history is complicated. For generations, the southern Philippines has been home to the Muslim Moro people. The Moro people were subjugated by Spanish colonists in the late 1800s and integrated them into the Philippine Islands as sultanates. Nonetheless, the Moro people persisted in opposing Spanish rule, and when the United States annexed the Philippines in the early 1900s, it encountered a similar level of opposition. The lengthy history of Moro resistance to colonization, which saw the Moro people struggle against both the Spanish and the Americans, is the source of the Moro insurgency (McKenna, 1998).

According to historian John T. Sidel (2006), the roots of the Moro rebellion can be traced back to the American colonial period. The US government, seeking to extend its control over the Philippines, implemented a policy of "benevolent assimilation," which involved imposing American culture and values on the Philippine population. However, this policy largely ignored the interests and traditions of the Moro people, who were already marginalized under Spanish rule.

In response to this marginalization, Moro leaders began organizing resistance movements, including the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which was founded in 1969. The MNLF sought greater autonomy or independence for Muslim-majority regions in the southern Philippines, which they called "Bangsamoro." Hutchcroft (1998) stated that economic factors, including unequal access to resources and development opportunities, also fueled the Moro rebellion. The Philippine government, under the leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos, implemented policies that favored the Christian-majority north of the country while neglecting the development needs of the south. This created a sense of relative deprivation among the Moro people and contributed to the growth of the rebellion.

The Moro rebellion has evolved over the years, with different factions and groups emerging and engaging in various forms of violence and negotiation with the Philippine government. However, the underlying grievances of the Moro people, including their desire for greater autonomy and access to resources, remain a key factor in the ongoing conflict. Fanon (1961) argued that oppression creates a deep sense of indignity and powerlessness among the oppressed, which can lead to a profound desire for liberation and the overthrow of the oppressor. He writes, "Oppression is a source of constant tension, which explodes in the end, in rebellion or revolution."

Fanon (1961) also noted that the experience of oppression can lead to the development of a collective consciousness among the oppressed, where they come to see themselves as a unified group with shared experiences and interests. This can create a powerful sense of solidarity and a willingness to fight for collective liberation.

In 1969, the Moro National Liberation Front was established. Its goal was to provide Mindanao's thirteen Islamized ethnolinguistic groups their own autonomous Bangsamoro nation. It is stated that Nur Misuari, the MNLF's founder, had a secularist understanding of Bangsamoro identity. The ARMM was established when the MNLF and the GPH signed a peace treaty in 1996. Four provinces would make up the ARMM, which would have limited autonomy (Lum & Dolven, 2014). According to reports, the MNLF wants the

complete implementation of its own peace accord with the GPH, rather than the recent GPH-MILF peace agreement (Lum & Dolven, 2014).

The armed conflict in Maguindanao has been ongoing since the inception of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and Moro National Liberation Front. The conflict began with the establishment of these two militant groups, which aimed to fight for the rights and self-determination of the Moro people in Mindanao. Over the years, the conflict has evolved and taken on various forms, including insurgent attacks, clashes with government forces, and territorial disputes (Carter, 2010). The conflict has resulted in countless lives lost, displacement of communities, and a continued cycle of violence and insecurity in the region. Some human rights advocates believe that the primary purpose of the extended militarization in Mindanao is to steal, take advantage, and take away indigenous people 's lands to use them for personal gains, such as business interests like mining ventures and, mall establishments, and the like.

However, it is important to note that this belief is subject to debate and may not capture the full complexity of the conflict. Involvement in jihadist militancy is often the result of a vocational decision within a family or a village, rather than an individual's epiphany, resulting in a situation where joining jihadist groups like the Maute Group is influenced by various factors, including material motives and familial or community pressures. After more than 5 months of intense fighting, the Battle for Marawi has concluded as the largest urban combat scenario in modern Philippine history. Winning a dynamic campaign against violent extremist organizations like the Maute Group is insufficient in itself to prevent the eruption of other 'Marawis' in the future. On 24 January 2018, Colonel Romeo Brawner, deputy commander of the Joint Task Force Marawi, stressed that even though hundreds of militants were killed in the battle, there are still IS-affiliated supporters and sympathizers who continue to pursue the goal of establishing an IS-styled regime in Southeast Asia (Interaksyon, 2018).

Significantly, the prolonged conflict in Basilan province between the Moro secessionist group and government security forces has led to an intensification of violence and a deteriorating security situation, resulting in large-scale displacement and widespread insecurity among the local population. The affected areas face constrained access to water and sanitation facilities, exacerbating the already dire conditions experienced by those who have been displaced. While efforts are underway by the government and humanitarian organizations to provide relief assistance, they encounter significant challenges due to the scale of displacement.

The economic struggles throughout history have been a significant factor in fueling rebellions. According to the study by economists Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2000), titled "Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty" economic inequality and a lack of opportunities can create a breeding ground for unrest. The Study suggests that when economic inequality is high, those at the bottom of the income distribution are more likely to engage in collective action to demand change (Acemoglu and James Robinson, 2000).

Moreover, Özerdem, A., & Podder, S. (2012) suggest that recruitment into MILF is not simply about religion or ideology. This is a simplification of its underlying support base. Several factors such as geographic location, especially proximity to Armed Forces of the Philippines camps, and conflict-related impacts of displacement, together with disparity in governance delivery levels, have resulted in divergence in levels of support for the Bangsamoro struggle between the two main ethnic groups. These variables will have an impact on the future existence of the MILF as a rebel movement.

Further, Hall (2009) emphasizes Integration of the military is frequently promoted as a means of preventing war from escalating again. The movement's potential to mount fresh threats against the government is diminished as a result of reintegrating former rebels into the armed forces. Military integration is frequently offered as a choice in addition to other sources of income accessible to those formerly engaged in battle, who make up the notion of re-integration. Reintegration is the term used to describe the wider range of social, political, and financial support provided to former combatants as they adjust to civilian life and are ready for their return to their communities. Reintegration programs frequently entail temporary employment in addition to skill development for a living, financial aid to meet urgent material needs, help for education, and referrals for employment and healthcare.

The numerous grievances and adjustments that integratees and regulars/organics within the same unit encountered were also thoroughly investigated in the earlier research. These fall into two categories: (1) relational difficulties resulting from cultural differences (discrimination, disrespect for religious belief); and (2) procedural difficulties arising from the very structure of the AFP, e.g., poor understanding of the AFP's complex rules and regulations, delays in pay and benefits, slow promotion, mental demands of training, long periods of separation from family (Hall, 2009).

Lastly, Ragandang and Podder (2022) narrated that the BARMM case shows that, while young people's agential capacity is academically (and professionally) superior to that of former Moro combatants, young Moro ministers must be humble and establish a relationship of submission to elders to maintain smooth intergenerational relations. This necessitates an awareness and acceptance of their cultural status as subordinates due to age and experience. To be included, they must collaborate with the elders in culturally appropriate ways, and they cannot claim ownership of the process solely because of their youthful energy and agential capacity.

Economic inequality is a primary motivator of revolt, as demonstrated by Acemoglu and Robinson's (2000) study, which focuses on the relationship between economic disparity and political instability. When the distribution of wealth and opportunities is skewed, those at the bottom feel excluded from the country's prosperity, prompting rebellion as a means of seeking justice.

Furthermore, governance failings such as corruption, neglect, and repression can intensify societal tensions and create circumstances conducive to insurgency, as seen with the Moro insurgency and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Furthermore, revolt is more than simply a physical conflict; it is both psychological and cultural in nature. Fanon (1961) contends that persecution adopts a collective consciousness among the downtrodden, fueling their desire for liberation. This sense of solidarity and shared experience boosts rebellious movements, as evidenced in both historical and contemporary circumstances. Finally, social, economic, and political problems frequently act as catalysts for revolt, particularly when people view them to be unjust or oppressive. Historical and present instances, such as the Arab Spring, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Moro rebellion in the Philippines, demonstrate that when marginalized groups encounter systemic concerns such as injustice, corruption, or persecution, they are more likely to mobilize collectively. Economic disadvantages, such as severe inequality, can exacerbate anger, while government failure to address grievances can provide a ripe ground for rebellion. Finally, rebellion is frequently a reaction to ongoing injustice and a desire for systemic change.

3. Methodology
This section presented the research design, research environment, research informants, research instrument, research procedures, and collection of data, analysis of data, ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Research Design
This qualitative research utilized the transcendental phenomenological research design to explore the life experiences of the former Moro rebels. Transcendental phenomenology adds depth to the study of human experiences through qualitative inquiry. Understanding and using its philosophical premises, such as noema, noesis, noeses, noetic, and epoche, in a meaningful way might be difficult due to their abstraction and complexity (Moustakas, 1994).

 Qualitative research involves a naturalistic approach aimed at understanding specific events within their natural surroundings. The researcher used a phenomenological research design, which focused on exploring and uncovering the essence or meaning of individuals' experiences related to a specific phenomenon. This approach involved in-depth interviews to gain insights into their subjective perceptions and interpretations. Phenomenological research design was a qualitative research approach that aimed to understand and describe the lived experiences of individuals (Englander, 2020).

The study of subjective experiences and perceptions focused on the essence or meaning of those experiences, emphasized the lived experiences and perspectives of participants, acknowledged the significance of context and how experiences were influenced by a variety of factors such as culture, society, and personal history, and acknowledged the significance of setting aside the researcher's preconceptions and biases to truly understand the experiences of the participants and allowed the participants' perspectives to shape the research process and findings, these were among the key tenets of phenomenological research (Al-Busaidi, 2008).

3.2 Research Environment
This study was conducted in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines. This region is composed of five (5) provinces: Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, and Lanao del Sur.
Basilan is an island province in the Philippines, located in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) situated in the southwestern part of the Philippines, specifically in the Sulu Archipelago at 6.4585° N, 122.8230° E with an approximate total land area of 1,359 square kilometers (Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage - BARMM, 2022).
The province is home to diverse cultural and religious communities, including indigenous groups, Muslims, and Christians. It is known for its diverse cultural heritage, natural beauty, and unfortunately, a history of conflict and security challenges. As a research environment, Basilan presents a unique and complex setting that offers various opportunities and challenges for studies related to peace, security, and development.
Sulu is another island province in the Philippines, situated in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The province has a land area of 3,436.99 square kilometers or 1,327.03 square miles (Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage - BARMM, 2022). Like Basilan, Sulu presents a unique and complex research environment due to its rich cultural heritage, socio-economic challenges, and history of conflict and security issues.
Tawi-Tawi is an island province in the Philippines, located in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The province has a land area of 3,626.55 square kilometers or 1,400.22 square miles (Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage - BARMM, 2022). Similarly Basilan and Sulu also face significant socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, limited access to basic services, and infrastructure development.
Maguindanao is also part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao located in the mainland of Mindanao. The province has a land area of 9,729.04 square kilometers or 3,756.40 square miles (Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage - BARMM, 2022)., offers a rich and complex research environment that requires a holistic approach to understanding the challenges and opportunities related to peace, security, development, governance, environmental conservation, and human rights. Similar to the island provinces, Maguindanao also faces significant socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, limited access to basic services, and infrastructure development.

Lastly, the province of Lanao del Sur is also part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Similar to Maguindanao, the province has a land area of 13,494.37 square kilometers or 5,210.21 square miles (Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage - BARMM, 2022)., this province is located in the mainland of Mindanao that has a unique governance structures, political dynamics, and the impact of decentralization and autonomy on local governance, political participation, and development, as well as the challenges and opportunities for inclusive governance, transparency, accountability, and rule of law.

3.3 Research Informants
Former Moro rebels turned public servants, appointed in law enforcement agencies or Public Safety Agencies in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, specifically were members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces - Joint Peace and Security Team (BIAF-JPST), Philippine National Police (PNP), Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU), and Armed Forces in the Philippines (AFP) with at least 2 years in public service. The informants of this research were ten (10) former or surrendered members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) or Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). One (1) informant from any area within the province of Sulu underwent a detailed individual interview. Additionally, five (5) informants from the location within the province of Basilan, two (2) from the province of Maguindanao, and two (2) from the province of Lanao del Sur also participated in individual in-depth interviews.
The informants were selected based on the following criteria: a) must have been a former rebel or member of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) or Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and b) must have been a public servant or government employee serving for at least two (2) years in service in any agencies in law enforcement and public safety.

3.4 Research Instrument
For this research, the researcher designed the interview guide in such a way that the researcher could identify the lived experiences of the informants. The first part of the questionnaire was composed of biographical questions for the researcher to get to know the informant better; this part also aimed to set a friendly atmosphere between the researcher and the informant. The next segment of the questionnaire included preliminary questions that covered the experiences of the informants from being a Moro Rebel to becoming a public servant. The third part of the questionnaire addressed how the informants dealt with the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties as public servants, and the last part focused on the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of the performance of their duties as public servants (Please refer to Appendix C for the Interview Guide).

3.5 Research Procedures
In order to fulfill the implementation of this research, a tediuous ethics review was being made. The researcher filled out forms 2.1 or the protocol information, forms 2.2 or the synopsis, forms 2.3 or the protocol evaluation, and forms 2.4 or the inform consent evaluation form. All these forms were duly submitted to the ethics committee.

3.6 Data Collection. The researcher utilized purposive sampling methods to select research informants, choosing samples based on their judgment of which units would best serve the investigation. Adler & Clark (2008) suggested that purposive sampling was selected for its specific purpose, often due to the unique placements of trial elements. This entailed studying the entire population or a subset of it, recognizing that purposive sampling required less investment while remaining highly effective. The researcher secured a transmittal letter from the Office of the Graduate School Dean to allow them to proceed with the data gathering through in-depth interviews and focused group discussions. The pre-determined questions and interview guide were attached for panel validation and rechecking. Upon receiving approval, the researcher initiated the identification of potential participants relevant to the lived experiences of a moro rebel. After pinpointing the intended informants, the researcher provided them with a signed copy of the transmittal letter and personally requested permission for an interview, facilitating, and scheduling. This process was supported by informed consent and an interview guide form outlining the study's purpose, interview procedures, informant rights, and researcher responsibilities. Interviews were conducted in venues conducive to the informants. Transcription of interview results was conducted using writing instruments and audio recording simultaneously.
For security reasons and sensitivity regarding the research topic, the researcher secured assistance and coordination before and during the actual conduct of the data gathering from the former Moro rebels. Coordination with the offices of Local Chief Executives was also undertaken by the researcher to secure assistance in the conduct of the research study.

3.7 Data Analysis. The data gathered during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were subjected to thematic analysis. The primary basis for the data analysis was the information provided by the informants. The information or data gathered were coded for easy identification and management by the researcher. The responses were categorized into themes. These cluster themes were created from the formulated meanings extracted from significant statements. Lastly, from the cluster themes, the researcher created emergent themes that answered the sub-problems.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in qualitative research involving former Moro rebels turned public servants were paramount due to the potentially sensitive nature of the subject matter and the vulnerability of the participants. Here are the ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy as they were applied:

Beneficence. The researcher prioritized the well-being of informants by ensuring that the research process did not cause harm and actively promoted their welfare. This included obtaining informed consent from participants, protecting their privacy and confidentiality, and providing support services if needed. The researcher also strived to produce findings that contributed positively to understanding the experiences and needs of former rebels transitioning into public service roles, with the ultimate goal of informing policies and interventions that benefited both individuals and communities.

Non-maleficence. The researcher took steps to minimize the potential for harm to informants throughout the research process. This included avoiding re-traumatization of informants by creating a safe and supportive environment for sharing their experiences, respecting their autonomy in deciding whether to participate, and providing opportunities for debriefing or counseling if they experienced distress. The researcher also carefully considered the potential consequences of their research on participants and took measures to mitigate any negative impacts.

Justice. The researcher ensured fairness and equity in the treatment of informants and the distribution of benefits and burdens associated with the research. This involved addressing power imbalances between researchers and informants, being transparent about the goals and methods of the research, and acknowledging and respecting the diverse perspectives and experiences of participants. The researcher also considered the broader social, economic, and political context in which the research was conducted and strove to promote social justice and inclusivity in their work.

Autonomy. The researcher respected the autonomy of participants by providing them with sufficient information to make informed decisions about their participation in the research. This included clearly explaining the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study, obtaining voluntary consent from informants without coercion or undue influence, and allowing them to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The researcher also respected informants' rights to privacy and confidentiality and involved them in the research process as active partners and collaborators.

Trustworthiness of Research

Trustworthiness includes four distinct elements: credibility, which pertains to the validity of the findings; transferability, which concerns the relevance of the findings to different settings; dependability, which refers to the consistency and reliability of the findings over time; and confirmability, which relates to the objectivity and neutrality of the researcher during the research process. These four aspects collectively establish the criteria for trustworthiness, serving as fundamental pillars within qualitative methodology (Guba, 1981).

Credibility. It is the first aspect or criterion that must be established. It is seen as the most important aspect or measure in establishing trustworthiness because credibility essentially asks the researcher to link the research study's findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research findings.

Transferability. The researcher will also establish transferability by providing a robust and detailed account of his experiences during data collection. The researcher will make explicit connections to the cultural and social contexts that surround data collection. This means talking about where the interviews transpired, the general setup of the environment, and other aspects of data collection that help provide a richer and fuller understanding of the research setting. Thus, constitutes the idea that the research study's findings could apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations (Guba, 1981).

Dependability. Dependability, on the other hand, is also important to trustworthiness because it establishes the research study's findings as consistent and repeatable. The researcher will aim to verify that the findings are consistent with the raw data they collected, making sure that if some other researchers were to look over the data, they would arrive at similar findings, interpretations, and conclusions about the data. This is important to make sure that anything will not be missed in the research study, or that the researcher will not be sloppy or misguided in his or her final report (Guba, 1981).

Confirmability. Guba (1981) posited that confirmability is the last criterion of trustworthiness the researcher needs to establish in this study. This criterion has to do with the level of confidence that the research study's findings will be based on the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases.

Bracketing and Reflexivity

Reflexivity is pivotal in qualitative research on former Moro rebels turned public servants, particularly for a researcher new to the qualitative methodology but intimately familiar with the subject matter as a Mindanao resident. The researcher examined his own biases, assumptions, and insider perspectives throughout the research process to ensure the integrity and validity of their findings. Acknowledging his background allows him to navigate potential cultural nuances sensitively while maintaining transparency about his positions. His novice status in qualitative research presents an opportunity for growth and fresh insights, as he engages in self-reflection, seeks guidance from experienced peers, and remains open to learning.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter provides the presentation and analysis of data. The data that were presented are divided into four (4) parts, namely: the experiences of the informants from being a Moro rebel to becoming a public servant, the ways of addressing the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties as public servants, the strategies employed by the informants to address the problems encountered in the performance of their duties, and the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of their performance as public servants.

The researcher in this phenomenological study meticulously collected all the data or information that was obtained from the informants during the in-depth interviews. A precise quantity of data has been produced due to these procedures. The researcher guaranteed that an exhaustive record of the individual in-depth interviews, including words and actions, would be preserved. Prior to data analysis, the researcher employed an audio recorder that was verbatim transcribed.

The researcher employed Colaizzi's (1978) methodology to analyze the data in this study. Each transcript is meticulously reviewed and reread at the outset to guarantee a comprehensive understanding of its contents. Subsequently, pertinent statements regarding the phenomenon under investigation were extracted from each transcript and individually documented with their respective page and line references. After this, the significance of these statements was utilized to produce meanings, which were subsequently categorized to provide a comprehensive explanation. The formulated meanings were categorized into categories, clusters of themes, and emergent themes. The study's conclusions will incorporate the results to represent the phenomenon comprehensively. The fundamental structure of the phenomenon was identified, and the results were condensed to eliminate redundant, misinterpreted, or excessively detailed descriptions. Finally, the research informants' feedback was used to confirm the validity of the findings, ensuring that the descriptive results were consistent with their personal experiences.

 These emergent themes are formulated as answers to the sub-problems and are summarized as follows:

I. Experiences of the Informants from Being a Moro Rebel to Becoming a Public Servant

       A.   Positive Experiences
1. Fulfillment in Serving the Community
2. Positive Impact on Community Peace
3. Societal Recognition and Acceptance

       B. Negative Experiences
1. Facing Social Judgment and Stigma
2. Struggling with the New Responsibilities
3. Adjusting to Bureaucracy and Conflict of Ideals
4. Emotional Struggles in Role Transition

II. Addressing the Challenges Encountered by the informants in the Performance of their Duties as Public Servants
1. Building New Networks and Relationships
2. Leveraging Past Experiences

III. Strategies Employed by the Informants to Address the Problems Encountered in the Performance of their Duties
1. Seeking Guidance and Support
2. Emphasizing Communication and Collaboration

IV. Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of the Performance of their Duties as Public Servants
1. Enhancing Skills and Education
2. Improving Community Relations

    I.   **Experiences of the Informants from Being a Moro Rebel to becoming a Public Servant**

       A.   Positive Experiences

1. Fulfillment in Serving the Community. The informants revealed the satisfaction they experienced as a result of contributing to the well-being of their community and observing positive change. This theme encapsulates the pride and gratification they experience in their new positions, which allow them to make a tangible impact on the lives of others and contribute to developing a brighter future for the Bangsamoro people.

Informant 5 felt that the effort of helping during calamities was worthwhile. He shared:

*Worth it sir yong.. napapagod kana pero nakikita mo naman na if ever may calamity tumotulong kami sapag dedeliver nang goods and commodities Ahmm... Napakasaya nang taong natulongan namin sir (*IDI5:SS4). (Worth it, sir... you get tired, but you see that whenever there's a calamity, we help in delivering goods and commodities. The people we help, who are also MILF members and their children, are very happy, sir).

Informant 10, as a teacher, found great satisfaction in seeing students learn, graduate, and find jobs:
Malaking gantimpala kapag natuto ang mga bata, ayon ang malaking gantimpala kapag nakikita kong makapag tapos sila saka nasa trabaho nadin sila, at masaya din kami bilang guro (IDI10:SS5). (It's a great reward when the children learn. The greatest reward is when I see them graduate and find jobs, and we, as teachers, are also happy).

Informant 3 observed that he had felt satisfied when he had the authority to help resolve conflicts within the community and among former MILF members. He expressed:
Kasi mula noon nakikibaka kami alang alang ng kapayapaan. Sa ngayon naging team leader na ako ng JPST magawa ko na po ano ang itutulong ko sa mga kapatid na milf at sa mga mamamayan halimbawa may rido, yun na ako pumasok na ako doon kasi may authority na ako para e settle (IDI3:SS4). (Since then, we have been fighting for peace. Now, I have become a team leader of JPST, and I can help my fellow MILF members and the community, for example, when there is a conflict, I step in because I now have the authority to settle it).

2. Positive Impact on Community Peace. The informants deliberated on the significance of their respective responsibilities in fostering harmony, mitigating conflict, and establishing trust among diverse groups. This theme encapsulates their experiences in promoting a more stable and tranquil environment for their community.
Informant 3 dreamed of achieving peace in the community, believing that it would eliminate problems and make community engagement easier:
Gusto ko pangarap kailangan mapayapa na po ang lugar kasi po kung may gulo pa po minsan alanganin tayo papasok sa community. So kapag kapayapaan at mapayapa na tayo wala na tayong problema kasi ang hangarin natin ay ang kapayapaan (IDI3:SS1). (What I want, my dream, is that the place needs to be peaceful because if there's still chaos, sometimes we hesitate to enter the community. So if there's peace and we are peaceful, we won't have any problems because our goal is peace).

Informant 1 highlighted that one of the key goals of the MILF was to achieve lasting peace:
So yan yung isa sa mga gustong i-implement ng Kwan, ng MILF so lasting peace talaga yung gusto nila (IDI1:SS4). (So that's one of the things that the MILF wants to implement - lasting peace is really what they want).

Informant 6 was encouraged by their superiors to join the JPST, believing it would contribute to the peace agreement:
It was like my superiors, my commanders who told me to join JPST because it would also help with the peace agreement and our comrades in MILF (IDI6:SS2). (Parang yong mga superior ko po, mga commanders ko po na mag JPST na kayo dahil makakatulong din ito sa peace agreement o sa mga kasamahan sa MILF.).

3. Societal Recognition and Acceptance. The informants emphasize the respect and support they receive from their colleagues and communities, which starkly contrasts their previous experiences. These affirmations indicate their successful reintegration into society and dedication to contributing positively to their communities and serving the country.
Informant 3 saw their role in the JPST as valuable, noting that their presence helped ease the anxiety of locals:
nakita ko po ako bilang isang JPST dahil marami na po kaming nagawa halimbawa yun mga nag ano nag security tulad ng organization ninyo tulad ng save the children of war. Kung minsan pag papasok dito kasama na po kami kasama sina doktora at saka pag nkita kami ng mga tao doon na may sundalo pag kasama nila ang jpst hindi na po sila kinakabahan (IDI3:SS1). (What I've seen as a JPST is that we've done a lot, for example, providing security, like your organization, such as Save the Children of War. Sometimes, when we enter with the doctors, and people see soldiers with JPST, they are no longer nervous).

Informant 4 reflected on past difficulties, describing that the situation eventually became more orderly:
Yung dati po, ma'am, medyo mahirap kasi sa loob. Dito sa amin, mas maayos pala dito sa loob. Dito sa ano. Mas maayos pala dito sa loob (IDI4:SS2). (Now it's better inside. Here, you know, it's better inside. Unlike before. Now, life is just okay here.).

Informant 10 felt no judgment from colleagues, who were instead proud and supportive of their opportunity to study and serve others.:
Hindi naman Akong napapansin sa mga kasamahan ko na hinuhusgahan Ako nila, proud pa yong mga kasamahan ko na syempri napag bigyan na maka labas makapag aral nang maayos at maisakatuparan ko yong pangarap ko din na makapag lingkod baya (IDI10:SS2). (I haven't noticed any of my colleagues judging me, and they're even proud that I was given the chance to get out, to study properly, and fulfill my dream of serving the country).

B. Negative Experiences

1. Facing Social Judgment and Stigma. The theme delves into the obstacles that former Moro rebels face as they transition into public service positions. This theme illustrates how they address the societal prejudices, judgment, and stigmatization they encounter due to their history.

Informant 10 acknowledged feelings of jealousy from others:

Yung panghuhusga dahil sa yung sinabi ko na yun na selos o minsan sani nila ay ikaw lang ang may magandang kabuhayan so dahil don ay hindi namn natin masabi na dahil nag lipat na tayo ay nagiging taga lingkod bayan na ay wala na tayo, hindi na tayo nagiging kasama nila dahil continues parin yung pag supporta para lamang makuha ng bangsamoro yung kalayaan (IDI1:SS6). (The judgment from others stems from jealousy, or sometimes they say you are the only one with a good livelihood. But we can't say that just because we have shifted to being public servants, we no longer support them. We continue to support Bangsamoro's quest for freedom).

Informant 1 noted that there was a lingering perception of them as uneducated former rebels who only knew how to fight:

Yung sa amin ngayon yung parang, ay mga ano lang yan mga rebelde lang yan dati mga ganyan ba, so walang kuwan yan walang alam kundi fighting hindi nakapag-aral yun (IDI1:SS7). (or us now, it's like, 'Oh, they're just former rebels, they don't know anything except fighting, they didn't study).

Informant 5 experienced discrimination at work due to their background as a former MILF combatant:

May discrimination sa trabaho kasi nalaman nila na galing ako sa MILF combatan (IDI5:SS2). (There was discrimination because they found out that I was an MILF combatant).

2. Struggling with the New Responsibilities. The theme delves into the challenges that the informants encounter as they adjust to their new responsibilities as public servants. It emphasizes the abrupt learning curve and the constraints associated with their new duties, emphasizing the challenges of transitioning from a life of conflict to governance and service.

Informant 7 considered taking a chance on changing his life after former President Duterte's offer of acceptance for those wanting to leave armed groups:

Nasa isip ko nalang, sabi ko, patsambahan na lang. Naisip ko na rin yung magbagong buhay. Kaya lang, wala akong paraan. Hindi tinatanggap ang abusayap na bag balik loob noon. Nasa isip ko, kung ito ang oras ko na abutan ako ng malas, siguro dito na lang ako. Pero sa awa siguro ng Diyos. Nagiging pangulo si Pangulong Duterte. Yun, pag na syempre, may news din, lagi nung nagsasalita sa TV na sabi niya, kung sinong gusto nung bumaba, anong grupo, tatanggapin niya yan doon nakapag-isip ako sir, sabi ko tatanggapin na rin kaya yung mga abusayap na nagbalik loob para naman kako na makasama ko yung mga pamilya ko subukan ko muna anong buhay nang hindi ka na magiging wanted yun, ang ano ko pagka dito na po sa pagbaba ko. Una unang non si Mama Dok Laging mag-ano sa akin (IDI7:SS8). (I also thought about changing my life, but there was no way. Abu Sayyaf wasn't accepting those who wanted to surrender back then. I thought, if this is my time and bad luck catches me, maybe I'll just stay here. But by God's mercy, President Duterte became the president. Then, of course, there was news on TV where he said, if anyone wants to come down, from any group, he would accept them. That's when I started thinking, maybe Abu Sayyaf members who surrender will be accepted, so I can be with my family. I decided to try living without being wanted. That was my thought when I came down. The first to reach out to me was Mama Dok, who kept calling me, even though I was still at war. She said, you've changed. All your children's and wife's problems are now my problems. I was always being told things like that. Then, sir, if there was time, there was nothing we could do because Abu Sayyaf surrenderers were not yet being accepted).

Informant 6 believed that the transition period was too short which was often seen as a failed experiment:

Kaya, ang hamon ngayon, sa palagay ko, 6 na taon ay masyadong maikli para sa transition. Kung ang ARM, na tumagal ng 30 taon o higit pa, ay itinuturing na isang nabigong eksperimento, paano pa ngayon na tayo ay nagti-transition? Ito ay isang bagong uri ng gobyerno (IDI9:SS7). (So, the challenge now is, in my estimation, 6 years is too short for the transition. If ARM, which lasted for 30 years or so, was even considered a failed experiment, what more now that we are transitioning? This is a new set of government).

Informant 5 reflected on how their responsibilities increased significantly when they began contributing to the government compared to the past when they had fewer obligations:

Sangayon sir parang, e compare ko yong dati Ngayon ay nakakatulong na Ako sa goberno, mga tungkolin ko sa BJMP. Malaki talaga Ang resposibilidad ko Ngayon, dati Kasi Wala kaming resposibilidad, halibawa nasa custodial ka matakasan ka Malaki talagang problema Kasi e defend mo talaga sa courte kng bakit nagka ganon (IDI2:SS2). (Now, sir, when I compare it to before, I can say that now I'm helping the government through my duties with the BJMP. I have a big responsibility now, unlike before when we didn't have responsibilities. For example, if you're in custody and someone escapes, that's a big problem because you'll have to defend yourself in court as to why it happened).

3. Adjusting to Bureaucracy and Conflict of Ideals. The theme depicts the challenges the informants experienced in adjusting to bureaucratic systems and the internal conflicts when the ideologies they once fought for collide with the practicalities of governance.

Informant 4 highlighted the shift from using weapons to using educational tools:

Pagbabago, kasi ang dati ay ang hawak lamang ay baril sa ngayon ay ang hawak ay ballpen, chalk or ano mang mga bagay na gamit sa pagtuturo so yun ang pagkakaiba kasi dati dugo natin yung ginagampanan kung paano mailigtas tsaka mailigtas din yung mga batang bangsamoro at ngayon ang ginagampanan natin ngayon ay kung paano mabago yung pananaw ng mga bata kung paano sila ma educate kung paano gampanan ang tungkulin nila. (IDI4:SS5). (Change, because before, we held guns, but now we hold pens, chalk, or other teaching materials. That's the difference, because before, we were sacrificing our blood to save and protect the Bangsamoro children. Now, our role is to change their perspective, to educate them on how to fulfill their duties).

Informant 1 described the challenge of adjusting from the principles of the MILF to those of the government:

Yung dating prinsipyong sinusunod namin sa MILF, iba na ngayon sa gobyerno. Mahirap mag-adjust lalo na kapag sanay ka na lumalaban, tapos bigla kang magiging bahagi ng sistema (IDI1:SS6). (The principles we followed in the MILF are different now in the government. It's hard to adjust, especially when you're used to fighting and suddenly become part of the system).

Informant 3 expressed the challenge of adapting to government processes, contrasting the swift decision-making in the MILF with the bureaucratic requirements in their current role:

Maraming proseso sa gobyerno na hindi namin sanay. Sa MILF, mabilis ang mga desisyon, pero dito, kailangan ng maraming papel at pagpapatunay bago makagalaw. (IDI3:SS6). (There are many processes in the government that we're not used to. In the MILF, decisions were made quickly, but here, you need a lot of paperwork and approvals before you can act).

4. Emotional Struggles in Role Transition. The theme stresses that informants encountered challenges reconciling their previous identities with their new responsibilities. Their emotional burden was exacerbated by the pressure to demonstrate their dedication in prioritizing peace and service.

Informant 1 found it difficult to transition from a combatant to a public servant:

Hindi madali ang mag-adjust mula sa pagiging combatant tungo sa isang public servant. Maraming pagkakataon na nararamdaman ko ang bigat ng responsibilidad, at minsan, parang gusto ko nang bumalik sa dati. (IDI4:SS5). (It's not easy to adjust from being a combatant to a public servant. There are many times when I feel the weight of the responsibility, and sometimes, I feel like I want to go back to the way things were).

Informant 3 shared that it was challenging to adjust to their leadership role, often feeling unprepared or insufficient for the responsibilities it entails:

Naging challenging ang pag-adjust sa bagong papel ko bilang lider. Minsan, pakiramdam ko hindi ako handa o hindi ako sapat para sa posisyon na ito (IDI3:SS6). (Adjusting to my new role as a leader has been challenging. Sometimes, I feel like I'm not ready or not enough for this position).

Informant 4 described that he experienced a mix of emotions when transitioning from their previous role to becoming part of the government:

Maraming emosyon ang lumabas nung una akong maging bahagi ng gobyerno. Yung takot na baka hindi ko kayanin, at yung lungkot na iniwan ko na ang dating mga kasama ko (IDI4:SS6). (A lot of emotions came out when I first became part of the government. There was the fear that I might not be able to handle it, and the sadness of leaving behind my former comrades).

II. Addressing the Challenges Encountered by the informants in the Performance of their Duties as Public Servants

1. Building New Networks and Relationships. The theme delves into the undertakings of former Moro rebels to cultivate relationships and forge new connections within the government. This theme emphasizes the significance of networking, trust-building, and collaboration in their new roles, in contrast to the more insular and close-knit relationships they cultivated within the MILF.

Informant 2 viewed the importance of collaboration and good relationships within the government, noting the need to maintain an open mind and heart in their interactions:

Mahalaga yung pagtutulungan at pagkakaroon ng magandang relasyon sa mga kasamahan sa gobyerno. Dito ko natutunan na kailangan palaging bukas ang isipan at puso sa pakikipag-ugnayan (IDI2:SS11). (It's important to work together and have good relationships with colleagues in the government. Here, I learned that you always need to have an open mind and heart when interacting).

Informant 4 stressed the importance of networking with different agencies in government work:

Sa trabaho sa gobyerno, napakahalaga na marunong kang makipag-network sa iba't ibang ahensya. Hindi pwede yung ikaw lang, kailangan mo ng suporta ng iba para magawa ang tungkulin mo (IDI4:SS5). (In government work, it's very important to know how to network with different agencies. You can't do it alone; you need the support of others to fulfill your duties).

Informant 10 noted the importance of forming alliances and working collaboratively with former adversaries within the government:
Kahit dati kaming rebelde, natutunan kong makipagkaibigan sa mga taong dati ay kaaway. Mahalaga na magtulungan kami ngayon sa gobyerno (IDI10:SS18). (Even though we were former rebels, I learned to make friends with people who were once our enemies. It's important that we work together now in the government).

2. Leveraging Past Experiences. The theme draws attention to the transfer of skills, knowledge, and perspectives acquired during their time in the MILF to resolve challenges and fulfill their responsibilities in public service.
Informant 1 believed that his past experiences with the MILF helped him to effectively plan and organize projects:
Yung mga karanasan ko dati sa MILF, nagagamit ko ngayon sa pagtulong sa mga kababayan natin. Mas alam ko na kung paano magplano at mag-organisa ng mga proyekto. (IDI3:SS14). (My past experiences with the MILF are now being used to help our fellow citizens. I have a better understanding of how to plan and organize projects).

Informant 3 emphasized that he used the lessons from past struggles to resolve current issues:
Ang mga natutunan ko sa mga nakaraang laban at pakikibaka, nagagamit ko sa pag-resolba ng mga isyu ngayon. Mas naiintindihan ko na ang kahalagahan ng diplomasya at pakikipag-usap (IDI3:SS14). (The lessons I learned from past struggles and fights are being used to resolve issues today. I now better understand the importance of diplomacy and communication).

Informant 10 expressed that the discipline and skills acquired from past experiences can be applied to teaching and guiding the youth:
Yung disiplina at kasanayan na nakuha ko dati, nagagamit ko ngayon sa pagtuturo at paggabay sa mga kabataan. Mahalagang maipasa sa kanila ang mga natutunan ko noon (IDI10:SS14). (The discipline and skills I gained before are being used now in teaching and guiding the youth. It's important to pass on the lessons I learned back then to them).

III. Strategies Employed by the Informants to Address the Problems Encountered in the Performance of their Duties
1. Seeking Guidance and Support. The theme probes the approach by which informants actively seek guidance and support from their peers, mentors, and the community to navigate the challenges of their new positions.
Informant 3 sought help from colleagues when facing new challenges:
Minsan kailangan ko rin humingi ng tulong sa mga kasamahan ko, lalo na kapag may mga bagay na bago sa akin. Nagbibigay sila ng guidance at tumutulong para mas mapadali ang trabaho (IDI3:SS20). (Sometimes I also need to ask for help from my colleagues, especially when there are things that are new to me. They provide guidance and help to make the work easier).

Informant 8 expressed gratitude for the support and guidance received from officials at the BJMP:
Nagpapasalamat ako sa suporta ng mga opisyal sa BJMP. Laging mayroong tumutulong at nag-gaguide sa akin, lalo na kapag may mga bagay na bago sa akin (IDI8:SS14). (I am grateful for the support from the officials at BJMP. There is always someone to help and guide me, especially when there are things that are new to me).

Informant 10 stressed the importance of having supportive people to turn to for help:
Madalas akong magtanong sa mga kasamahan ko kapag may hindi ako alam. Importante na mayroong mga taong handang magbigay ng guidance (IDI6:SS26). (I often ask my colleagues when there's something I don't know. It's important to have people who are willing to provide guidance).

2. Emphasizing Communication and Collaboration. The theme examines how informants prioritize collaboration and open communication in their new positions. This theme emphasizes their endeavors to establish relationships with their communities and government institutions, cultivating a collaborative atmosphere that promotes effective governance and peacebuilding.
Informant 1 stated the importance of open and clear communication within the group, as it facilitates the effective fulfillment of their duties:
Importante ang bukas na komunikasyon sa lahat ng miyembro ng grupo. Kapag malinaw ang usapan, mas madali naming nagagampanan ang mga tungkulin namin (IDI1:SS21). (Open communication is important among all group members. When the discussion is clear, it becomes easier for us to fulfill our duties).

Informant 3 highlighted the importance of teamwork in their office:
Ang teamwork sa aming opisina ay mahalaga lalo na kapag may mga big projects. Lahat kami ay nagcocontribute ng ideas at nag-uusap ng maayos para sa ikabubuti ng resulta (IDI3:SS22). (Teamwork in our office is essential, especially during big projects. We all contribute ideas and communicate effectively to achieve the best possible outcome).

Informant 2 recognized that collaboration with different sectors is crucial for successfully implementing projects:
Natutunan ko na ang pakikipag-collaborate sa iba't ibang sektor ay susi para maipatupad ang mga proyekto ng maayos. Hindi pwedeng magtrabaho ng solo, kailangan talaga ng tulungan (IDI2:SS26). (I've learned that collaborating with different sectors is key to effectively implementing projects. You can't work solo; teamwork is essential).

IV. Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of the Performance of their Duties as Public Servants
1. Enhancing Skills and Education. The theme highlighted the necessity of ongoing self-improvement. The informants have implemented measures to improve their education and abilities. They are dedicated to enhancing their effectiveness in their positions through formal education, training programs, or self-study.
Informant 2 recognized the importance of education and skills training after becoming a public servant:
Ang napagtanto ko po ay kailangan talagang magpatuloy sa pag-aaral kahit na nasa serbisyo na. Kaya nag-enroll ako sa mga kurso at training para mas mapabuti pa ang aking mga kakayahan sa trabaho (IDI2:SS6). (When I became a public servant, I realized the importance of education and skills training. I enrolled in courses to enhance my knowledge in governance and community development, which has been crucial in my current role).

Informant 5 expressed that he sought opportunities for education and skills improvement as essential for his growth as a public servant.:
Patuloy akong naghahanap ng mga pagkakataon upang mapabuti ang aking edukasyon at mga kakayahan, sa pamamagitan man ng pormal na pagsasanay o sa mga natutunan sa trabaho. Mahalagang aspeto ito sa aking paglago bilang isang lingkod bayan (IDI5:SS4). (I am constantly seeking opportunities to improve my education and skills, whether through formal training or on-the-job learning. It's essential for my growth as a public servant).

Informant 7 appreciated the government's educational programs, which enabled him to upgrade his qualifications and better serve the community:
Binigyan kami ng gobyerno ng mga programang pang-edukasyon na nagbigay-daan para mapataas ko ang aking mga kwalipikasyon at mas mahusay na mapagsilbihan ang komunidad (IDI7:SS26). (The government provided us with educational programs that allowed me to upgrade my qualifications and better serve the community).

2. Improving Community Relations. The theme observes that the informants have placed a high value on fostering relationships within the communities they serve. They have aspired in establishing trust and understanding among their community to overcome gaps and build a feeling of togetherness and collaboration.
Informant 1 emphasized that building trust with the community involved listening to concerns and being responsive:
Ang pagbubuo ng tiwala sa komunidad ang naging pangunahing pokus. Sa pamamagitan ng pakikinig sa kanilang mga hinaing at pagiging tumutugon, nakita ko ang malaking pag-unlad sa aming relasyon (IDI1:SS20). (Building trust with the community has been a major focus. By listening to their concerns and being responsive, I've seen a significant improvement in our relations).

Informant 8 expressed that improving community relations required demonstrating that their work benefits:
Ang pagpapabuti ng relasyon sa komunidad ay kinabibilangan ng pagpapakita sa kanila na ang aming trabaho ay para sa kanilang kapakanan. Ito ay nagdulot ng mas mataas na kooperasyon at suporta mula sa mga lokal (IDI8:SS14). (Improving relations with the community involved showing them that our work is for their benefit. This has led to increased cooperation and support from the locals).

Informant 10 focused on strengthening the bond between the government and the community through outreach programs and initiatives:
Sa pamamagitan ng iba't ibang outreach programs at mga inisyatiba, nagsusumikap akong palakasin ang ugnayan ng gobyerno at komunidad, na tinitiyak na ang kanilang mga boses ay naririnig at ang kanilang mga pangangailangan ay natutugunan (IDI10:SS26). (Through various outreach programs and initiatives, I've worked on strengthening the bond between the government and the community, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are met).

5. Analysis of Data

The phenomenological approach was the foundation of the qualitative research methodology employed in this study. An exhaustive study methodology is employed to collect data on the affective states and perceptions of individuals regarding a particular phenomenon. It acknowledges that the concept of reality is subjective and varies from person to person. Researchers can identify common themes associated with the topic under investigation by recounting the study's findings from the perspectives of the informants.

The data was analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step descriptive phenomenological method in the study. The informants' narratives were read by the researcher on numerous occasions in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their lived experiences. Relevant statements from each narrative faithfully represented the informants' experiences. Subsequently, the underlying context was taken into account in order to discern the meanings of these statements. The derived meanings were organized into clusters and themes, providing a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon. The validity of the study was confirmed by soliciting feedback from the informants after the identification of the fundamental components of the phenomena.

The study extracted significant statements relevant to the research phenomenon from the transcripts. These statements were then formatted into a cluster, developing thirteen (13) emergent themes. These themes addressed the sub-problems and are summarized as follows: a) the experiences of the informants from being a Moro rebel to becoming a public servant, b) addressing the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties as public servants, c) the strategies employed by the informants to address the problems encountered in the performance of their duties, and d) the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of their performance as public servants.

This study is anchored on the concept of Anomie Theory by Durkheim (1893) as its primary theory and is supported by Marxist Theory by Marx (1859), and Social Control Theory by Hirschi (1969).

The transformation of Moro rebels into public servants can be correlated with Durkheim's Anomie Theory by examining these individuals' significant societal transformations. Anomie or normlessness may result from transitioning from a dissident lifestyle, which is frequently characterized by conflict and a distinct sense of identity within a resistance movement, to the structured environment of public service, where distinct norms and values are predominant. This transition may result in feelings of alienation or disconnection as former rebels attempt to adjust to the expectations and responsibilities of their new roles. Providing the requisite support systems to assist these individuals in locating their position within the new social structure and making a positive contribution to society is contingent upon comprehending this state of anomie (Durkheim, 1893).

Marxist theory can be utilized to analyze the socio-economic factors that underlie the experiences of Moro rebels who have transitioned into public service. The transition from membership in a marginalized group engaged in a struggle against perceived exploitation and inequality to assuming positions within the government can be viewed through class struggle. This transition may indicate a transition from the proletariat, engaged in a battle against the dominant capitalist class, to a system they previously opposed. Marxist theory would potentially advocate for changes that address the inequalities they once fought against by examining how these former rebels traverse their new roles within the state and how their previous experiences influence their approach to public service (Marx, 1859).

Lastly, Hirschi's Social Control Theory provides a valuable perspective on the lived experiences of Moro rebels who became public servants by emphasizing the significance of social bonds in preventing deviant behavior. The successful assimilation of these individuals into society is contingent upon the strength of their attachments to family, commitment to societal objectives, involvement in community activities, and belief in the rule of law as they transition from rebellion to public service. The theory posits that these former rebels can conform to their new roles and avoid reverting to deviant behaviors associated with their past by fostering solid social connections and a sense of belonging within the public service framework. The comprehension of these connections is indispensable for promoting their reintegration and encouraging their contributions to peace and development (Hirschi, 1969).

I. Experiences of the Informants from Being a Moro Rebel to becoming a Public Servant.

A.   Positive Experiences

1. Fulfillment in Serving the Community. The emergent theme emphasizes the profound recognition and contentment that former Moro rebels experience in their new positions. They expressed that they derive immeasurable satisfaction from promoting positive change and contributing to the well-being of their community. This theme encapsulates the confidence and satisfaction they experience in making a tangible impact on the lives of others, particularly in developing a brighter future for the Bangsamoro people. Their satisfaction is not only derived from their capacity to render service but also from the satisfaction they derive from observing the outcomes of their endeavors. This experience reinforces their dedication and commitment to serving the community with compassion and integrity.

The emergent theme, which signifies the realization of personal goals and aspirations and the fulfillment of one's potential, is pertinent to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, particularly the concept of self-actualization. The opportunity to witness positive change and contribute to the community's well-being aligns with the highest need for the former Moro rebels who have transitioned to public service. They attain a sense of self-actualization, fulfillment, and personal development by serving the community and witnessing the tangible outcomes of their endeavors. This experience of realizing their potential and making a meaningful impact

on the lives of others brings them profound gratification and pride, reinforcing their commitment to the ongoing development of the Bangsamoro community and their new responsibilities.

Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) demonstrated that individuals employed in positions that contribute to the welfare of others frequently experience a profound sense of pride and satisfaction. This satisfaction is derived from their positive influence on their communities, whether by promoting social change, assuring public safety, or providing essential services. Job satisfaction and personal well-being are substantially influenced by the dynamic rewards of witnessing positive changes, such as increased public trust or improved community cohesion.

According to Gutierrez and Borras (2016), informants have articulated the profound gratification they experience when they contribute to the well-being of their community and observe positive changes. The tangible effects they are having on the lives of others, as well as their contributions to developing a brighter future for the Bangsamoro people, are closely linked to the pride and gratification they experience in their responsibilities. The success of community-driven initiatives designed to foster economic development, social justice, and harmony in the region is significantly influenced by this sense of fulfillment, which serves as a source of personal motivation.

2. Positive Impact on Community Peace. The emergent theme encapsulates the role of the former Moro rebels in promoting harmony, reducing conflict, and establishing trust among the diverse groups within their community. Informants deliberated on the importance of their obligations in pursuing a more tranquil and stable environment. This emerging theme indicates their dedication to developing an environment that fosters trust and ensures that all community members feel secure and appreciated, in addition to preserving peace.

Lederach (1997) emphasizes the significance of establishing sustainable peace by addressing the underlying causes of conflict, fostering reconciliation, and promoting social cohesion, which is particularly pertinent to the emergent theme. Peacebuilding Theory encompasses the processes and strategies employed to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violence. Peacebuilding Theory elucidates how the informants' duties as public servants contribute to establishing a stable and peaceful environment in the context of their experiences. They are actively involved in peacebuilding by participating in activities that foster dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among diverse groups. They are committed to enhancing the social fabric of their community, reducing tensions, and establishing a foundation for enduring peace, which is consistent with the principles of theory.

Galtung (2013) investigated that individuals engaged in community building and conflict resolution frequently derive substantial satisfaction from their capacity to establish a more harmonious and reliable environment. The research demonstrated that community members' well-being is improved, and social cohesion is promoted through efforts to reduce conflict and promote harmony within communities. These individuals are instrumental in reducing tensions and formulating mutual understanding among diverse groups by actively participating in dialogue, mediation, and trust-building activities.

3. Societal Recognition and Acceptance. The emergent theme emphasizes how the informants are perceived and regarded by their colleagues and communities. The informants underscore the respect, support, and affirmation they receive, which is in striking contrast to their prior experiences of alienation or conflict. Not only do these favorable responses indicate their successful reintegration into society, but they also confirm their dedication to positively impacting their communities and serving their Nation. This acknowledgment serves to strengthen their sense of purpose and belonging, inspiring them to persist in their pursuit of public service and community development. This theme encapsulates the potent influence of societal validation in fostering ongoing commitment to the community's welfare.

The emergent theme is associated with social identity theory, devised by Tajfel and Turner (1979). This theory elucidates how individuals derive a sense of identity and self-esteem from their membership in social groups. Their reintegration into society and their respect from colleagues and the community represent a positive transformation in their social identity for the former Moro rebels who have transitioned to public service. They are motivated to make further contributions to society and improve their self-concept due to their new responsibilities, which allow them to become part of a respected and valued group. The affirmations and acceptance they receive contribute to establishing their new identity as community leaders and public servants, as opposed to former combatants.

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), the sense of belonging and commitment to one's new responsibilities are bolstered by the respect and support they receive from their colleagues and the broader community. They emphasized that societal recognition can considerably improve their self-esteem and motivation by serving as a potent affirmation of their contributions. This acknowledgment is particularly significant for individuals who have encountered prior obstacles or stigmatization, as it signifies a positive change in their social status and underscores their commitment to the betterment of the community and nation.

B. Negative Experiences

1. Facing Social Judgment and Stigma. The emergent theme probes into the prevalent societal prejudices, judgments, and stigmatization the informants encounter due to their prior involvement in the conflict. This theme exemplifies the emotional and social challenges they must overcome as they strive to redefine their identities and establish themselves as dependable and

committed public servants. The informants' experiences underscore the intricacies of reintegration, as they must consistently demonstrate their intentions and capabilities to a society that may be skeptical of their transformation.

The theme that posits that individuals can be stigmatized and treated differently based on the labels or identities ascribed to them by society is relevant to Becker's (1963) Labeling Theory. Societal labeling that portrays former Moro rebels as untrustworthy or hazardous may result from their past involvement in the conflict, irrespective of their current actions and intentions. This labeling can lead to social judgment and stigmatization, impeding their ability to fully reintegrate and be accepted in their new roles as public servants. Labeling Theory elucidates how these societal perceptions can erect obstacles to acceptance and how surmounting these labels necessitates personal effort and a change in societal attitudes.

Hamber (2009) noted that societal prejudices and stigmatization frequently impede the reintegration of former combatants or rebels into society due to their past. These individuals must negotiate a multifaceted social environment in which they are assessed based on their present actions and past experiences. The research indicates that overcoming this stigma necessitates both personal resilience and institutional support, as well as community initiatives that pursue understanding and acceptance. Obstacles frequently accompany the reintegration process, as societal prejudices can endure for an extended period after individuals have transitioned from their previous roles.

2. Struggling with the New Responsibilities. The emergent theme explores the substantial obstacles that former Moro rebels face as they adjust to governance and public service requirements and expectations. This theme underscores the challenges of transitioning from a life of conflict to one focused on administration, community service, and leadership. Additionally, the bureaucratic procedures, decision-making processes, and the necessity of navigating intricate social and political dynamics accompanying their new responsibilities present additional obstacles. They are frequently subjected to intense scrutiny from their peers and the public, necessitating new skills, knowledge, and a distinct mentality to address these challenges.

The Role Transition Theory, developed by Ebaugh (1988), is linked to the theme, as it elucidates the process that individuals undergo when transitioning from one role to another, mainly when these roles are substantially different or conflicting. The transition from a role characterized by conflict to one focused on governance, and public service represents a profound shift in identity and function for former Moro rebels. Role Transition Theory elucidates that this process entails the acquisition of new skills and behaviors and the reconciliation of their prior identities with their new roles. The theory emphasizes the difficulties associated with adapting to new social dynamics, responsibilities, and expectations, which are incredibly challenging when the new role significantly differs from previous experiences.

According to Muggah and O'Donnell (2015), individuals transitioning from roles in armed conflict to positions of governance encounter significant challenges in adapting to their new responsibilities. This transition frequently entails the acquisition of new skills, comprehending intricate bureaucratic processes, and adjusting to the expectations of public service, which can be significantly different from their previous experiences. The precipitous transition from a life of conflict to one of governance necessitates technical training and emotional and psychological adaptation. The new structures and responsibilities imposed on many former combatants are difficult to navigate, and they find it difficult to adjust to the constraints and formalities of public service roles.

3. Adjusting to Bureaucracy and Conflict of Ideals. The emergent theme navigated the realities of the former rebels' new responsibilities in governance. The informants' experiences underscore the challenge of adjusting to bureaucratic systems, which frequently necessitate compromise, hierarchical structures, and rigid procedures. These elements starkly contrast with the more fluid and ideologically driven environment they were accustomed to during their time in conflict. This theme underscores the internal disputes when the ideals they once fought for collide with the practical demands and constraints of governance.

According to Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory (1957), individuals experience psychological distress, or cognitive dissonance, when their actions are inconsistent with their values or hold conflicting beliefs. For former Moro rebels, the transition to governance necessitates interaction with bureaucratic systems that may be at odds with the revolutionary principles they once advocated. This dissonance is induced by the practicalities of their new responsibilities, which necessitate compromises that contradict their fundamental beliefs. Adaptation is necessary to overcome this dissonance, in which they either modify their beliefs to align with their new actions or find methods to integrate their principles into their roles in governance.

Theidon (2009) discovered that former combatants or activists who transition into formal political or administrative positions frequently encounter difficulties with the inflexible structures and processes of bureaucracy, which may appear to oppose the principles they previously battled for. For those who are used to more direct and action-oriented methods, this transition can be exasperating as it necessitates navigating intricate government systems, adhering to regulations, and working within the constraints of institutional frameworks. Internal conflict occurs when the practicalities of governance, such as the necessity for compromise, adherence to legal frameworks, and slow-moving bureaucratic processes, intersect with the revolutionary ideals or objectives that motivated them during their time in conflict. This can result in frustration or disillusionment, as the practicalities of political life may necessitate that they compromise their ideals to accomplish pragmatic results.

4. Emotional Struggles in Role Transition. The emergent theme highlights former Moro rebels' attempts to reconcile their prior identities with their new responsibilities as public servants. The informants disclosed that this transition resulted in substantial emotional strain as they attempted to reconcile the departure from a life characterized by conflict with adopting a new identity that prioritized peace and service. Another layer of emotional complexity is added by the pressure to demonstrate their dedication to their new roles and the community. They frequently encounter feelings of self-doubt, remorse, or conflict as they negotiate the expectations of their new roles while simultaneously reconciling with their prior actions and convictions.

Stryker (1980) developed Identity Theory, which examines how individuals define themselves based on their social responsibilities and how these identities affect their self-concept and behavior. The transition from a role in conflict to one in governance necessitates a substantial change in identity for former Moro rebels. This transition may result in emotional distress as they attempt to reconcile their prior experiences with their new responsibilities. Identity Theory elucidates the internal conflict they encounter, as their former identity as rebels may conflict with their new identity as public servants dedicated to community service and harmony. The theory emphasizes the significance of a stable and supportive environment that enables the incremental formation of a new identity consistent with their current responsibilities, thereby reducing the emotional toll of role transition.

Theidon (2009) reported in the same study that combatants or activists transitioning into new roles often experience a profound internal conflict as they reconcile their former identities with their new responsibilities. This transition can be emotionally taxing, encompassing a transformation in personal identity and a shift in professional responsibilities. The emotional struggles that individuals experience can be further exacerbated by the pressure to demonstrate their dedication to peace and service, as they are under the weight of public expectation and the necessity of demonstrating their commitment to a new path. He observed that feelings of loss frequently exacerbate this emotional burden as individuals relinquish the sense of solidarity and purpose that defined their previous roles and confront the ambiguities and obstacles of their new roles.

II. Addressing the Challenges Encountered in the Performance of their Duties as Public Servants

1. Building New Networks and Relationships. The emergent theme dives into the insular and close-knit alliances that emerged within the Moro rebels to the broader, more diversified networks necessary for their new roles. In their prior positions, relationships were frequently established based on shared experiences and a common cause. Nevertheless, in the context of governance, they must negotiate a multifaceted network of interactions with various stakeholders, such as government officials, community leaders, and other public servants. The theme underscores the importance of these new relationships in successfully pursuing their objectives and the effective service of their communities, as well as the challenges and opportunities that come with expanding their social networks.

Putnam's (2000) expansion of Social Capital Theory underscores the significance of cooperation, trust, and social networks in pursuing individual and collective objectives. Social Capital Theory elucidates the importance of establishing new networks that transcend the confines of their previous, more insular connections within the MILF in the context of former Moro rebels transitioning into public service. These new relationships offer them access to resources, information, and support essential for their success in governance. To effectively navigate the complexities of their new positions, contribute to public service, and nurture community development, they can cultivate trust and collaboration within these broader networks.

The successful integration and efficacy of former activists in their new positions are contingent upon establishing trust, collaboration, and new connections within the government, as revealed by Muggah (2009). The results of the study suggested that the capacity to establish and sustain these new relationships is crucial for effectively navigating the bureaucratic environment and securing the necessary support to implement policies and programs. Trust-building and networking are essential for the broader process of peacebuilding and reconciliation, as they facilitate cooperation across various sectors and groups and reconcile divides, contributing to personal and professional success.

2. Leveraging Past Experiences. The emergent theme demonstrates the practical and strategic application of their prior experiences to their new responsibilities. To navigate the intricacies of governance and public service, the informants leverage their extensive knowledge of community dynamics, leadership, and conflict resolution, which they have refined in their previous roles. Their ability to effectively interact with the communities they serve and resolve their needs is facilitated by their understanding of local issues and cultural sensitivities. Furthermore, the strategic thinking and resilience that they cultivate during their tenure in the MILF equip them with the ability to confront the bureaucratic and political obstacles they face in government.

Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory posits that learning is a process in which knowledge is generated by transforming experience. Kolb's paradigm underscores the significance of concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation in learning. The MILF experiences that former Moro rebels acquired during their time there serve as a valuable source of knowledge that they now employ in their positions in public service. Adapting and transferring their skills to new contexts is facilitated by their ability to reflect on their past experiences, which inform their decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership approaches.

Lederach (1997) discovered that past experiences in the combatant's administration, including strategic thinking, leadership under pressure, and conflict resolution, can be effectively transferred to the public sector, enabling these individuals to navigate complex situations and make informed decisions. Research indicates that the skills acquired in conflict environments, including adaptability,

resilience, and collaboration, are highly transferable to civilian roles, where they can improve problem-solving capabilities and effectiveness.

III. Strategies Employed by the Informants to Address the Problems Encountered in the Performance of their Duties

1. Seeking Guidance and Support. The emergent emphasizes the significance of utilizing a network of community resources and experienced individuals to facilitate the effective transition into public service and governance. The informants acknowledge that the skills and knowledge they acquired during their time with the MILF, while valuable, must be supplemented by new insights and advice that are specific to their current responsibilities. They can make informed decisions, surmount obstacles, and gain a better understanding of their responsibilities by requesting feedback and support from colleagues and community members and engaging with mentors with experience in public administration.

The Social Learning Theory, developed by Bandura (1977), believes that individuals learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modeling. It underscores the significance of social interactions and the impact of mentors, colleagues, and other role models on the learning process. Social Learning Theory elucidates the active pursuit of and learning from others who have faced comparable challenges or possess the necessary expertise for former Moro rebels transitioning into public service. They acquire new skills, strategies, and perspectives that assist them in adapting to their responsibilities in governance by observing and engaging with mentors, colleagues, and community leaders.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), the support system offers the informants practical strategies, emotional support, and vital advice to overcome obstacles in their new positions. Research suggests that mentorship and peer support are essential for professional development, particularly in challenging environments where the learning curve is precipitous and the consequences are high. In addition to promoting a sense of belonging and community, these networks also assist individuals in developing confidence and competency, which can be essential for sustaining motivation and resilience during challenging transitions.

2. Emphasizing Communication and Collaboration. The emergent theme underscores the former rebels' deliberate endeavors to establish and sustain relationships with their communities and government institutions. These individuals prioritize transparent and inclusive communication channels to guarantee that all stakeholders are heard and engaged in decision-making, acknowledging that effective governance and peacebuilding necessitate collective efforts. They aim to foster mutual understanding, bridge divisions between various organizations, and work toward shared objectives by encouraging collaboration. This method not only aids in resolving conflicts and community concerns but also fortifies the social fabric, thereby contributing to the stability and development of the region.

The collaborative governance theory, developed by scholars such as Ansell and Gash (2008), emphasizes the collaborative effort of public institutions, community organizations, and other stakeholders to accomplish shared goals. Collaborative Governance Theory elucidates how former Moro rebels transitioning into public service engage multiple stakeholders in dialogue and decision-making to establish effective governance structures. They can establish trust, better resolve the needs and concerns of their communities, and work towards sustainable harmony and development by promoting open communication and collaboration. This theory emphasizes the importance of inclusive processes in attaining long-term stability and underscores the critical role of cooperation in overcoming the challenges of governance in post-conflict settings.

Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggested that open communication and collaboration are essential for effective governance and peacebuilding, as they facilitate mutual understanding and resolve gaps between diverse stakeholders. The study indicated that prioritizing these components is crucial for successfully implementing policies and initiatives and developing trust and cooperation. Former combatants or activists who assume governance responsibilities in post-conflict environments must actively cultivate robust relationships with their communities and government institutions. This collaborative approach is essential for establishing a unified front in pursuing sustainable peace and resolving challenges.

IV. Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of the Performance of their Duties as Public Servants

1. Enhancing Skills and Education. The emergent theme acknowledged the importance of acquiring new knowledge and skills to enhance the effectiveness of the informants in public service and governance. This theme emphasizes their commitment to continuous education and training through formal education programs, professional training, or self-directed learning. The desire to enhance oneself not only assists them in fulfilling the requirements of their new positions but also indicates their enduring dedication to personal development and to making a positive impact on the advancement of their communities.

The significance of continuous education and skill development throughout an individual's life is particularly underscored by Lifelong Learning Theory, designed to enhance personal and professional effectiveness and adapt to changing circumstances (Aspin & Chapman, 2000). As former Moro rebels, they must acquire new competencies and knowledge to ensure their success. Lifelong Learning Theory elucidates how these individuals approach education and skill enhancement as an ongoing process that is essential to their duties. They are better prepared to navigate the intricacies of governance and make a more meaningful contribution to their communities by participating in formal education, training programs, or self-study.

Brett (2016) investigated the function of vocational training and education in reintegrating former combatants. In addition to equipping former insurgents with the essential skills required for civilian life, educational programs also facilitate the development

of social capital and networks that enable their reintegration into communities. He reiterated the importance of these programs. The research emphasizes the transformative potential of continuous education in facilitating the successful transition of ex-combatants from armed groups to productive civilian roles.

2. Improving Community Relations. The emergent theme observed the importance of establishing trust and understanding toto bridge divides and foster collaboration and unity. This theme emphasizes the erstwhile insurgents' endeavors to engage with community members actively, attend to their concerns, and work collaboratively to address local issues. The objective is to transcend historical divisions and establish a more cohesive and united community by emphasizing mutual respect and open communication.

Allport (1954) first proposed the Contact Hypothesis, which posits that interpersonal contact between members of different groups can strengthen relations and reduce prejudice under appropriate conditions. To foster mutual understanding and bridge divides, former Moro rebels in public service should actively engage with community members, many of whom may have had varying experiences or perceptions during the conflict. The theory elucidates how these interactions can result in the reduction of biases and the development of trust when they are conducted in a context of equality, cooperation, and open communication.

Kilroy (2014) investigated the influence of former combatants on the enhancement of community relations during post-conflict reintegration processes. The research emphasizes the role of former rebels in restoring trust and promoting collaboration within communities by actively engaging in community initiatives and local governance. It emphasizes the significance of these endeavors in fostering social cohesion, overcoming mistrust, and bridging gaps, all of which are essential for the successful reintegration of former combatants and the sustainability of peace in post-conflict settings.

6. Conclusion

TheBased on the results, the researcher developed thirteen (13) emergent themes.

Seven (7) emergent themes described the positive and negative experiences of the informants as a former Moro rebel to becoming a public servant. For the positive experiences, three (3) emergent themes were developed, namely *Fulfillment in Serving the Community, Positive Impact on Community Peace,* and *Societal Recognition and Acceptance.* For the negative experiences, four (4) emergent themes were also developed, to wit: *Facing Social Judgment and Stigma, Struggling with the New Responsibilities, Adjusting to Bureaucracy and Conflict of Ideals,* and *Emotional Struggles in Role Transition.*

Meanwhile, two (2) emergent themes were formulated to explain how the informants address the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties as public servants, namely: *Building New Networks and Relationships* and *Leveraging Past Experiences.*

Similarly, two (2) emergent themes were formulated to illustrate the strategies employed by the informants to address the problems encountered in the performance of their duties, namely: *Seeking Guidance and Support* and *Emphasizing Communication and Collaboration.*

Finally, two (2) emergent themes were formulated to described the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of the performance of their duties as public servants, namely: *Enhancing Skills and Education* and *Improving Community Relations.*

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