

Between Security and Repressions: The Martial Law Years in Iligan City 1972-1981

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to uncover the personal experiences, community responses, and socio-political dynamics of the Iliganons during the Martial Law years from 1972-1981. By examining these diverse narratives, the research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how Martial Law impacted the Iliganon's life and influenced local history.

This study employs qualitative research, including mixed method of oral history archival research, and descriptive-narrative mode of writing. The researcher interviewed one hundred (100) respondents and consulted primary persons or key informants of the study. However, all forty-four barangays in Iligan were not included. Instead, the researchers intentionally selected ten barangays namely the Saray-Tibangaa, Mahayahay, Pala-o, Suarez, Maria Cristina, Tambacan, Tubod, Buru-un, Hinaplanon, and Kiwalan—as the focus areas. These barangays, chosen for their dense populations and significant impact during the implementation of Martial Law, that play a crucial role in the study. The proponent collected first-hand accounts and historical documents to present various narratives of the Iliganons to elucidate the time's socio-political climate.

INTRODUCTION

Martial Law remains a pivotal chapter in Philippine history, exerting a profound influence on the nation's political, economic, and socio-cultural landscape. Declared by President Ferdinand Marcos on September 21, 1972, under the pretext of addressing rebellion and restoring order, Martial Law became a tool for consolidating authoritarian rule. While it was officially presented as a strategy to stabilize society and implement reform, in reality, it ushered in a period marked by widespread human rights violations, suppression of civil liberties, economic decline, and political repression. For many Filipinos, the era of Martial Law is remembered as a time of fear, cruelty, and systemic injustice.¹

This study seeks to examine the impact of Martial Law on the people of Iligan City, comparing social conditions before and after its implementation. It explores personal narratives, individual and collective responses, and broader community perspectives during the Martial Law years from 1972 to 1981. By foregrounding lived experiences and localized viewpoints, this research contributes to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how authoritarian policies affected ordinary citizens, particularly in regional urban centers like Iligan.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it represents one of the initial scholarly attempts to document and analyze the perspectives of Iliganons on Martial Law during the Marcos regime. Second, it draws upon first-hand accounts, offering valuable qualitative data on the struggles, coping mechanisms, and resistance strategies of Iligan residents during a period of state repression. Third, the research may serve as a foundational reference for future scholars interested in the socio-political history of Iligan City, especially within the context of Martial Law. Lastly, it supplements existing literature by adding localized experiences that are often overlooked in national narratives. By centering the voices of those who lived through the era, this

¹ Primitivo, Mijares, *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* I. New York: Union Square Publications, 1986, p. 54.

study offers an alternative lens to understand the national trauma of Martial Law—one that is grounded in the everyday experiences of communities beyond Metro Manila.

The scope of this study is confined to the implementation and effects of Martial Law in Iligan City from 1972 to 1981. While Iligan comprises forty-four (44) barangays, this research focuses on ten (10) barangays: Saray, Tibanga, Mahayahay, Pala-o, Suarez, Maria Cristina, Tambacan, Tubod, Buru-un, Hinaplanon, and Kiwalan. These barangays were selected based on two primary criteria: their relatively large population and the significant impact they experienced during the Martial Law period. The decision to limit the study to these barangays was also influenced by practical considerations. Time constraints—specifically, a five-month research period—made it unfeasible to conduct fieldwork in all barangays. Furthermore, the chosen areas had better access to written records and documentation relevant to Martial Law, which facilitated the data collection process. Logistical limitations such as inadequate transportation to remote areas and financial constraints in disseminating official communication also contributed to the exclusion of hinterland barangays.

The researchers encountered several challenges throughout the course of the study. Among these were the reluctance of some targeted respondents to participate in interviews due to lingering fear or distrust, as well as the difficulty in accessing legal and archival documents. Despite these obstacles, the research team was able to secure interviews with key informants, including local officials and community elders who lived through the period. They also succeeded in acquiring valuable primary sources that lend credibility to the study's findings.

Despite logistical limitations and difficulties in data gathering, this research was able to piece together a compelling account of Martial Law's effects on Iligan City. By illuminating how the Marcos regime's policies were experienced on the ground, the study contributes to a broader understanding of authoritarianism in the Philippines. It underscores the importance of preserving local histories and ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities are included in national memory. In doing so, it hopes to foster historical awareness, critical reflection, and civic vigilance among present and future generation.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach, specifically utilizing descriptive-narrative and historical methods. These approaches are suitable for examining the lived experiences and socio-historical realities of individuals during the Martial Law period, allowing for a comprehensive and contextually grounded analysis.

A total of one hundred (100) informants participated in the study through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The participants were purposefully selected to represent a broad cross-section of individuals who lived through Martial Law, including ordinary residents, government employees, military personnel, and non-state actors. These respondents were distributed across ten (10) barangays in Iligan City, with a maximum of twenty (20) participants per barangay.

The study adopted a snowball sampling technique to identify and reach respondents. Initial contacts—individuals known to have lived during Martial Law—referred the researchers to other potential informants with relevant experiences and insights. This method proved effective in locating key individuals who might otherwise have been difficult to reach through random sampling.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire, designed to guide the conversation while allowing for flexibility in probing specific experiences. The questionnaire was written in Bisaya (vernacular) to ensure clarity, comfort, and authenticity in respondents' narratives. Interviews were recorded and documented using mobile phones, laptops, and personal computers, with the consent of the participants. In addition to oral testimonies, the study also drew upon a range of primary and secondary sources. These include: Legal and administrative documents from the Iligan City Hall detailing the socio-political conditions of Iligan before and during Martial Law; resolutions and ordinances issued by then-Mayor Cabili during the period; demographic and socio-economic data obtained from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) relevant to the time frame under study. To further enrich the analysis, the researchers consulted secondary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers, and scholarly articles available at public libraries and other local archives. The

triangulation of interview data with documentary sources enabled the researchers to produce a cohesive and historically grounded analysis of Martial Law's impact on Iligan City.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Historical Background During Martial Law in Iligan City

Iligan became a chartered city on June 16, 1950, through Republic Act No. 525, authored by Congressman Mohammad Ali Dimaporo and Senator Tomas Cabili, and signed into law by President Elpidio Quirino. The city's conversion from a municipality to a chartered city was based on its compliance with the national standards of population size, income level, and land area qualifications. This political milestone marked the beginning of Iligan's transformation into a major urban center in Northern Mindanao.²

According to Professor Geoffrey Salgado, Iligan is considered one of the few rapidly urbanizing small-sized cities in Southeast Asia—a phenomenon largely attributed to its early and aggressive industrialization. From a modest municipality with a population of 3,329 in 1903, Iligan evolved into a thriving city with over 300,000 inhabitants by the early 21st century. This demographic and economic growth was set in motion shortly before and after Iligan's cityhood.

Following its charter, Mayor Benito Ong, who was appointed by the president as the city's first mayor, played a pivotal role in attracting investments. Under his administration, key infrastructural and industrial projects were initiated. Notably, the construction of the Maria Cristina Hydro-Electric Power Plant catalyzed the city's industrial development. This was soon followed by the establishment of major manufacturing enterprises such as the Maria Cristina Fertilizer Plant and the Iligan Integrated Steel Mill, Inc. (IISMI), which would later become the National Steel Corporation—a critical component of the national industrialization strategy³.

When Martial Law was declared in 1972, many Iliganons initially expressed hope for reforms aimed at curbing corruption, dismantling bureaucratic inefficiencies, and restoring public order. In its early years, Martial Law was perceived by some sectors as a mechanism for ensuring discipline and order. The imposition of curfews, the enforcement of strict local ordinances, and the general climate of surveillance contributed to a sense of stability in Iligan. Daily life proceeded with fewer visible disruptions, and business establishments operated with minimal disturbances. Local governance structures, particularly at the barangay and city levels, remained functional and service-oriented.

Economically, the city benefited from continued industrial expansion, supported by macroeconomic trade and industrial policies aligned with the Marcos administration's broader development agenda. Infrastructure development projects—particularly those involving energy, manufacturing, and public utilities—contributed to increased economic activity and employment. The growth of institutions and physical infrastructure further improved the quality of life for many residents.

However, this seemingly stable and progressive environment was not universally experienced. Beneath the surface of urban growth and industrial prosperity, human rights violations, military surveillance, and restrictions on civil liberties affected several sectors of society. Accounts of bitterness and injustice emerged from residents who experienced the repressive aspects of authoritarian rule—arbitrary arrests, suppression of dissent, and limitations on free expression. For some, these experiences led to disillusionment and even subversive activities in response to state abuses.

Thus, while Martial Law in Iligan was marked by a degree of economic and administrative order, it was also characterized by underlying tensions, with divergent experiences depending on one's class, political affiliation, or interaction with state institutions. The duality of progress and repression reflects the broader contradictions of Martial Law as both a developmental project and a coercive regime.

² Iligan Website Office & ICTC. "About Iligan." <http://www.iligan.gov.ph/about-iligan/> (accessed April 1, 2019)

³ Ibid, 3.

In 1973, the City Government of Iligan passed Resolution No. 37, Series of 1973, along with the proposed Plantilla of Personnel for the Office of the City Public Works Supervisor for Fiscal Year 1972–1973. This was endorsed by the City Mayor on February 1, 1973, and was part of the broader initiative to implement infrastructure improvements under the Streets, Roads, and Bridges Fund Budget. Complementing this resolution, City Ordinance No. 963, Series of 1973 was enacted, allocating funds for the operation, maintenance, construction, and repair of streets, roads, and bridges within the city for the same fiscal year.⁴

These legislative measures marked a significant phase in Iligan City’s urban and economic development during the Martial Law period. The massive infrastructure programs facilitated by these policies greatly enhanced transportation efficiency, which in turn stimulated economic productivity. Improved road connectivity allowed for smoother movement of goods and labor, reduced travel time, and lowered operational costs for businesses. This favorable environment boosted industrial competitiveness and regional economic integration, positioning Iligan as an attractive hub for both local and national investors.

The enhanced infrastructure also played a crucial role in shaping investment patterns and the urban landscape. Accessibility became a key factor in the expansion of manufacturing zones and commercial areas, particularly in barangays that later became industrial centers.

Demographic trends further reflect this transformation. Based on available census data, Iligan’s population grew steadily throughout the 20th century, with notable increases particularly after the 1960s:

Figure 1: The Population Increase from (1903-1975)

Year	Population	Increase/ Decrease
1903 March 1	2,872	
1918 December 31	10,078	7,206
1939 January 1	28,273	18,195
1948 October 1	25,725	2,548
1960 February 15	58,433	32,708
1970 May 6	104,493	46,060
1975 May 1	118,778	14,285

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

The population boom between 1960 and 1975—coinciding with the early years of Martial Law—underscores the growing urbanization and attractiveness of Iligan City as a center of opportunity. The infusion of national funds and the prioritization of infrastructure development not only contributed to urban growth but also mirrored the Marcos administration's broader policy agenda of promoting industrialization through public works.

However, while these developments had tangible benefits, they must also be viewed within the broader context of Martial Law’s authoritarian governance. Infrastructure expansion coexisted with restrictions on civil liberties, political repression, and widespread fear. The developmental outcomes in Iligan, therefore, reflect both the gains and contradictions of state-led modernization under Martial Law.

Figure 2. Population of ten (10) barangay from (1970-1975)

Barangays	Total Population 1970	1975
Buru-un	6702	7243

⁴ Office of the Municipal Board, Resolution No 37, series 1973.

Hinaplanon	6135	7667
Kiwalan	4014	4299
Mahayahay	5704	7704
Maria Cristina	4141	5370
Pala-o	6190	6743
Saray-Tibanga	15,628	17435
Suarez	5174	5700
Tamabacan	3271	4082
Tubod	8311	10426

Source: Iligan City, Office of the City Planning

The population distribution across selected barangays in Iligan City between 1970 and 1975 reveals patterns of steady demographic growth, reflecting the city's increasing urbanization and industrialization during the early years of Martial Law. The data demonstrates a clear trend of population expansion, particularly in barangays with strategic economic, residential, or infrastructural significance. Urban Migration and Industrial Pull, barangays such as Mahayahay, Tubod, and Saray-Tibanga experienced the largest absolute increases in population. These areas likely benefited from proximity to emerging industrial and commercial zones or from enhanced public infrastructure, including road networks and public utilities, funded by government resolutions and ordinances enacted during Martial Law. Expansion of Industrial Zones, the growth of Maria Cristina and Hinaplanon may be attributed to their strategic importance in Iligan's industrial landscape, particularly with the presence of facilities like the Maria Cristina Hydro-electric Plant and nearby manufacturing operations. These industrial anchors attracted both labor and secondary services, thereby boosting local population figures.

Infrastructural Influence on Residential Growth increased investments in road and bridge construction during the early 1970s—as part of local ordinances like City Ordinance No. 963 series of 1973—likely enhanced the livability of certain barangays. Improved access may have encouraged migration from more remote or rural parts of Iligan or neighboring municipalities. Balanced Growth Across Barangays: Although the levels of increase vary, all ten barangays recorded positive population growth, indicating a broad-based urban expansion rather than isolated concentration. This may suggest a relatively even spread of development efforts and resource allocation during this period. Social Implications: While population growth generally suggests economic opportunity and improved services, it also implies increasing pressure on housing, sanitation, public health, and employment. If not met with proportionate government response, rapid urbanization could result in overcrowding or social inequality—issues that were commonly overlooked or suppressed during Martial Law.

In conclusion, the barangay-level population data for 1970 and 1975 illustrates the demographic dimension of Iligan City's transformation under Martial Law. The interplay between infrastructure-driven economic growth, internal migration, and industrial expansion significantly shaped the city's urban landscape during this period. However, the gains achieved must be critically examined in the context of authoritarian governance and its long-term implications for local communities.

Economic Performance of Iligan City During Martial Law (1972–1977)

The period from 1972 to 1977 marked a phase of rapid economic transformation for Iligan City, coinciding with the implementation of Martial Law under President Ferdinand Marcos. Official records from the Office of the City Planning and the City Treasurer show a consistent increase in both barangay-level income and city-wide revenue, indicating heightened economic activity and improved fiscal capacity during this time.

Figure 3: Income by Barangay (1972–1978)

INCOME BY BARANGAY	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Buru-un	14507.04	9234.57	11905.59	14395.59	15077.47	7569.66	16237.36
Hinaplanon	3572.23	3925.36	2392.76	3344.75	2690.25	1383.61	3857.03
Kiwalan	224.65	396.51	27924.34	25425.90	24090.04	13531.62	50.757.96
Mahayahay	1807.14	2512.30	2597.29	2924.28	3484.74	1619.61	3916.42
Maria Cristina	10478.64	14484.28	14265.95	14670.72	17784.74	9950.51	15649.33
Pala-o	4767.55	8196.92	8663.98	10291.62	10208.77	5217.73	12686.10
Saray-Tibanga	9238.37	8534.67	8714.38	9052.75	9638.86	4494.37	9831.92
Suarez	40881.96	37,129.98	111921.64	229476.34	270343.13	135732.15	276686.80
Tambacan	163.93	381.89	276.53	164.30	219.41	68.58	288.07
Tubod	7,791	9805.29	7285.56	8652.92	9633.14	2874.17	8846.06

Source: Iligan City, Office of the City Planning

The barangay-level income data (Figure 3) presents diverse growth trajectories across the ten barangays surveyed. Barangays such as Suarez, Maria Cristina, Tubod, and Kiwalan posted significantly high income figures, with Suarez alone reaching a remarkable ₱276,686.80 in 1977—surpassing other barangays by a wide margin. This can be attributed to Suarez's strategic location and the presence of major commercial and residential developments that bolstered local revenues.

Barangays such as Maria Cristina and Tubod also consistently generated strong incomes throughout the period, likely due to their proximity to industrial zones and major infrastructure such as the Maria Cristina Hydro-Electric Plant and the National Steel Corporation. In contrast, barangays like Tambacan and Kiwalan showed more erratic or lower figures, possibly due to limited industrial activity or fluctuating investment patterns.

This uneven income distribution among barangays suggests that while some areas experienced accelerated economic development, others remained relatively marginalized. The trend reflects the broader urban-industrial strategy of the Marcos regime, which often prioritized zones with high economic potential.

Figure 4: Iligan City Income Statement (FY 1972–1977)

Income Accounts	FY 1972	FY 1973	FY1974	FY 1975	FY 1976	FY 1977
Internal Revenue Allotment	387,747.26	546,024.00	1,641,347.40	1,641.347.40	1,641,347.40	2,051,684.28
Revenue from Taxation	3,392,950.37	4,285,411.97	4,339,777.74	6,962,941.18	7,656,859.05	8,518,068.91
Revenue from Economic Enterprises	173,901.70	86,411.57	344,461.38	599,406.94	649,998.22	705,8977
Fees, Permits, Rentals, Penalties	219,365.28	201,565.52	391,028.15	370,627.23	484,556.21	683,949.70
Other receipts	1,185,296	1,320,1	1,796,43	3,231,64	8,300,71	1,823,308.44

	.82	44	4	7.	8.50	
		.90	.61	84		
TOTAL	5,359,264	6,538,5	8,513,04	12,805,9	18,733,5	13,782,908.8
	.43	502	9.28	59	52.38	0

Source: Office of the City Planning, Iligan City

The consistent increase in revenues from taxation, economic enterprises, and internal allotments reflects a more efficient fiscal apparatus and a growing local economy. Notably, the dramatic leap in total income from ₱5.3 million in 1972 to ₱18.7 million in 1976—more than tripling in just four years—is indicative of the city’s expanding industrial base and improved tax collection mechanisms. This economic performance culminated in the reclassification of Iligan as a First Class-A City in 1977 through Presidential Decree No. 465, a formal recognition of its enhanced fiscal and economic standing.

The economically active population during this period was estimated at 48 percent of the total labor force, with a high employment rate of 93 percent. The growth of industries, combined with increased educational attainment and overseas labor deployment, likely expanded Iligan’s pool of economically engaged citizens. The boom in employment, particularly in steel production, energy, and construction, contributed to rising household incomes and urban migration.

However, while these developments signify economic vibrancy, it is critical to contextualize them within the broader national climate of repression, censorship, and inequality. The centralized control exercised by the Martial Law regime often meant that development was not uniformly distributed and that civil liberties were suppressed, even amid economic gains.

The data from 1972 to 1977 highlights Iligan City's transformation into an industrial hub, with corresponding growth in barangay-level and city-wide revenues. Fueled by strategic infrastructure, a strong manufacturing base, and effective fiscal governance, the city emerged as a key economic player in Northern Mindanao during the Martial Law years. Yet, these achievements must be assessed critically, acknowledging both the material benefits and the authoritarian context in which they occurred.

Social Condition of Iligan City Under Martial Law

From 1972 to 1981, the Philippines was under Martial Law, declared through Proclamation No. 1081 by

President Ferdinand Marcos. Justified by claims of “lawlessness, anarchy, chaos, and disorder,” the declaration centralized power under the executive branch and initiated sweeping political, social, and administrative reforms across the nation. The curfew imposed—from midnight to 4:00 a.m.—reflected the tightening of military control and the government's desire to impose discipline and surveillance on both urban and rural populations.⁵

In support of national directives, Iligan City promptly aligned its local governance with the broader Martial Law agenda. Mayor Camilo Cabili, through Resolution No. 392, Series of 1972, outlined the implementation of Martial Law provisions for the city. This resolution was notable for its localized approach: it sought to directly inform the 44 barangays and their respective barrio captains about the implications of Martial Law. Members of the Municipal Board—Alfredo R. Busico, Casimero P. Cabigon, and Antonio P. Fabe—collaborated with the military to conduct community forums. These initiatives aimed to foster compliance and ensure that barangay-level leaders became active partners in the execution of Martial Law policies.⁶

⁵ Resolution No 392, series of 1972

⁶ Office of the Municipal Board, Resolution 392, series of 1972.

Approved by City Vice Mayor Pacificador Lluch and Secretary Voltaire Rovira, the resolution facilitated the enforcement of national orders in Iligan, including: the suspension of the freedom of the press, the imposition of curfew hours, the repressions of civil liberties and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

These measures, while aimed at establishing order and discipline, also led to the erosion of constitutional safeguards and civil rights. The extent of their enforcement varied across communities, but they had lasting effects on the relationship between state authorities and local populations.

Barangay Reform and Administrative Reorganization

Beyond security measures, Martial Law also reshaped the administrative landscape of the Philippines. President Marcos sought to restructure local governance by emphasizing barangay-level administration. Under the 1973 Constitution, greater autonomy was promised to local government units, particularly barrios, with the goal of promoting self-reliant communities. A key development in this regard was Presidential Decree No. 86, issued on December 21, 1972, which created the Barangay or Citizen's Assembly. This decree mandated the formation of barangay-based assemblies in all municipalities and cities, replacing the traditional barrio structure. Where barrios did not exist, barangays were created as their functional equivalent. These assemblies were intended to increase citizen participation in governance, serve as a platform for expressing public opinion on national issues and function as a mechanism for grassroots consultation, albeit under close supervision⁷

While the policy was presented as a democratizing reform, it must be understood within the authoritarian context of Martial Law. The Citizen's Assemblies, although participatory in form, were often used to legitimize decisions already made by the Marcos regime. The barangay system allowed for micro-level surveillance and top-down policy dissemination, making it a strategic tool for both governance and political control.

The Martial Law period in Iligan City, as in much of the country, was marked by contradictions. On one hand, it introduced structural reforms and administrative efficiency, as seen in the streamlined barangay system and the formal inclusion of citizens in local assemblies. On the other hand, it significantly curtailed democratic freedoms and institutionalized repression.

The creation of barangays and Citizen's Assemblies was as much about increasing state penetration and surveillance as it was about empowering citizens. In practice, local leaders often acted as agents of the regime, ensuring that Martial Law directives were followed while limiting dissent. While some communities may have experienced short-term gains in terms of order, infrastructure, or administrative clarity, these benefits came at the cost of civil liberties and participatory governance. The period from 1972 to 1981 saw Iligan City integrated into the national Martial Law framework through both security enforcement and administrative restructuring. The local government's rapid implementation of Martial Law provisions and the establishment of barangay-level governance reflect the Marcos regime's strategic use of decentralization to consolidate central authority. While reforms such as the Citizen's Assemblies were presented as democratizing tools, they ultimately served to reinforce authoritarian control under the guise of community empowerment.

Peace and Order in Iligan City During Martial Law: Security Measures, and Social Unrest (1970s)

Even before its formal chartering on June 16, 1950, Iligan City had already developed into a culturally diverse community. It was home to three major ethno-cultural groups: the Christian settlers, the Maranao Muslims, and the Higaonon indigenous peoples, among others. The coexistence of these communities, while at times peaceful, was also marked by deep-seated differences in beliefs, customs, and traditions. These differences occasionally escalated into tension and violence, particularly during periods of national instability and lawlessness.

⁷ Presidential Decree No. 86 "Creation of Baranggay" (Citizens Assembly), Accessed December 4, 2018
[/nanopdf.com/download/file-pres-ferdinand-marcos](https://nanopdf.com/download/file-pres-ferdinand-marcos)

Under the leadership of Mayor Camilo Cabili, significant efforts were made to address the rising security concerns and ethnic tensions within the city. The administration prioritized the maintenance of peace and order, especially amid ongoing threats from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the New People's Army (NPA). To counteract the growing threat of insurgency, military installations such as Camp Tipanoy and the Army Brigade in Maria Cristina were strategically established, serving both as deterrents and rapid-response centers in times of unrest.

One of the most noteworthy peace initiatives during Cabili's term was the interfaith peace conference that brought together leaders from the city's five key barangays—Mandulog, Rogongon, Digkilaan, Bonbon, and Mainit. The conference addressed Muslim-Christian relations and aimed to institutionalize cooperation at the grassroots level. Agreements included:

- Authorizing barangay leaders to register new Muslim residents to monitor demographic changes.
- Creating interfaith peace committees composed of Christian, Muslim, and indigenous members.
- Encouraging community-based conflict resolution, with appeals for legal recourse rather than retaliatory violence.

A pivotal moment came when Barrio Captain Marigo Dianal of Tubaran asked the Sultans of Mandulog to reaffirm their commitment to peace. The sultans responded positively, highlighting the years of peaceful coexistence with Christians as a basis for ongoing harmony. Mayor Cabili emphasized the importance of rule of law, urging community members to report incidents to authorities rather than resorting to vigilantism.

Prior to the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, Mindanao was already engulfed in escalating violence between armed vigilante groups, notably the Ilaga (largely Christian) and the *Barracuda* (Moro-affiliated). In Lanao del Norte, this conflict became particularly intense, prompting the direct intervention of President Marcos, Governor Quibranza and Mayor Cabili, among others, publicly accused Ali Dimaporo and his brother Naga of supporting the Barracuda. Allegations also surfaced about Ilaga death squads operating with impunity and being backed by local politicians.

Despite this volatile context, Iligan City managed to remain insulated from the worst of the violence. The combined presence of military forces and proactive peacebuilding measures helped prevent the full-scale infiltration of these groups into the city's territory. However, the wider climate of fear and insecurity affected public sentiment and contributed to increased support for government-imposed security measures.

The declaration of Martial Law in September 1972 heightened social tensions in Iligan. A series of bombings and violent incidents stirred panic among residents and revealed the fragility of local peace. The first major dynamite explosion in the city created widespread fear. While leftist groups were suspected, public opinion was divided—some believed it was an act of destabilization by insurgents like the NPA, while others accused the government of staging attacks to justify the continuation of Martial Law.

Another notable event was the Premier Cinema bombing in Barangay Poblacion. Authorities discovered a grenade and gasoline bottle inside the facility, leading to its temporary closure. The SSD (Special Security Division) and Attorney Encarnacion from the NBI launched an investigation. Civil society organizations, including three activist groups, decried the incident as a possible false flag operation, further highlighting the climate of suspicion and political polarization. On April 18, 1979, an ambush in Tumpol Malimbato, Iligan City, resulted in the deaths of five individuals, including workers from PTH Construction Inc. While no group claimed responsibility, the attack was widely speculated to be the work of the NPA, underlining the reach of insurgent influence despite military efforts.

Despite the volatility, Martial Law policies also brought about visible changes in public order. The implementation of city-wide curfews was met with mixed reactions. While civil liberties were severely restricted, many residents credited the regular police and military patrols with curbing petty crimes, improving nighttime safety, and reinforcing public discipline. These reforms cultivated a temporary sense of stability in Iligan and facilitated safer economic and social activities, particularly in the downtown and commercial districts.

The social condition in Iligan City during Martial Law (1972- 1981) presents a complex portrait of tension, adaptation, and endurance. While Martial Law under Ferdinand Marcos imposed sweeping authoritarian control across the Philippines, its localized impact in cities like Iligan offers a nuanced understanding of how communities responded to systemic repression.

The declaration of Martial Law through *Proclamation No. 1081* led to the suspension of civil liberties, including the freedom of speech, press, and assembly. In Iligan, this meant a chilling effect on activism, political dissent, and even everyday conversations. The presence of military checkpoints, SSD (Special Services Division) patrols, and the enforcement of curfew hours contributed to a climate of fear. Suspected leftists or sympathizers of groups like the NPA (New People's Army) or Moro separatist movements were often subject to surveillance, arrest, or worse—detention without due process.

This environment of fear was heightened by bombings, ambushes, and the threat of insurgent violence, such as the 1979 ambush in Tumpol, Malimbato. These incidents blurred the lines between state security measures and authoritarian excess, leading many residents to feel caught between two extremes: the repressive tactics of the state and the destabilizing actions of armed groups. Despite these challenges, Iliganons demonstrated remarkable resilience. Local governance under officials like Mayor Camilo Cabili aimed to mediate tensions between diverse ethno-religious groups, especially Christians, Muslims (Maranaos), and Indigenous peoples (e.g., Higaonons). The peace conferences, formation of multi-sectoral barangay committees, and community-led security initiatives like checkpoints in Buru-un all reflected a communal will to maintain order and coexist peacefully despite national turmoil.

Moreover, the implementation of Martial Law also had positive effects on public discipline and security, as noted in firsthand accounts. Residents recall lower crime rates and safer streets, partly due to strict curfews and visible military presence. Youth behavior was reportedly more restrained, with groups like the Kabataang Barangay playing a role in organizing civic activities and promoting discipline among the youth.

KI2 accounted:

*"Criminality in Barangay Buru-un was kept under control due to the establishment of a checkpoint that extended from Barangay Ditucalan to Buru-un. My father, a retired member of the Philippine Constabulary, often shared that anyone found roaming the streets after midnight would be apprehended and detained at Camp Tipanoy. The presence of these checkpoints significantly heightened security, especially in our area, which was considered vulnerable to threats from groups such as the NPA, Barracuda, and Ilaga."*⁸

KI3 accounted:

*"I had a largely positive experience during Martial Law, especially in terms of the improved peace and order situation. At first, I was apprehensive about its implementation, but over time I came to see its benefits. Martial Law helped regulate the behavior of young people and significantly reduced crime in the city. The enforcement of curfew hours contributed to greater discipline among the youth. I witnessed this firsthand while serving as the first Kabataang Barangay Chairman of Santa Filomena. Because of the curfew, people—especially the youth—became more disciplined. In terms of safety, I was able to sleep peacefully at night, knowing that soldiers were actively patrolling the city. Criminal activities declined, and I genuinely felt secure during that period."*⁹

Narratives On Human Rights Violation

⁸ KI2, A Personal Interview with the resident of barangay Buru-un, 70 years old

⁹ KI3, A Personal Interview with the resident of barangay, Kiwalan, 75 years old

One of the most immediate effects of the Martial Law regime was the curtailment of press freedom. Privately owned media outlets—including radio stations, newspapers, magazines, and television networks—were placed under government control or outright seized. This media crackdown effectively silenced dissent, stifled public discourse, and ensured that the Marcos administration controlled the flow of information. Journalists and commentators were prohibited from reporting on or expressing views critical of the regime, creating an atmosphere of censorship and fear.

In Iligan City, however, certain local radio stations, such as DXIC, DCMI, and DXRG, were not among those seized by the government. Their exemption was largely due to their compliance with the administration's directives and their avoidance of broadcasting content deemed subversive or critical of the Martial Law government. This illustrates how local media navigated the constraints of the era—balancing journalistic function with the need to avoid government retaliation.

Ultimately, the suppression of the free press during Martial Law not only limited the public's access to truthful information but also served as a powerful tool for state propaganda, consolidating Marcos's authoritarian rule while leaving long-term consequences for democratic institutions in the country.¹⁰

KI 4 accounted:

I worked as a radio commentator throughout the Martial-Law years. Although there were many issues I wanted to discuss on air, I often had to censor myself. Any opinion judged critical of President Marcos or the Martial-Law regime was strictly forbidden. I began my career at DXIC, later transferred to DXMI, and eventually to DXRG. These stations were allowed to stay on the air largely because we agreed to follow the government's guidelines; they were the only outlets prepared to carry even mildly critical material, and only within very narrow limits. We could report on individual killings, but we avoided probing too deeply into the larger political context. We also received credible information about military abuses and other human-rights violations, yet we deliberately chose not to broadcast those stories. Survival meant learning where the invisible red lines were—and never crossing them.¹¹

A. Student Activism and State Repression during Martial Law

In the late 1960s through the 1970s, student activism intensified across the Philippines as resistance to the Marcos regime grew. Led by organizations such as *Kabataang Makabayan (KM)*, student movements mobilized to demand democratic reforms, social justice, and an end to state oppression. However, with the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, these movements were swiftly and brutally suppressed.

In Iligan City, student activism gained significant momentum, particularly at the Mindanao State University–Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT). A number of students courageously voiced their dissent and called for systemic reforms. Under the Marcos administration, however, those who refused to cease their activism or surrender to military pressure were targeted. Many were arrested by the Philippine Constabulary (PC) and the Armed Forces, and several were subjected to harsh interrogation, abuse, and torture.

KI5 accounted:

In Barangay Tubod, there have been reports of abuses and torture by military personnel, with detainees in Camp Tipanoy facing severe restrictions and physical violence. Additionally, former propaganda members have been targeted, and there are reports of activists going missing.¹²

¹⁰ KI3, A personal interview with the resident of barangay Santa Filomena, 70 years old

¹¹ KI4, A personal interview with the former radio broadcaster, 75 years old barangay Buru-un

¹² KI5, A personal interview with the former activist groups, 78 years old, barangay Tubod

An interview with a key informant—whose identity remains undisclosed for security reasons—revealed a powerful and personal account of resistance during the height of Martial Law in 1972. At the time, he was a first-year college student in Iligan City. He recalled that an organized activist group he was associated with had dispersed across various areas in Mindanao and the Visayas, particularly in Cebu, as part of their propaganda efforts. While he chose to remain in Iligan to continue his studies, many of his fellow activists who had left eventually returned, bringing with them harrowing stories of abuse and repression under the Marcos regime. These testimonies galvanized them to regroup and form a movement aimed at challenging and ultimately overthrowing military rule. Clashes between the group and government forces soon followed. Some members were killed, captured, or forced into hiding. The informant managed to escape the escalating danger, traveling to Pangasinan, Isabela, and Manila in search of other members of their network. However, upon returning home to Iligan to visit his family, he was apprehended by authorities. He endured months of interrogation under the Philippine Constabulary (PC) and was eventually released, only to be re-arrested and detained at Camp Alagar for further questioning. After his second release, he began living a life of evasion, constantly on the run to avoid capture.

Despite the risks, he continued participating in anti-government activities. His role involved producing and distributing pamphlets and leaflets in public areas to raise awareness and spark resistance. During one of these missions, he was captured again and detained in deplorable conditions—kept in a pigpen. He was eventually freed through the intervention of a cousin who was employed in government service. However, his release came with strict conditions: he was required to report regularly to the military camp in Tipanoy and submit a weekly itinerary. He was also prohibited from associating with certain individuals or groups. The informant recounted the severe torture experienced by his fellow activists, including physical beatings that led to broken noses and ribs. Many were subjected to degrading treatment, such as having their heads shaved with dull bayonets while imprisoned at Camp Tipanoy—causing wounds and swelling. Despite these brutal conditions, the resistance continued. His group, identified as survivors of the First Quarter Storm and the *Dekada '70* movement, operated in silence, often in coordination with surrendered members of the MNLf and NPA. Some comrades traveled to Kalinga-Apayao to sustain the armed struggle. The group frequently convened in safe houses located in Mahayahay, Palao, and Poblacion. Another faction, known as “*Lumping*,” was more militant in nature. They were often involved in direct confrontations, including throwing pillbox bombs at Marcos’ riot police and serving as frontliners during rallies and demonstrations. Some members relocated to Davao, forming what eventually became known as “*Sparrow*” units or liquidation squads. Later, under government amnesty programs, some former rebels were offered financial assistance to support livelihood projects in exchange for laying down their arms and aligning with the government. Although this brought an end to the open rebellion for many, the experiences and trauma of this era remain deeply embedded in their lives—and in the history of Iligan.¹³

KI6 accounted:

I created and posted stenciled pamphlets and leaflets in public places, which attracted the authorities' attention. I was detained and interrogated in a detention camp for a month. After that, I had to report to Camp Tipanoy weekly and was prohibited from being in a group of people and entering Iligan. Our group was called First Quarter Storm Dekada70.¹⁴

During the Martial Law period in the Philippines, the illegal incarceration of political dissidents and suspected sympathizers of leftist movements was a widespread and systemic practice, even at the local level. In Iligan City, one such case involved Francisco Dosdos, a local politician who was arrested without due process on March 26, 1976. At approximately 9:00 a.m., agents of the Military Intelligence Group (MIG) arrived at the office of Dosdos, then employed at the National Steel Corporation in Suarez, Iligan City. Traveling in an unmarked civilian jeep, the agents presented him with an Arrest, Search, and Seizure Order (ASSO). Alongside him, an official from the company’s Industrial Relations Department was also apprehended. Both

¹³ KI 6, A personal Interview with a key informant, 77 years of age, baranggay Tubod, Iligan City.

¹⁴ KI 6. A personal Interview with the key informant. 77 years of age. baranggay Tubod. Iligan City.

were initially taken to the Philippine Constabulary (PC) Headquarters at Camp Tomas Cabili in Tipanoy, Iligan City.

Shortly afterward, Dosdos was blindfolded and transferred to another location. After a 20-minute drive, the vehicle stopped, and he was led, still blindfolded, into what he later identified as an interrogation facility. The psychological tactics employed were immediate and cruel. Upon arrival, he was met with taunts and threats. One interrogator remarked, “I have not yet killed today,” while another forced Dosdos to feel his muscular forearm, suggesting, “So, you are malakas [strong], let us see.” They mocked his upright posture and military-style haircut, insinuating that he might be commander or a rebel leader. While in detention, Dosdos heard persistent cries and screams, a harrowing indicator of ongoing torture in adjacent rooms. He was questioned about individuals he allegedly knew to be communists. During the interrogation, a man in civilian clothing—later identified as Master Sergeant Max Salazar—joined in. His threatening demeanor and harsh tone deepened Dosdos’s fear of imminent physical torture.

That night, Dosdos was made to sleep in a room the interrogators referred to as the “lion’s den.” There, he encountered fellow detainees, including David Borja, who had a black eye, and Roberto Cahoy, who bore a bruise on his chin—both clear signs of recent torture. Throughout the night, the sleep of detainees was frequently interrupted by the distressing sounds of beatings and screaming.

Dosdos, along with Pastor Tenorio Jr., Romulo Cantutay, Jimmy Pineda, Carmencito Yamba, Borja, and Cahoy, were confined in a cramped detention cell designed for far fewer occupants. With 25–30 individuals sharing inadequate facilities, they endured squalid living conditions: scarce food, limited hygiene, and extreme overcrowding. These daily indignities were compounded by the uncertainty of their legal status. They were never formally charged with any crime, nor were they informed of when—or if—they would be released. Despite being ordered released by President Ferdinand Marcos, Dosdos remained in detention and was only formally released on March 4, 1977—almost a full year after his arrest. Even after his release, he remained under state surveillance and was compelled to report weekly to Camp Tipanoy. His prolonged detention without trial and subjection to inhumane treatment exemplify the gross violations of human rights that marked the Martial Law era in Iligan and across the Philippines.¹⁵

K17 accounted:

I was a political detainee during Martial Law. I was arrested on March 26, 1976, and held in Camp Tipanoy for nearly a year. During my detention, I witnessed the suffering of my fellow detainees who were subjected to torture. When Jimmy Carter assumed the presidency in 1977, he stated that aid to countries holding political detainees might be cut. In response, President Marcos of the Philippines denied the presence of political detainees and ordered their release. I was eventually released on March 4, 1977.¹⁶

The declaration of Martial Law in the Philippines severely curtailed fundamental civil liberties, depriving Filipinos of their rights to due process, meaningful participation in governance, and access to truthful information. This systematic erosion of rights was further exacerbated by an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, where the pervasive presence of armed forces manipulated the populace into submission, undermining democratic principles and justice.

An interview with a key informant (KI8), a former Barangay Captain of Bunawan, highlights the profound social and political turmoil experienced in his community during this period. The infiltration of the New People’s Army (NPA) into Barangay Bunawan created a climate of instability and fear. Many residents, including the Barangay Captain, evacuated the area, leaving behind those loyal to or supportive of the NPA—locally referred to as the “Masa.” Among these supporters was Ederito Cabarubias, who consciously chose to remain despite the imminent dangers.

¹⁵ KI7, Personal Interview with a political detainee, 72 years old, barangay Tubod

¹⁶ KI7, Personal Interview with a political detainee, 72 years old, barangay Tubod

¹⁶ KI8. A Personal Interview with the former barangay Captain. 70 years old

Tensions escalated following a violent encounter between the NPA and government forces, resulting in the deaths of five soldiers. In response, President Marcos deployed the 12th Infantry Battalion to strengthen military presence in the area, with troops stationed at Camp Isaac Dandasan Sr. in Barangay Bunawan. However, this military reinforcement brought further hardship for the local population. Reports of human rights abuses, including the killing of livestock for sustenance and acts of violence against civilians—especially those suspected of affiliations with leftist groups such as the Communist Party of the Philippines—emerged as tragic hallmarks of this era.

The residents of Barangay Bunawan found themselves in a vulnerable and powerless position, unable to seek justice or protection due to fear of retaliation by the military. The widespread climate of terror was compounded by reports of grave violations against women, including cases of rape, torture, and extrajudicial killings perpetrated by soldiers based on mere suspicion.

The experience of Barangay Bunawan during Martial Law exemplifies the broader pattern of militarization and repression across many parts of the Philippines during this era. The state's strategy of suppressing dissent through force and intimidation resulted in gross human rights violations, fracturing the social fabric of communities. The militarization not only targeted armed insurgents but also indiscriminately affected civilians, often punishing innocent individuals suspected of subversion without due process.

Such abuses had lasting impacts, fostering deep-seated mistrust between the military and civilian populations. The erosion of civil liberties, coupled with unchecked military power, created a culture of fear that stifled political participation and silenced dissent. This environment effectively undermined the democratic principles that the government purported to uphold, revealing the paradox of Martial Law: a regime that claimed to restore order but instead institutionalized oppression. In sum, the case of Barangay Bunawan underscores the critical importance of safeguarding human rights and civilian protections, particularly in times of conflict and political instability. It also highlights the enduring need for accountability and reconciliation to heal communities torn apart by state violence.

Martial Law: From The Iliganon's Perspective

The declaration of Martial Law elicited mixed reactions among the residents of Iligan City. While some perceived it as a necessary measure to suppress subversion and quell rebellious movements, others viewed it as a serious threat to civil liberties and the social fabric of the city. The initial response of Iliganons to Martial Law offers valuable insight into their nuanced and varied acceptance of the Marcos administration.

Many residents, after weighing the potential benefits and drawbacks, recognized certain achievements attributed to the Marcos regime, particularly in the realm of economic growth and infrastructure development. Marcos's administration prioritized national progress through extensive infrastructure projects, significantly improving roads, highways, bridges, schools, hospitals, and academic institutions. These developments had lasting positive effects that are still evident in Iligan today.

However, opposition to the regime was also present and active. Numerous Iliganons resisted Marcos's rule through protests and dissemination of information, despite facing grave risks including arbitrary arrests and military detentions. The pervasive censorship of the media during Martial Law effectively suppressed the true extent of governmental abuses, making it difficult for many residents to fully grasp the severity of the human rights violations occurring nationwide.

For some in Iligan, Martial Law was seen as a pathway to restoring order and stability, especially by those who were not directly affected by the repression. Yet, for others—particularly those who experienced illegal arrests, forced detentions, and the imposition of strict curfew hours—the era represented a time of fear, frustration, and social control. The curfew, coupled with intensified military presence and media censorship, deeply altered the city's socio-political dynamics, fostering an environment of surveillance and limited freedom.

Ultimately, the local response in Iligan to Martial Law reflects a spectrum of experiences shaped by broader socio-political unrest that affected the entire region. These varied perspectives reveal how Martial Law's

legacy is complex—marked by economic development on one hand and widespread human rights abuses on the other—both of which continue to influence Iligan’s social and political landscape to this day.

Contrasting Perspectives on Martial Law: Marcos vs. Duterte

President Ferdinand Marcos’s declaration of Martial Law elicited deeply divided reactions among Filipinos, particularly in the Southern Philippines. Originally intended to disarm rebel groups and restore order, the imposition of Martial Law soon became associated with widespread abuses by uniformed personnel, leaving a lasting social stigma. For many, it represented a period marked by repression and national disgrace. Yet, despite these challenges, some residents of Iligan perceived the era as a time of new opportunities amid adversity.

A comparison between Marcos’s nationwide Martial Law and President Rodrigo Duterte’s regional declaration in Mindanao reveals key differences in scope, execution, and societal impact. Duterte’s Martial Law was imposed specifically in response to the Marawi siege, targeting a localized security threat, whereas Marcos’s declaration extended across the entire country, affecting all sectors of society.

Under Marcos, numerous documented human rights violations fostered a climate of fear and trauma. In contrast, Duterte’s Martial Law in Mindanao was characterized by a more disciplined approach from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), with fewer reports of systemic oppression.

Moreover, Duterte’s declaration did not significantly disrupt daily life nor infringe upon constitutionally guaranteed freedoms. The writ of habeas corpus remained intact, ensuring that arrests were conducted with appropriate legal warrants. Freedom of speech and other fundamental rights were largely preserved, and government agencies maintained normal operations throughout the period. While Marcos’s Martial Law left deep psychological and emotional scars on many Filipinos, Duterte’s implementation in Mindanao was more focused and constrained, avoiding broad societal repression. This contrast highlights the evolving use of Martial Law in Philippine history and reflects lessons learned from past experiences regarding the balance between security and civil liberties.

KI8 accounted:

For me, the implementation of Martial Law by President Duterte provides security to the City of Iligan, because of the impositions of curfew hours. Before martial Law, Iligan was in the state of chaos and upheaval caused by the drug addicts, because of the curfew hours the crimes had lessen. During the time of Marcos, the implementation of curfew hours also strengthens of civil order of the locality. We know for the fact that Marcos declare Martial law because of the rebellious movement. I am in favor about the extension of Martial Law in Mindanao; there’s no reason to be afraid of, military officials were not abusive with their power towards the people. But those who were against the government and practice lawlessness were the one who feared the law.¹⁷

In Proclamation No. 216, President Rodrigo Duterte declared a state of Martial Law in Mindanao in response to a national emergency triggered by escalating lawless violence. This declaration was primarily prompted by violent attacks carried out by the Maute terrorist groups, which resulted in significant casualties among both civilians and government forces. It is important to distinguish President Duterte’s Martial Law in Mindanao from the nationwide Martial Law imposed by President Ferdinand Marcos, as these two declarations have evoked markedly different public reactions, both positive and negative.

The proclamation by President Duterte received a mixed response from the residents of Iligan. Many viewed it as a necessary measure to strengthen security and maintain civil order amid the ongoing rebellion in Mindanao.

¹⁷ KI7. Personal Interview with the resident of barangay Kiwalan. 66 years old

Conversely, others expressed concerns that the declaration might be exploited to extend presidential power and potentially replicate the abuses and injustices that characterized the Marcos era.

KI9 accounted:

Upon the declaration of martial law our parents are surprised even because the policies of martial law are dangerous. during that time there are lots of injustices or cases of human rights violation due to the abuses conducted by the Philippine const and the Philippine army. Dutertes martial law in the present, has been viewed differently, some agrees to it while others oppose it as we can never avoid people who doesn't like the laws passed. but in my opinion, I am thankful for Duterte's proclamation of martial law in Mindanao because it has served peace and order to our city especially the checkpoints that they initiated to ensure the security of the people in the city. I can really see that the Martial law declared by Duterte has no cases of abuses committed or taking of advantage from the soldier¹⁸.

Some residents of Iligan perceive President Duterte's declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao as a necessary measure to maintain public order and ensure the safety of the populace. Since its implementation, a relative restoration of peace has been observed, fostering renewed confidence among regional investors and opening new economic opportunities for the people of Mindanao. Many Iliganons recognize positive aspects of this proclamation, noting the military's role in upholding national sovereignty, protecting civilians, and respecting civilian authority and human rights. While there are parallels between Duterte's and Marcos's imposition of Martial Law, particularly in their focus on restoring peace and security, it is crucial to remember and acknowledge the grave human rights violations and injustices that transpired during the Marcos regime.

KI0 Master Sgt. Accounted:

I was very active during the Martial Law period of Marcos because I was a soldier. Around 1977, I was assigned here in Iligan. Me, being a soldier, I was very much favor of Marcos declaring Martial Law because there has been a lot of changes in our city as a result of the many programs implemented by Marcos. Many have found and enjoyed job opportunities. We, in the military, we really can't go against Marcos, except with those who attempted coup d'etat. There's really nothing to worry about Martial Law and us soldiers because we, soldiers, like everybody else, also want peace for our country. It's only the lawless people that should be afraid because we would really apprehend them. If I would look at the Martial Law of Duterte now, it is very far different from the Martial Law before, because I see it now, it's just like semi-Martial Law that most people haven't felt that there is such Martial Law in place here in Mindanao.¹⁹

DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to illuminate the social conditions in Iligan City before and during the implementation of Martial Law under the Marcos administration. Drawing from collected data, the research presents an overview of the social climate in Iligan and its profound impact on the daily lives of its residents. It explores their lived experiences, struggles, and perceptions of Martial Law, serving as a narrative account of this critical and often harrowing period in Philippine history. The study also seeks to preserve the personal testimonies of individuals who directly endured the adverse effects of Martial Law in Iligan City.

Historically, Iligan City was chartered on June 16, 1950, and experienced rapid socio-economic growth, evolving into a highly industrialized, first-class city. Under the stewardship of mayors Benito Ong and Camilo Cabili, the city witnessed significant infrastructure development and economic expansion, which contributed to

¹⁸ KI8, Personal Interview with the former retired military, 70 years old

¹⁹ KI10. Personal Interview with Master Sgt. 75 years old. barangay Maria Cristina

its modernization. Despite the city's ethnically and religiously diverse population, underlying tensions rooted in differing beliefs and traditions occasionally posed challenges, particularly during periods of conflict.

The declaration of Martial Law brought mixed reactions among Iliganons. For some, it fostered a sense of security as curfew hours and intensified law enforcement led to a reduction in criminal activity and public disorder. Conversely, many residents experienced fear, repression, and violations of civil liberties, which engendered resistance and subversive activities. Despite these tensions, Iligan's political stability remained relatively manageable throughout the Martial Law period.

This duality in experiences underscores the complex socio-political dynamics of Iligan during Martial Law, reflecting broader national struggles between order and freedom, development and repression. Understanding these varied perspectives offers crucial insights into the long-term impact of authoritarian rule on local communities.

RECOMMENDATION

A study of this nature demands exceptional dedication, with the researcher's heart, mind, and soul fully invested in the work. Addressing social issues that affect the daily lives of citizens requires careful attention, as a comprehensive understanding of these concerns is essential for developing effective solutions.

For future researchers interested in conducting similar studies, it is highly recommended to undertake a more thorough and in-depth investigation to address the gaps and limitations encountered in this research. This includes gathering data through interviews with individuals who have firsthand experience and were direct witnesses to the events under study. Such an approach will help ensure that the findings are objective, free from bias, and thus more verifiable, credible, valid, and authentic. These qualities will enhance the study's value as a reliable source of information for future planning and reference.

Furthermore, it is suggested that subsequent research encompass all 44 barangays of Iligan City, providing a more comprehensive and representative analysis of the social conditions during the period under examination.

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