

Mangayaw and Banyaga: Moro Wars, China Trade, and the Shifting Hermeneutics of Piracy, Slavery, and Ethno-nationalism

ERIC S. CASIÑO

ABSTRACT

In Majul's "Moro Wars" construct, the cycle of piratical raids against Spanish-held territories in the Philippines is recast as counter-attacks in defense of Islam and Moro areas, in retaliation for Spanish attempts to conquer Mindanao and Sulu. By reading them through the lens of religious jihad and of a postulated patriotism, he hoped to connect Moro history with the anticolonial, nationalist historiography of mainstream Filipino historians. His reinterpretation of Moro history has inspired later Moro ideologues to proclaim an imagined Moro pre-nationalism that is parallel to or aligned with later Filipino nationalism. Other historians, armed with many more historical facts than what Majul used, do not support his jihad theory behind the Moro Wars. James Warren, in his book *The Sulu*

ERIC S. CASIÑO finished his MA in Philosophy in Berchmans College, Philippines, in 1960, and his PhD in Social Anthropology in Sydney University, Australia, in 1973. He is currently based in Honolulu, Hawaii, and is an adjunct lecturer at Hawaii Pacific University.

Zone, has provided a wider array of piratical and slavery-based economic practices that were driven by pure economic calculus innocent of morality and religious zealotry. Moro traders in the Sulu Zone did not oppose but collaborated with British commercial imperialists in opening up the China market that had a huge demand for Sulu Zone marine and forest products. Increased demand for them drove Moro sultans and datus to engage in systematic, regionwide slave-raiding expeditions, to recruit more slave labor to collect and process these products for export to China. Thus Majul's argument on the anti-Hispanic and religious basis of the Moro Wars has become hardly tenable in the face of more facts and newer interpretations.

KEYWORDS

mangayaw, banyaga, Moro Wars, piracy, slave-raiding, jihad, defense of Islam, colonization, pre-nationalism, British trade, China trade, marine and forest products, coercion, conversion, reinterpretation

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to interrogate and deconstruct a number of propositions and interpretations embedded in the "Moro Wars" construct, which is the central theoretical architecture of Cesar Adib Majul's classic book *Muslims in the Philippines*. Relative to these interpretations, I wish to explore and evaluate two issues: (1) the weakness of the jihad theory he proposed to explain the Moro Wars, especially when examined against the impact of British commercial interventions in Sulu after 1768; and (2) the implications of massive Iranun and Balangingi slave-raiding operations outside the Philippines. Exploring these two issues, I suggest, will provide significant insights for reevaluating the jihad basis of the Moro Wars theory as to its validity and explanatory potential; for assessing the balance of religion and

commerce, of conversion and coercion, underlying the structure of the sultanates; and for developing deeper understanding and appreciation of the historical forces behind the ethno-religious nationalism now fueling the transformation of the Muslim societies in Southern Philippines.

Our general conclusions might be better appreciated if I give them right at the beginning of this paper:

To establish some semblance of balance between the contradictory forces of coercion and consent, between ruler and ruled, in our understanding of the history of the sultanates, one could transcend this dichotomy by not championing one side against the other, but seeing them from the perspective of a “higher rationality.” That means to say, to recognize that just as the sultanates were not unitary and democratic but segmentary and feudal states, harboring both free and enslaved peoples, of believers and unbelievers, so also the governance was a mixture of coercion and consent, of raw power and legitimated authority. An honest and dispassionate recognition of this mixture of order and anomie—of religious compassion and extreme brutality in the piratical, empirical world of the sultanates—might open a path to a less adversarial approach to building a different future in the Southern Philippines, liberated from the narrow ideological and polemical constraints of the “Moro Wars” paradigm.

GENESIS OF THE “MORO WARS” CONSTRUCT

In Majul’s vision, the Moro Wars “represented the Muslim response to colonialism, imperialism, and Christianization.”¹ But at the base of this proposition is in fact his theology, his belief in a trans-regional Muslim *ummah*. This imagined continuum of Faith was to him the Southeast Asian or “Malaysian” *darul* Islam, which he believed became fragmented by the forces of history, the destructive intrusion of European commercial, colonial,

imperial powers. The consequent dispersion of an Islamic social world explains the separate development of Philippine sultanates, their decline, and their modern inclusion in the Philippine state. It was this Islamic faith, according to Majul's thesis, that explains Moro resistance to colonialism.

There are three interrelated propositions forming a syllogism in the Moro Wars construct. First, that Moro piracy needs to be explained not as acts of savagery but as defensive wars motivated by the desire to preserve the Faith, and therefore a virtual jihad. Second, that Islam as a religious impulse got fused with patriotism, the defense of Moro homeland and society, a fusion that is a type of pre-nationalism. Third, this Moro pre-nationalism can be equated with the later nationalism of the Christian Filipinos because both were anti-Spanish, anti-imperialism, and driven by aspirations for freedom from foreign control. These key propositions articulated in the 1973 book were already germinating in a 1966 conference paper, prepared for the Silver Jubilee of the Philippine National Historical Society, in which he outlined the rationale for developing a history of the Philippine Muslims. His central argument starts with an explicit acknowledgment of the existence of an independent Philippine state within which Muslims are included as citizens. The existence of such a state, however, does not immediately create a national community.

No national community is possible without consciousness of itself. This consciousness cannot be considered as something developed overnight, as it is usually the result of a long historical process as well as a constellation of expectations and aspirations of a people. A national community is, as it were, always in a process of becoming: that is, its members are trying to become more and more of a national community. Consequently, a people in the process of integrating themselves into a national community will search for further elements of common identity. One such element is the possession of a national

tradition. Another is the existence of a common set of aspirations and expectations related to one another by a common ideology; or, in the absence of this, at least an agreement on how such an ideology is to be created or determined. Now, no national tradition is by definition possible without the possession of a common history. It is a history cherished and treasured as an account of the development of a people or peoples in the process of becoming a national community.²

The above statement lays down the predicate for why there is need to develop a history of the Moros parallel with the history of the *indios*. Both groups need to be integrated into a “body politic” above both groups, identified with neither the Christian nor Muslim exclusively. It should be a common but pluralist national community, one that is conscious of itself as forming a single nation. Implied in this statement is that the history of both peoples be presented as parallel struggles against Spain and other oppressive foreign powers.

The problem can be raised as to whether the struggles of the Moslems of the South against Spanish attempts to conquer them can also be taken as part of the general struggle of the native inhabitants of the Philippine Archipelago against not only Spanish domination but Western imperialism as well. If the Philippine Revolution is to be regarded not only as a movement of some Christian natives against Spanish rule, but of the Filipino people in their attempts at freedom, then there is no reason why the more than three hundred years of struggle of the Moslems of the South against Spain and resistance against pressure from other Western powers, cannot, in the same light, also be considered as part of the Filipino struggle for freedom. To put it in another way, both parallel struggles can be considered as a movement of racially and ethnically related peoples in the Archipelago that have helped to bring about the

present situation where they find themselves trying to integrate into a single nation of Filipinos.

The implications of this is that the struggle of the Moslems in the South against any form of Western dominance is to be interpreted as an expression of their patriotism and love for the soil of their birth. Consequently, their outstanding leaders and heroes are to be honored as persons who helped bring about the formation of the national community.³

Unfortunately, this attempt at parallel patriotism is negated by a strange romanticized, triumphalist “bragging rights” to re-balance the parity of esteem at the intercommunal level. Majul praised and idealized the Muslims as “the unconquered,” compared to the Christianized indios as “the conquered.” The subtext seems to be that conversion to Christianity is equivalent to being conquered, and escaping conversion to being unconquered. This is a strangely myopic reading of history because under the Americans, the Muslims, though remaining unconverted, were in fact decisively conquered and colonized, and made minorities in a majority Christian but theoretically secular and modernizing nation-state. Where is parity of esteem in such a situation?

To be fair to Majul, it should be noted that his construing of Muslim resistance against Spain as a nationalist struggle parallel with the nationalist movement in Luzon and the Visayas, was presented initially tentatively as a “problem” back in 1966. It was raised as a “question” as to whether this interpretation might be acceptable; it was a questioning couched in an “if-then” format, suggesting that accepting his conclusion depends on accepting the validity of his premise. It is this premise that needs to be seriously interrogated and questioned as to its validity. But in 1973, this tentative stance was replaced by a firm assertion: “It was patriotism as well as defense of Islam that made the Muslims

resist bitterly all attempts to conquer them. In this struggle, Islam became transformed into an ideological force which rationalized resistance while at the same time infusing patriotism with a religious sentiment. Consequently, this generated the holy war (jihad) against the enemies threatening their Faith. After a few centuries of struggle, the elements of patriotism and Islam became intimately intertwined that they became virtually indistinguishable from one another.”⁴

Majul’s “Moros Wars” as a reinterpretation of the history of the Muslim sultanates has had a radicalizing effect on Moro scholars and activists. The best proof of this is Misuari’s attempt to champion an imagined community, a “moro nation” with a glorious past, one that can inspire and mobilize people wanting to create a “Bangsamoro Republik.” Nur Misuari, the founder of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), offers one very dramatic articulation of an invented tradition, contained in a speech he delivered at a conference in Algiers, Algeria, 11–15 October 1977.

The Muslim people and homeland have 500 years of Islamic culture and civilization. They were once free, sovereign and an independent nation. As a matter of fact, they were once one of the strongest powers in Southeast Asia. From early 16th century until the close of the 19th century and on till the end of the Second World War, they fought one of the longest and bitterest anticolonial wars in history.⁵

But did this “free, sovereign and independent nation” actually exist, or was this an “invented tradition,” or an “imagined community” projected into the distant past in order to generate inspiration for a contemporary struggle?⁶ We now know that the genesis of this was Majul’s 1966 conference paper, cited above, in which his basic premise was a question—“whether or not” Muslim history could be aligned with Philippine nationalism?—

which later became an assertion in his 1973 book, and was further appropriated and propagated as a central doctrine by Nur Misuari in 1977 and Salah Jubair in 1984. “Today, the mantra that Muslim separatism has a history longer than that of the nation-state is accepted by everyone.”⁷ Majul’s construct is woven throughout the book’s ten chapters. Six chapters are devoted to narrating the six stages of these wars, a periodization designed to fit the construct and vice versa. At the end of the book, he softens the obsessive focus on war and instead strikes a strangely anachronistic nationalist note, by attempting to convince the readers that “the Muslim struggle in the Philippine South can be considered part of the heritage of the entire Filipino people in the history of their struggle for freedom.”⁸ But while doing this, he unfortunately underplays the fact that this so-called Moro struggle for freedom was waged on the back of thousands of indio slaves captured from the Philippines, including many natives from other parts of Southeast Asia outside Spanish control. He adds by way of explanation that “ignorance of Islam on the part of Christians as well as Muslim indifference for anything Christian and, therefore, belonging to the enemy, tended to emphasize the differences between people who share a basically common cultural matrix.”⁹

It is worth noting that he was quite careful to note variations in the character of these conflicts: “this long-drawn conflict at different times and at different places represented at least *six distinct phases with shifting motives and different political results*. As it were, *each phase represented a function of different historical forces*. *Each phase would consequently evince a political dimension of its own*.”¹⁰ Precisely because there was this variation over time—shifting motives and different political results—why then should they be all depicted as Moro Wars understood as modalities of jihad? It is crucial to deconstruct the sociologically loaded statements: “shifting motives and different political results” ... “each phase represented a function of different historical forces.” One is tempted to ask: “do these shifting motives” and “different

historical forces” still continue to represent the same motivations of the prime protagonists—the Spaniards and Muslims—or are these shifting motives and alternative forces so different such that the concept of jihad assumed to have animated these wars can no longer be honestly applied to the later stages without seriously misrepresenting the real historical course of events and the resulting situation on the ground. These are serious historiographical issues that I will do my best to address in the following sections.

My working assumption is that “objective” facts logically precede interpretations, that there can be several alternative interpretations of the same set of facts, and that some interpretations become so deeply appropriated (as in a ruling paradigm) that they assume the force of facts in one’s mind. How to navigate between and across facts and interpretations is the challenge of historical and anthropological methodology.

FROM GUERRAS PIRATICAS TO MANGAYAW

The terms “war” and “piracy” are joined in Majul’s analysis when he justified them as reactions to the unprovoked Spanish assaults on the Muslims. This linking of war and piracy was found originally in the Spanish phrase *guerras piraticas*, popularized by Spanish historians Vicente Barrantes and Jose Montero y Vidal; it was advanced by them on “the premise that the Spaniards waged war on the Muslims in the Philippines and Brunei to eliminate or, at least, minimize the piratical incursions of Muslims into Spanish-held territories.”¹¹ In Majul’s writings, the phrase *guerras piraticas* was replaced by “Moro Wars,” which then entered the mainstream of historiographic lexicons as the catch-all descriptor applied to all six phases or stages of these conflicts, extending from 1565 to the end of Spanish rule around 1898.

To further deconstruct the Moro Wars construct would require a detour into the indigenous history of the practice of “war,” “piracy,” and “slavery.” These three are interrelated inasmuch as the capture of slaves was the primary purpose of piratical wars. Piracy has been defined as “an act of boarding any vessel with the intent to commit theft or other crimes and with the capability to use force against individuals and land-based communities as well, in furtherance of these acts.”¹² The first step in this detour is via historical linguistics—finding the indigenous equivalents to the notions and empirical referents of war, piracy, and slavery.

Historical linguistics provides a special window to reconstructing the sociological correlates of the indigenous terms “*mangayaw*,” “*uripen*,” “*banyaga*,” and “*datu*.” These four terms, and the practices they refer to, formed a set of interactive institutions within a dynamic sociological matrix. The *datu* organized trade/raid ventures in order to obtain captives and booty, which were essential to increasing *datu* power, wealth, and influence. Piracy therefore implied slavery and vice versa, and both were used as the basis of economic-political power. Raiding weaker peoples and imposing debt-slavery were two mechanisms that led to slavery, bondage, and social dependency. Morga describes the working of these interrelated institutions among the indios in the late sixteenth-century Philippines.

These slaves constitute the main capital and wealth of the natives of these islands, since they are both very useful and necessary for the working of their farms. Thus they are sold, exchanged and traded, just like any other article of merchandise, from village to village, from province to province, and indeed from island to island.

No sure beginning can be assigned for the origin of slavery among the natives, because all the slaves are aborigines, not outsiders. It is thought that they were made so in

wars and quarrels. The most certain fact is that the more powerful [datus] enslaved others and carried them off into servitude for slight causes and pretexts, very often on account of loans and the usurious contracts that were common among them. In any delay of the repayment, the capital and the debt increased, until the borrowers finished up as slaves. Thus all these enslavements have violent and unjust beginnings, and most of the natives' lawsuits have to do with these....¹³

The first term, mangayaw or *pangayaw*, happens to join the twin ideas of war and piracy, of trading and raiding at sea. In pre-Spanish Visayan culture, "the most celebrated form of warfare was sea raiding, *mangayaw*, a word which appeared in all the major languages of the Philippines and Southeast Asia. Its roots appears to be *kayaw* (for example, Ilocano *kinayawan*, captive) ... Spanish lexicographers extracted *ayaw*, *ngayaw*, and *agaw* and it meant a raid to bring back slaves or heads."¹⁴ Frequent raiding/warfare at sea many centuries prior to 1500 AD goes back to protohistory and even prehistory. In her research into Philippine protohistoric society, polity, and economy, Laura Junker summed up her findings in her book, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting* (2000), explicitly recognizing the practice of inter-tribal raiding or mangayaw as endemic and integral to precolonial societies.

In Bahasa Indonesia and among the Dayak of Borneo, *kayaw* still means head-hunting. The Portuguese wrote about the *bujuus* (*bajaus*), the feared corsairs who operated in the Straits of Melaka and in the Riau-Lingga island group, depicting them as marauders who came in their well-built "*pangajawas*" (*pangayaw* ships). A British navy report on some captured "Ilanoon" marauders said that "they have scarcely any other means of getting a livelihood except through *mangoorays*,"¹⁵ a linguistic cognate of mangayaw. It was this word, mangayaw, that Moro slave-raiders used when they went out on their seasonal raids both within and outside the Philippines. McKaughan's *Maranao Language*

Dictionary described *mangangayaw* simply as “plunderer, pirate, slave-trader, slave-thief.”¹⁶

In its earlier usage, mangayaw was looked up to as a risky but honorable venture for brave men. “Successful *mangayaw* raiders were regarded as popular heroes and enjoyed interisland reputations. They tattooed in proportion to their prowess and were entitled to wear distinctive attire.... The Spaniards, of course, considered any such venturing datus simple pirates, and defined *mangayaw* itself as piracy—armed robbery at sea.”¹⁷ It is clear thus that the practice of piracy, war at sea, and raiding for captives and booty, was a regionwide phenomenon that antedated the colonially induced Moro Wars. Consequently, piracy, slavery, and politics can be fruitfully reconstructed as historical and cultural categories within the calculus of native political economy.

That mangayaw was a common term among the raiders is proven by some examples. “Under the term *mangaio* slave-raiding expeditions were looked upon as acceptable means of accumulating capital and political power.”¹⁸ An Iranun sea raider, captured and investigated by the British in 1838 in Singapore, confessed in court that he was an “Ilanoon” engaged in pirating in Macassar, and other places in Indonesia and Borneo, and that except for “mangoorays” [mangayaws] (pirating), “they have scarcely any other means of getting a livelihood.”¹⁹ In nineteenth-century North Borneo, near Marudu Bay, there was a place called Sampang Mangaio designating a notorious assembly point of feared piratical groups that preyed on passing European and native shipping going to and from Singapore and those sailing through the South China Sea; piratical attacks here were launched without reference to the victims as being Spanish or Christians. This is one clear instance where the jihad-inspired framework of the “Moro Wars” could not possibly be meaningfully applied.

The terms “mangayaw,” “uripen,” “banyaga,” and “datu” together formed a complex that reflect real group dynamics

surrounding the distribution of wealth, prestige, power, and authority in the political economy of ancient “Malay” societies in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. Variant spellings occur for the word referring to the most recognizable class of subservient people—*ulipen* (Maguindanao), *oripen* (Maranaw), *ipun* (Tausug), *oripun* (Waray), *ulipon* (Cebuano), *alipin* (Tagalog). This term designates persons and status within traditional social hierarchy.

Like the Visayans, the Tagalogs had a three-class social structure. The ruling class was called *maginoo*, including datus, who were the heads of *barangays*; and their supporters were *timawa* or *maharlika*. Everybody else was *alipin*—slaves, bondsmen, or debt peons. Moreover, the difference between the serflike householding slaves, *alipin sa namamahay*, and the more lowly domestic slaves, *alipin sa gigilid*, was so great that Father Plasencia described them as two separate classes.²⁰

The term *banyaga* or *baniaga* was added to refer to the lowest of the class of alipin. The etymology of banyaga is most revealing because it is of Sanskrit derivation. Its original meaning is related to commerce, trade, trade wares, or trade goods. It is equivalent to *dagangan*, a common Tausug and Indonesian term for merchandise. In Panganiban’s Tagalog dictionary, banyaga is defined as “foreigner, foreign, alien” it is said to be derived from Sanskrit *vanija* (travelling merchant), which is thought to be a cognate-source of *babaligya* (barter or trade in kind). Another variant is *mambabaligya* (peddler, huckster). The shift in the meaning of banyaga from commercial goods to human slaves is quite understandable because some slaves were regarded as in fact disposable merchandise, even as human capital. The increasing use of banyaga to mean slaves is possibly a measure of how slave raiding had increasingly become commercialized ventures under aristocratic datu sponsorship, as Warren has documented in the

history of the Sulu zone. Scott clarifies the difference between ordinary oripun and those considered banyaga merchandise. "At the very bottom of the social scale, the oripun presumably included ... those persons seized in mangayaw raids or purchased in a domestic slave trade which was literally big business."²¹

The term "datu" is an ancient Austronesian term for a village chief, tribal leader, or "big man," which developed to connote king, nobility, or royalty. It appears in the Javanese term *kraton* (*ke-ratu-an*) that signified palace, the residence of chiefs or kings. As a consequence of increasing commercial relations with visiting Indian traders, native chiefs appropriated many indianized titles of chiefly status and prominence, to add to the earlier title datu. This explains such popular titles like *raja* (ruler), *maharaja* (paramount ruler), *batara* (noble lord), *bendahara* (prime minister), *shahbandar* (harbor master), and *saripada* (his highness). The latter comes from the Sanskrit *Sri Paduka* commonly found in Mindanao, Sulu, and Borneo under the variants *salipada*, *sipad*, *paduka*. The same process of appropriation occurred with the introduction of Islamic religion and statecraft by Muslim merchants and missionaries. This explains the appearance of the titles *sharif*, *sayyid*, and *sultan*. Visiting Arab traders who carried the nobility titles *sharif* or *sayyid* married into indigenous datu aristocracies to form dynastic lines that later evolved into sultanates. The evolution of ruling dynasties, built on the pre-islamic base-system of *kedatuan* or *datuship*, is well summarized in the case of the Maguindanao sultanates. As a result of this titular intermixing with the underlying *kedatuan* system, prominent chiefs may sometimes carry datu, *raja*, *sharif*, and *sultan* titles simultaneously. In other words, becoming a sultan does not negate but adds to the previous registry of native and appropriated titles of nobility.

This brief excursion into historical linguistics and folk categories leads to certain conclusions. First, that the system of piracy and slavery that developed in Mindanao, Sulu, and Borneo should be understood as elaboration of a protohistoric

base system of political economy that was operational prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity; second, that Islamic political ideology and practice were an extrinsic model grafted on to a preexisting sociopolitical dynamic; third, that the datus need to be reevaluated not as passive recipients but as proactive agents in the incorporation and amplification of these foreign models, whether Indic rajah-ship or Islamic sultanate. The antecedent indigenous, pre-Islamic social system deserves to be better recognized as a critical factor in the evolution of the sultanates and in the history of piracy and slavery.

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN MATRIX OF PIRACY AND SLAVERY

It is instructive to compare Majul's views to those of Nicholas Tarling and James Warren, two respected historians who have also investigated war, piracy, and slavery and have developed influential theories to explain them. This is by way of illustrating my working premise that the same historical facts, such as "war," "piracy," and "slavery," are susceptible to divergent interpretations, and such interpretations are in turn subject to critical assessment as to their adequacy relative to the facts and events under review, whatever they may be. I will prescind for now from the epistemological problem that the categories used to present the facts are themselves derived from the observer's unexamined linguistic register shared with his or her own sociolinguistic or academic community.

To place these three in a historical timeline: Tarling's *Politics and Piracy in the Malay World* appeared in 1963, Majul's *Muslim in the Philippines* in 1973, and Warren's *The Sulu Zone* in 1981. A decade separates Tarling from Majul, and Majul from Warren. Since Warren's is the latest, he has the advantage of a latecomer to construct a more sophisticated interpretation compared with his two predecessors. Warren also came up later

on with *Iranun and Balangingi* (2002), a full-length study of two ethnic communities that specialized in slave raiding throughout Southeast Asia. Warren's studies, have relied substantially on ethnographic data and methodology; he has deepened and broadened our understanding of the indigenous roots and motive forces behind late protohistoric piracy, slavery, and politics in the maritime history of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Traditional practice of war, piracy, and slavery had a wide regional distribution in Southeast Asia. In Tarling's book, *Piracy and Politics in the Malay World* (1963), there are two maps that display the islands and seascapes that witnessed the grim drama of "politics and piracy" discussed in the book. The "Front Endpaper" shows the "Riau-Lingga group of islands" next to Johore and Singapore, marking the southern gateway of Melaka Strait; the "Back Endpaper" displays a larger cluster of islands in the "Borneo and the Sulu Archipelago" area. This second island world is more fully described thus: "The heartland of Piracy in Southeast Asia has been considered for centuries to be in the waters around the southern Philippines and Borneo, especially the Sulu and Celebes seas. The various Malayo-Muslim peoples who dominated the archipelago flanking mainland Southeast Asia, including what is now the southern Philippines, the east Malaysian state of Sabah, and the sultanate of Brunei, *engaged in maritime raiding and warfare before the arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century.*"²² Another description of traditional piracy along these major trade corridors in maritime Southeast Asia says it more graphically: "Privateering ... had always clung to the sea routes from the Far East to the Near East like a swarm of hornets."²³

Let us briefly examine the views of Tarling and Warren, keeping in mind their comparative bearing on how we reassess Majul's Moro Wars. Tarling titled his book *Piracy and Politics in the Malay World* precisely because "suppression of piracy" was an official British government policy as its commercial interests began to penetrate and restructure Southeast Asian

polities and economies in the nineteenth century. The problem was with uncritically using the term “piracy” because, as “a term with a criminal connotation, it involved an unfavourable moral judgement passed by Europeans on non-Europeans. Robbery and violence indeed existed: but to describe them as piracy attributed them to lesser motives than, in the light of history, may often be fairly suggested for them.” Tarling was likewise anxious to show that British “suppression of piracy” policy be understood as lawful.

If, however, matters of judgement and motivation are involved, it is also necessary to be fair to the Europeans who believed they were suppressing piracy. Certainly there were robbery and violence and in many cases it was not quite unreasonable, in the contemporary context, to consider them piracy. The desire to do away with such violence and make the seas safe for the peaceful trader was praiseworthy. Sometimes, on the other hand, piracy was used as an excuse for intervention, though even that might have worthy motives. Sometimes excessive violence retaliated upon violence.²⁴

Tarling’s “decay theory” is his attempt to explain the continuing prevalence of marauding by Malay seafarers. Forceful European interference in the commerce of the archipelago “contributed to the decay of the larger political units and especially of the Malay commercial empires.... One result of the loss of commerce and revenue was a shift to marauding on a more general scale than before; it became a way in which the Malay imperial aristocracy, deprived of other resources, could live from day to day. It became endemic, not epidemic.... The old empires decayed, but were not replaced, and within their boundaries marauding communities appeared, led by adventurous Sharifs, or deprived aristocracies, or hungry chiefs. The invasion of the Europeans did not destroy the native states, but it destroyed the dynamic of the state-system: it reduced

the old capitals from splendor to poverty and their chiefs from heroism to ambivalence, from constructiveness to stagnation.”²⁵

Warren, writing some twenty years after Tarling published his book, offered a different and more nuanced perspective on the problem of piracy and slavery. Warren’s main work, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898*, is similar to Tarling’s in placing the problem in the context of British commercial expansion, from the middle of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. Warren accepts that some “decay” did occur in some polities, such as those of Maguindanao and Brunei following colonial disruptions, but the Sulu zone experienced not decay but flourishing and commercial expansion. The Sulu sultanate was not reactive but very much proactive, using systematic slave raiding to maximize its economic and political dominance.

British expansion in eastern Asia after the 1760s drew the emerging [Sulu] state into a systemic network of economic traffic on a global scale. The rising demand for Southeast Asian slaves reshaped the character of the political economics of Sulu and China, and, as part of the same process, gave birth to the zone and the advent of highly mobile specialized communities of slavers. Thus the history of the slave trade and the rise of the Iranun and Balangingi must be framed as part of a unitary historical process, which emphasizes the intrusive role played in their sudden development and expansion by the global capitalist economy and singular commodities such as tea, bird’s nest and firearms. Slave raiding, or what the Spanish, Dutch and British called piracy, was not a manifestation of decay and dependence, but rather the results of phenomenal economic growth and strength. It was part of a vital effort to partake in and control a rapidly increasing volume of cross-cultural commerce caused by the arrival of Europeans in the China tea trade in the late 18th century. Accusations

of cultural decadence and barbarism directed against Sulu by the leading participants in that trade are both ironic and erroneous when approached from the perspective of a unitary historical process.²⁶

Majul, in contrast to Tarling and Warren, had focused on the early seventeenth century when piracy was initially conducted more aggressively from Cotabato than from Sulu. The contrast between seventeenth-century Maguindanao and nineteenth-century Sulu is critical for deconstructing the Moro Wars. The earlier Maguindanao period of slave raiding dominated the first to the fourth stages of the Moro Wars from 1578 to 1663. During these first eighty-five years, the Maguindanao chiefs were more active than those of Sulu in mounting a series of slave-raiding expeditions in their war against the Spaniards. The assumed motivation of jihad may perhaps be applied with some justification to Maguindanao-organized expeditions, especially when the assistance of Ternate Muslims are taken into account as contributions to defending Muslim Mindanao against Spanish colonial intrusions.

The fourth stage ending in 1663 (a century from the Spanish conquest of Manila) is followed by the “interlude” (1663–1718) when Spain had abandoned the fort of Zamboanga. When the latter was reestablished in 1718, it marked the beginning of the fifth stage, 1718–1851. This stage marked the eclipse of Maguindanao as the center of slave raiding and trade, a process that coincided with the decisive shift to Sulu as the rising center of marauding activities. Piracy and slavery in the middle of the eighteenth until the end of nineteenth century was driven less by defense of Islam and more by commercial transactions, as Tarling and Warren have argued in their works.

Majul’s fifth and sixth stages correspond to the principal periods Tarling and Warren have carefully investigated in connection with piracy and slavery. During this period,

marauding and slave raiding were carried out massively and commercially by Iranun and Balangingi raiders throughout Southeast Asia. The competing colonial and territorial interests of European powers—Spanish, British, Dutch, and German—increasingly became the defining issue in the southern Philippines, eastern Indonesia, and British Borneo. Thus raiding outside the Philippines renders the alleged anti-Spanish bias of the Moro Wars profoundly questionable (see maps of raiding routes in the appendix). Iranun and Balangingi marauders were reported preying on “the increasingly rich shipping trade of the Spanish, Dutch and English, and Bugis and Chinese, and seized their cargoes of tin, opium, spices, munitions and slaves as the merchants headed to and from the trading centers of Manila, Makassar, Batavia, and Penang.”²⁷ In such cases, the assumed motive of patriotism and defense of Islam is remarkable for its absence.

Consequently, Warren sees Majul’s interpretation of piracy and slavery as caught up in “the pseudo-historical cycle, the ‘moro-wars cycle,’ romanticizing it to a certain extent as a holy war—jihad—between the ‘moros’ and the Iberian infidel invaders, who slaughtered their kith and kin and blasphemed their sacred faith. Though religious zealotry verging on fanaticism certainly existed on both camps, *such an overall interpretation remains too simplistic to account for the dynamics of cultural-ecological transformation and the multifaceted changes that occurred in the Mindanao-Sulu region for over more than four centuries.*”²⁸

And yet, Majul’s “too simplistic” interpretation has survived with transformative power. To explore the reasons for this successful ethno-nationalist appropriation of Moro Wars narratives requires a shift in perspective, toward a different discursive sphere in psychology, intersubjectivity, and political mobilization. This is a theoretically important shift that lies, for now, outside the scope of this paper.

OTHER HISTORICAL FORCES: THE CHINA TRADE CONNECTION

Warren has proven, with an overwhelming variety of supporting facts, that the British intervention into the commercial affairs of the Sulu zone and North Borneo in connection with the China trade cannot be accommodated within the theoretical framework of either defense of Islam or resistance to colonial intrusion. This is where we need to recall and juxtapose Majul's remark cited above, to the effect that "this long-drawn conflict at different times and at different places represented at least six distinct phases with shifting motives and different political results ... each phase represented a function of different historical forces." The China trade connection is definitely one of these "historical forces" that Majul failed to fully account for within his theory. The Tausug traders did not oppose but profitably collaborated with the British imperialists. Nor did the Maguindanao trading elites resist the British entry, but on the contrary wrote to the British crown, ca 1775, inviting English traders to set up a trading base in Cotabato.

The key historical trends that inspired Warren's central argument are described as follows. Around the middle of the 1700s there was in Europe a noticeable change in the drinking preference from ale to tea, particularly among the commoner class, and thus the demand for it had a mass basis. To meet this growing European mass market for tea, the British had to devise a better method for obtaining a large volume of this and other Chinese goods. It became less and less practicable to continue the older system of using silver currency to buy these Chinese products, for it would have depleted British reserves of this precious metal over the long run. The British merchants in Asia gradually learned that it was possible to obtain Chinese products by barter—that is, tea in exchange for Southeast Asia's natural products, such as *tripang* (sea cucumber), shark

fins, bird's nests, which were ingredients in Chinese gourmet cooking; *agar-agar* (seaweeds), used as glue; and turtle shells and mother-of-pearl shells, used in furniture decoration and personal adornments. These were the traditional marine and forest products that China obtained through Nanhai barter trade with Southeast Asia coastal chiefs and harbor princes in centuries past, in exchange for Chinese porcelain, silk, iron tools, and other Chinese export goods. The British commercial strategists began to realize that if they could obtain these exotic and natural products from maritime Asia, they could use them to barter for Chinese tea and other commodities. In exchange for the maritime and forest products of maritime Asia, the British were prepared to sell Indian products, such as opium and textiles, and European industrial goods, such as guns, gunpowder, ammunition, and other war materials; these were increasingly in great demand among native Southeast Asian rulers in their effort to expand power over their subjects or defend themselves against local rivals and foreign colonizers. This three-sided trade strategy meant cutting into the preexisting trade nexus between China and Southeast Asia.

Considerations such as these inspired the British to find a suitable trading area they could control in maritime Asia to effect the three-sided exchange among European, Chinese, and Southeast Asian traders. Alexander Dalrymple, chosen by the British East India Company to implement the idea, was interested in an area at the margins of Dutch and Spanish direct control—the area comprising the Sulu Archipelago, the east coast of Borneo, southern Mindanao, and north coast of Celebes.²⁹ This is the area that Warren later embraced in his construct of the Sulu zone. In particular, Dalrymple “thought it a measure highly necessary for the Company’s interest to obtain a Cession of the Southern Part of Palawan and Northern part of Borneo with all the intermediate islands, as commanding the Navigation of those Seas.”³⁰ Eventually, in 1762 Dalrymple was able to obtain from the sultan of Sulu the cession of the island of Balambangan, an

island between North Borneo and Southern Palawan. In 1773, the Balambangan port was officially set up; and in 1775 it was destroyed by the Tausug.

The strategic value of Balambangan was to enhance two principal British objectives: (1) to divert the China trade into this channel by procuring numerous resort of the Chinese to settle at Balambangan, engaging the China junks to visit and dispose of their cargoes there; (2) to draw the produce of the adjoining countries thither and establish a populous colony by inviting and encouraging the Bugguese and natives of the neighboring islands to repair to and settle there.³¹

The Tausug traders were not slow in sensing both danger and opportunity in the British plan for Balambangan. There was danger that Sulu's direct link with the traditional Chinese junk trade would be cut off once Balambangan became a thriving entrepôt, since ships would likely no longer proceed to trade in Jolo or Cotabato. It would have threatened trade in both Mindanao and Sulu centers of commerce, unless a way was found to subvert the Balambangan enterprise. In 1775, or three years after it was set up, the Tausug demolished Balambangan and eliminated it as a potential rival entrepôt.

And there was an unforeseen benefit from it. The British port the Tausug captured had a large supply of weapons and ammunition, which further strengthened the *datus* and warriors of Sulu. Balambangan yielded a rich booty of weapons consisting of 45 cannons of the calibres 8, 10, and 12; 200 quintals of gunpowder; 22,000 rounds of ammunition; 22 rifles, 35 pistols, and 45 swords.³² From this point forward, Sulu began to emerge as the weaponized and unchallenged regional center of the distributive trade tied to the triangular interconnection among European, Chinese, and Southeast Asian trading partners. War materials, such as gunpowder and heavy ordnance, became key articles the Tausug subsequently demanded from British traders, because these materials fitted the state plan to dominate the redistributive trade in the Sulu zone.

Over the decades following the capture of Balambangan, there developed heavy demand in Sulu for western-made war materials. By 1835, gunpowder and muskets were the principal trade commodities desired by coastal intermediaries. In the 1830s, one leading Tausug datu's request for firearms included: "1,000 25-pound kegs of gunpowder, 6 swivel guns, 6 large cannon [sic] preferably brass, 600 muskets, 100 pistols, 4 bags of shot of varying sizes, gun flints, 2 dozen boxes of percussion caps and 8 dozen matchlets."³³ The general effect of this infusion of weapons has been noted. "There is an apparent correlation between intensified Maguindanao-Iranun raiding in the Philippine archipelago and the munitions traffic which was conducted at Jolo by the East India Company and country traders from Bengal."³⁴ Part of the Tausug strategy was to deny their Maguindanao rivals access to these critical war materials, and to supply them to their Balangingi and Iranun slave-raiding affiliates.

THE FUNCTIONS OF ORGANIZED AND MASSIVE SLAVE RAIDING

To approach the issue of slavery systematically, one needs to distinguish slave raiding or recruitment, from slave marketing or distribution, and from slavery itself, understood as the functional integration of slaves in the recipient or host society. Alternately, slave raiding may be compared to labor recruitment, as slavery is to labor allocation and utilization. What is new in the case of slavery in the Sulu zone is the conduct of systematic marauding inside and outside the Philippines, and the large number of captives that these regional raids produced. The contrast between small-scale traditional slavery and the large-scale commercialized slave-raiding ventures is comparable to the contrast between small

subsistence farming and large export-driven commercial agriculture.

To meet increasing European and Chinese demands for marine products (such as tripang, shark's fins, mother-of-pearl shells) and forest products (such as bird's nest and beeswax), the Tausug needed to recruit more workers from outside Jolo; the native population of Sulu at the inception of increased external trade in 1772 was not numerous enough for collecting these marine and forest products in large volume. This led Tausug entrepreneurs to systematize and intensify their slave marauding in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia in order to bring in more manpower. Munitions and war materials played a critical role in the whole slave raiding and slavery economy. More numerous and better weapons facilitated the capturing of more slaves, which brought in more exportable sea and forest products.

Slaves were critical resources for collecting and processing these raw materials from the marine and island territories surrounding Sulu. Slaves became highly valued resources not only because of their labor value as producers, but also because slave owning fed into the prestige and power pyramid of the Sulu sultanate. The more slaves a Tausug datu acquired, the more export products he could accumulate to trade for European and Chinese goods, and the more prestige objects and materials he could amass, the higher his prestige became; the higher his social standing the more followers he could attract; and the bigger his retinue of supporters, the more powerful he became politically, which in turn fed back into more power to accumulate more wealth from trade.³⁵ The economy of Sulu was a virtual cybernetic system of sociological energies connecting chiefs, slaves, commerce, and political power, each reinforcing the other symbiotically.

Captive slaves and their descendants were useful not only in the procurement of marine and forest products. They were also in great demand as farmers to grow food, as domestic help in the

homes of their owners, and as warriors in the retinue of powerful *datu*s. Women slaves were valued as wives and concubines to be offered to warriors and their leaders in order to secure their loyalty to the sultan and ruling chiefs. The increasing demand for manpower spilled over into other areas of the political economy, feeding into the Tausug *datu* ranking and status system in which power and wealth were inextricably tied to the number of slaves owned. Slave raiding, slave owning, and slavery thus had a strong multiplier effect in the growth of the Tausug political, economic, and cultural system.

Outside of fisheries and food production, slaves were in great demand as crew members in the numerous *prahu*s used in slave-raiding expeditions. Between 1700 and 1835, Sulu had 100 to 150 slaving *prahu*s; between 1836 and 1848, this number increased from 150 to 200 *prahu*s. These statistics indicate not only the number of slaves added as crew members in these ships; they also give an estimate of the number of slaves that were brought in and marketed in Sulu, many of them re-exported to other parts of the Sulu zone, to Borneo, Mindanao, and eastern Indonesia. The average number of captured slaves per *prahu* returning from a successful raid was estimated at twenty people. On this basis, Warren estimated that between 1770 and 1870, the human cargoes brought into the Sulu sultanate numbered between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand people. Based on later archival finds, Warren suggests even higher figures: from four thousand to six thousand Visayans—expert divers and seafarers—were being enslaved annually by the Iranun and Balangingi by 1845.³⁶

SLAVE DEMOGRAPHICS AND INCORPORATION INTO THE SULTANATES

The Sulu sultanate developed its capability to meet the rising demand of the global-regional trade with Europe and

China by increasing the scope, intensity, and tempo of slave-raiding expeditions throughout Southeast Asia. Piracy, then, rather than being a sign of social decay or of religious resistance, was the potent and creative response of the aristocrats and rulers of the Sulu zone to new opportunities to accumulate both political and economic power. In the cross-cultural trade centered in Jolo, slaves were both productive resources and enabling factors, commodity as well as capital. The gathering of tripang, mother-of-pearl shells, and the collection of bird's nests were labor-intensive operations in which many slaves were employed. Hundreds of slaves and subject tribal people also collected forest products from the hinterlands of Borneo and Mindanao. The increasing importance of slaves as a resource is attested to by the growth of Sulu's population, from about forty thousand people in 1770 to about two hundred thousand in 1814.³⁷ On some islands and settlements, the slave population was believed to exceed that of the Tausug. For example, the Spanish reported that slaves constituted more than 50 percent of the population of Jolo island as early as 1773.

Sulu town or Soog, the capital, has 3,500 dwelling houses, with a resident population of six thousand Muslims and eight hundred Chinese.... a larger population is not reckoned, as more than half the inhabitants are always out on trading voyages, in the pearl and tripang fishers and collecting of birds nest³⁸

The Taosug do not participate in slave raids but the people from Balangingi, Tunkil, and the other islands in the Samalese group as well as the Iranun come to Jolo to barter large numbers of Christian captives annually.³⁹

[ca 1836] the number of Christian captives in Jolo is at least twice as great as the Taosug population, the vast majority being Visayan: ... more captives than Muslims

in Parang many Christian captives on Tapul, nearly all of them are Visayans.... there are eighty Muslim families on Pilas and a least twice as many Christian captives who live alone in the fields, some of them go raiding with the Balangingi.⁴⁰

Slavery is defined as the incorporation of captives in society, and their placement in functionally meaningful roles in the host culture. It is a complex process that reveals very significant insights into the process of ethnic genesis and transformation, the “birth of ethnicity.” The best illustration of this process is provided by the history of the Balangingi or Sama Bangingi group, one of the Samal-speaking peoples who inhabited the many islands of the Sulu archipelago outside the main island of Jolo. The boat-dwelling Bajau are part of these Sama-speaking populations of Sulu. The Balangingi originally were a small, insignificant community within the jurisdiction of the Sulu sultanate; their traditional means of survival was fishing, collecting tripang, mother-of-pearl shells, tortoise shells, and making salt, which they traded with Jolo merchants in exchange for cloth and rice. They were forced to do this because their home island, also called Balangingi, was made up of low coralline outcroppings unsuitable to producing food from agriculture. When external trade expanded within the Sulu zone and the demand for slaves greatly increased, the Balangingi rose to the occasion by becoming organized slave raiders to supply the Sulu slave market. But since they were few in numbers, the Balangingi did not sell all their captives but incorporated some captives into their society, recruiting them as integral members of their slave-raiding squadrons. The captives were incorporated to such a degree that in one generation they became Balangingi themselves. Some talented Visayan captives even became respected *nakhoda* or captains of long-distance cruisers. Studies of the process of ethnic transformation, such as that of Barth, noted that a 10 percent rate of incorporation in a

generation is considered drastic.⁴¹ The Balangingi exceeded this, for in less than a decade, Balangingi Island's population roughly quadrupled. "The consequence of this extraordinary growth was the creation of an 'emergent' slave-raiding population within the Sulu Sultanate—the Balangingi."⁴²

Several factors provided measures of this phenomenal growth. As external trade and slave raiding mutually amplified and strengthened each other, Balangingi villages incorporated more new people, growing dramatically from units with three hundred people and ten to twelve prahus in 1831, to units with about four thousand people and 120 to 240 large piratical prahus in 1845. This increase continued and reached its peak in 1848 when the overall population in the Samales group of islands reached ten thousand people with two hundred raiding prahus.⁴³ Many captives were Tagalogs, Bicolanos, and Visayans from the Philippines, which the Balangingi raided twice a year; others were natives of Indonesia and Malaysia, since the Balangingi were also actively raiding in Celebes, Makassar, Borneo, and even in the vicinity of Singapore within the Malacca Straits. In 1836, according to Warren's estimate, only 10 percent of the Balangingi male population were "true" Balangingi; the remaining 90 percent were Christian Filipino *renegados*—that is, captives from Visayas and Luzon. The incorporation of captives from different ethnolinguistic groups into the Balangingi ethnic identity is a dramatic example of "process ethnicity" as opposed to a static, closed, and essentialized concept of an ethnolinguistic group. The mechanism for accomplishing a new ethnic identity was simple and coercive—the captives adopted or were forced to adopt the language, religion, customs, and piratical lifeways of their Balangingi captors.

From the point of view of Philippine history and the larger history of island Southeast Asia, it is important to understand the genesis of this particular ethnic group, to know that the infamous reputation Sulu acquired for

slave-mongering in the nineteenth century is attributable to the activities of the Balangingi, an “emergent society” increasingly composed of Filipino captives and their descendants who were brought to the Sulu archipelago and, in many cases, assimilated within a single generation to become the predators of their own people.⁴⁴

Large-scale assimilation happened not only with the Balangingi as a special case, but in the general demographics of the Sulu sultanate itself. The population of Sulu dramatically expanded from forty thousand in 1770 to about two hundred thousand in 1814. As a result of Jolo’s emergence as a regional entrepôt, the Sulu zone was flooded with captives from all over Southeast Asia. Demand from European traders and Tausug datus for slave labor “sparked one of the largest population movement in recent Southeast Asian history, with hundreds of thousands of individuals sent into slavery across the zone.”⁴⁵ In 1773, slaves accounted for about a quarter of Sulu’s population but by 1830, slaves comprised more than 50 percent of it. In the main town of Jolo, the slave class was several times the size of the “true” Tausug core to which new members were being assimilated from captives. The proportion of Christian Filipinos and Indonesians to “true” Tausugs was high in many Sulu districts. But since these captives were of racially similar types, it was difficult to tell the captives from their captors on the basis of physical appearance alone. One European observer wrote: “At present in Jolo there are more captives than Tausugs with whom they are easily confused. Many of them intermarried with the Tausugs.”⁴⁶

The attributes and skills of the captives, correlated with their ethnicity and place of origin, were factors that aided assimilation. Tausug rulers and slave owners demonstrated astuteness in recognizing such attributes to help them place captives in specific tasks and roles, with a view toward increased productivity, highly valued loyalty, and personal compatibility.

An interesting comparative description of such ethnicity-derived attributes, aptitudes, and skills is summarized below.

The Tagalogs or “Manila men” had great powers of endurance and thus made good rowers, as well as being skilful businessmen and boat builders, but were prone to escape. Visayans were unsurpassed as divers and considered superior to the Tagalogs as sailors. Papuans and Flores islanders always found a ready sale, particularly the latter who were supposed to be good artificers and uncommonly faithful to their masters. The courageous reputation of the Buginese as traders and soldiers, with a talent for learning the use of arms, made them favored in the trade. Visayan women were reputed to be superior weavers. Tagalogs were desired for their business ability, and as wives of *datus* were often entrusted with the management of accounts. Most esteemed for their beauty were *mestiza* Chinese. Women from the Aru islands and Papua were also considered attractive and sold without difficulty at higher than average price.⁴⁷

FROM MAGUINDANAO TO SULU AS POWER-CENTER OF PIRACY AND TRADE

For deconstructing Majul’s Moro Wars construct, it is critical to recognize the historical disjunction between the earlier Cotabato-centered and the later Sulu-centered slave-raiding activities. This is a significant break in Mindanao-Sulu historiography that Majul fails to take fully into account. As mentioned above, the earlier Maguindanao period of slave raiding dominated stages one to four of the Moro Wars, from 1578 to 1663. During these first eighty-five years, the Maguindanao chiefs were more active than those of Sulu in mounting a series of slave-raiding expeditions in their war against the Spaniards.

The assumed motivation of jihad may be applied with some justification to Maguindanao-organized raids, especially when the assistance of Ternatan Muslims are taken into account in Maguindanao's defense against Spanish attempt to colonize and Christianize Mindanao. It was also during this earlier period that Sultan Kudarat achieved the consolidation of *ra-raya* Buayan and *sa-ilud* Cotabato, the two rival political chiefdoms in the Pulangi valley, which made Maguindanao the leading power in the southern Philippines ahead of Sulu. Kudarat's rule, estimated to have lasted from 1619 to 1671, was contemporaneous with the third and fourth stages of the Moro Wars. He was the first Maguindanao chief to be named sultan, circa 1645.⁴⁸ The fourth stage ending in 1663 was followed by the "interlude" (1663–1718) when Spain had abandoned the fort of Zamboanga. When the fort was reestablished in 1718, it marked the beginning of the fifth stage, 1718 to 1851. It also marked the eclipse of Maguindanao as the center for slave raiding and trade, a process that coincided with the decisive shift to the Sulu zone as the emerging dominant regional power in trade and slave raiding.

The Maguindanao slave raiding in Luzon and the Visayas was not a matter purely of defense and offense in the face of Spanish incursions into Mindanao. Maguindanao was pursuing a broad "demographic accumulation policy," the drive to expand its population and labor base in support of Kudarat's effort to consolidate and expand Maguindanao's hegemony over surrounding polities. Slave raiding was only one way of acquiring manpower. Outside of regular mangayaw expeditions, there were other aspects to this accumulation policy that put slave raiding in a fuller context. Manpower accumulation also included (1) welcoming escaped slaves from Dutch-dominated ports, the escapees including Malays, Burmese, Makasarese, Buginese, Ternatans, Amboinese, and Indians; (2) prohibiting the sale of slaves outside Maguindanao; (3) welcoming Sangirese rebel Muslims and encouraging them to integrate into Maguindanao Muslim society; (4) disallowing the newly arrived, married,

or indebted Chinese from leaving, and encouraging them to convert; (5) encouraging the men to stay by providing them with wives and female companions, a Maguindanao hospitality custom known as *pagally*.⁴⁹

The decline of Maguindanao as a commercial port and slave-raiding base was due to several strategic and ecological factors. First, the reoccupation of the Zamboanga naval base allowed the Spaniards to put pressure on Chinese junk trade to Cotabato, thereby weakening the latter's traditional commerce. Second, from its Zamboanga base the Spaniards also strengthened the defense of Northern Mindanao, so much so that the Iranun raiders from the Cotabato-Malabang area were forced to sail farther west toward Sulu and Borneo to avoid the Spanish blockade between Zamboanga and Basilan. Third, the volcanic eruption of Mt. Maketering in the Lanao highlands (ca. 1765) forced the evacuation of many Iranun from the Lake Lanao area and adjacent coasts of Illana Bay, resulting in a diaspora of these people toward Sulu and Borneo, abandoning their earlier ties with Cotabato, to become the most active slave raiders under the Sulu sultanate. Furthermore, after the Tausug capture of Balambangan with its huge supply of war materials, Tausug *datus* were able to supply the Iranun and Balangingi raiders with more weapons and captured slaves as crew members to intensify their raiding throughout the Philippines and Southeast Asia. In short, Iranun sea raiders formerly affiliated with Cotabato shifted their base of raiding operations to Sulu where they found both better technical support and good marketing opportunities. In Sulu, their pursuit of slave raiding and slave trade was driven more by commerce than by religion, unlike in the earlier Maguindanao period.

It is important to realize that the enmity between the Muslims and Spaniards was never an unbroken state of war over the centuries. Instead of continuing Moro plundering countered by Spanish retaliation, and vice versa, Jolo and Manila developed and maintained a strong and profitable commercial

relation. Trade between Manila and Jolo was an important axis of Sulu zone's external trade between 1768 and 1848.⁵⁰ Spanish authorities recognized the importance of trade and commerce with Jolo and Mindanao and advocated trade agreements with these polities and ports. They stressed the commercial advantages the Tausug would derive from a trade treaty with Spain. "The Manila traders received *tripang*, shark's fin, pearl shell, wax, bird's nest, Chinese porcelain, Bengal textiles, and European manufactures from the Taosug in exchange for their rice, sugar, and cloth. Tripang (also known as beche-de-mer or sea slug) was one of Sulu's most valuable export in trade with Manila."⁵¹

IRANUN AND BALANGINGI SLAVE RAIDING OUTSIDE THE PHILIPPINES

The inadequacy of Majul's jihad theory to explain slave raiding as really "Muslim expeditions to lands held by Spaniards" becomes uncomfortably glaring when one contrasts such early expeditions with later systematic, long-distance slave raiding conducted outside the Philippines by the Iranun and Balangingi. (To appreciate this contrast, please see maps 1 and 2 in the appendix.) The aim of these Southeast Asian raids had nothing to do with resisting the Spaniards or defending Islam. These extra-Philippine slave-raiding ventures require a different intelligibility; it needs to be understood as part of Sulu's expanding slavery-based economy that was driven by the forces of regional trade and politics rather than by religion.

A second concern in these regional operations was the role of the sultanates and port chiefs vis-à-vis the presence of armed sea warriors in their territories. Majul held the view that "in general, it can be reasonably presumed that the sultans and other minor chiefs in the area did not look at such piracy with favor, for the simple reason that they were themselves traders. At least, peaceful trade was to their advantage on account of the port

taxes collected.”⁵² Unfortunately, the historical records reveal just the opposite, that sultans did actively support piracy and slave raiding, by providing the raiders with munitions and other logistics in exchange for a share in the captives and booty. Wilkes, the first American global explorer to visit Sulu, gave us firsthand observations on the organization of piracy establishments.

Most of the piratical establishments are under the rule, or sail under the auspices of the Sultan and Ruma Bechara of Sooloo, who are more or less intimately connected with them. The share of the booty that belongs to the Sultan and Ruma Bechara is twenty-five per cent on all captures, while the datus receive a high price for the advance they make of guns and powder, and for the services of their slaves ...⁵³

The taxes or tribute the raiders paid were several times more valuable than taxes and customs duties the sultans and port chiefs could have collected from peaceful traders. Moreover, some of these raiders were semi-autonomous actors, capable of attacking the territories of sultans, as in Brunei, or aligning themselves with the commercial and political interests of other sultans, as in Jambi and Siak in Sumatra.

The rulers of Jambi and Siak held sway over the islands and coasts where the Iranun had first careened their joanga and built sizeable stockaded settlements overlooking the Reteh and Inuk Rivers ... the sultans of Jambi and Siak, frequently traded produce, livestock and provisions with these Iranun for some of their captives and booty. In addition, they provided the raiders with munitions, naval stores and other supplies which had been brought around the tip of Africa to Java by VOC ships, as, in the 1790s, the sultans had regular access to such war stores. At Reteh, the Iranun were delighted to get their hands on Dutch manufactured pistols, muskets, canisters of shot and other

contraband war stores traded at bargain rates. Profiteering local rulers and merchants, some linked by marriage to the Iranun, received looted cargoes at wholesale price from the marauders, and also acquired captive slaves.⁵⁴

In support of expanded and systematic marauding outside the Philippines, under the sponsorship of the Sulu sultans and datus, the Iranun established satellite settlements and forward bases in Tempasuk, North Borneo; Reteh, East Sumatra; and Tontoli, north Sulawesi. These communities, outside the control of the Dutch, British, and Spanish were strategically positioned bases from which the Iranun and Balangingi launched themselves to prey upon all kinds of shipping, capturing all kinds of people from many of the coastal communities vulnerable to their raids in maritime Southeast Asia. Even within the Philippine archipelago, notably in Mindoro and Burias Island off the Bicol peninsula, there were also Iranun and Balangingi piratical bases established. We do not focus on them but instead on bases outside the Philippines to underscore the point that “Moro Wars” was carried out on a regional scale, with no connection to the defense of Islam as argued by Majul.

The homeland of the Iranun was the region along Illana Bay in Southwestern Mindanao, the coastal area between Zamboanga peninsula and the delta of the Pulangi River in Cotabato. They were a sea-oriented people very closely related in language to the Maranao groups living around the lake region of the Lanao highlands. As sea raiders, they were initially affiliated with the Maguindanao sultanate, but in the 1770s they changed their affiliation to the Sulu sultanate. The shift was partly caused, as mentioned above, by the eruption of Mt. Maketering in the Lanao highlands, which devastated both Maranao and Iranun communities and home settlements, causing a substantial demographic diaspora toward the Sulu archipelago and North Borneo. Their alliance with the Sulu sultanate was also motivated by the readiness of Tausug datus

to supply them with guns and ammunition to facilitate their slave-raiding expeditions. On their return they paid back the datus with captives, and the rest of the booty they kept to support themselves and their families. They cruised aboard their favorite *joanga* cruisers. These crafts were 100-foot long sleek seacrafts provided with large bamboo outriggers; both side were rowed and padded by more than 150 men. They had sails mounted on triangular collapsible supports. Cannons were emplaced in their bows, and platforms were provided for the fighters on deck. The Iranun were notorious throughout Southeast Asia as fearless and ruthless sea marauders, so much so that the name “Ilanoon” or “lanun” became synonymous with pirates and plunderers in Dutch and British government reports.

In North Borneo, Iranun bases were established in Tempasuk and Marudu, outside the effective control of the Brunei sultanate. The Iranun migrant settlements in North Borneo, particularly those of Tempasuk, Pandassan, and Marudu Bay, resembled ministates in their political function, as sovereignty increasingly resided with the Iranun rajahs and sherifs on the spot, and were increasingly unwilling to recognize political authority higher than their own.⁵⁵ However, its highest political figure, Sherif Usman, was well connected to the Sulu sultan, having married the sister of the Raja Muda of Sulu.

Usman also promoted slave raiding and marauding against the Brunei Sultanate on a sizeable scale. His town in Marudu Bay was a major staging center for the Iranun and Balangingi, who repaid him in captives for the munitions and rations that he advanced at the onset of each cruise. Usman’s following of between 1,500 and 2,000 Iranun and Samal warriors equaled those of Brunei’s most prestigious nobles. The *pengiran* of Brunei feared the power and influence he and his family had acquired since the Iranun had first migrated to Tempasuk and Pandassan some 40 years earlier.⁵⁶

The Iranun marauders from Tempasuk established a second base and settlement at Reteh, East Sumatra, close to the mouth of the Jambi River. The original group that came to Reteh was invited to serve as naval mercenaries to assist the sultan of Linga in its war against the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC). Three decades later the descendants of the Reteh force had one thousand men with twelve joanga cruisers of sixteen to twenty tons, each vessel holding fifty to eighty Iranun warriors, and carrying one cannon of large caliber and two smaller guns. Reteh was in a strategic location for raiding in the Straits of Melaka. Another Dutch report said that the Iranun built two large stockaded settlements: Saba was located six hours from the mouth of the Jambi River and had an estimated eighty houses; Reteh comprised some sixty houses on another tributary opposite Singkep Island. In 1831, it was reported that Saba had fifteen large prahus and fifteen small prahus; Reteh had five large prahus and twenty small prahus.

Reteh became the earliest stronghold of the Iranun in the western sector of the archipelago precisely because it was situated upstream on the Sumatran coast alongside the strait of Malacca and close to the entrance of the South China Sea. They began preying upon the prahus of the Bugis from Sulawesi, Chinese vessels from Java and Arab and Malay craft from Palembang. These merchant crafts were often at the mercy of the Iranun from Reteh who lurked among the small islands and mangrove infested estuaries of the area. This illegible area of non-state space, became, in less than a decade (1787–1797), an “iranun coast.”⁵⁷

Tontoli, located on the northwest coast of Sulawesi, was the third Iranun base for slave raiding in Southeast Asia. It was the forward base in the southern sector for those Iranun coming out of the Cotabato area for marauding in the south

toward Indonesia rather than north toward the Philippines. This again underlines the difficulty of interpreting the Moro Wars principally as a jihad to defend Islam against Spanish attempt at colonizing Mindanao and Sulu. The Iranun base at Tontoli was focused on slave raiding in the islands of east Indonesia, particularly around Sulawesi and the Moluccas where the Dutch tried to impose monopolistic trade policies. Dutch repression of local trade dislocated many trading communities and resulted in disaffected elements who hated the Dutch, who thus tended to affiliate with the Iranun. The threat to Dutch control in east Indonesia were the Iranun and their local allies who used Tontoli as their fortified base. By 1800, the immigrant raiders from Mindanao and Sulu, together with the local piratical groups such as the Tobello, built their life and economy around Tontoli. Hunt, an early English explorer in the Sulu zone, identified Tontoli as a “great piratical establishment,” with several thousand Iranun regularly domiciled in their joanga for up to several years at a time in the harbor. Closely allied to Tontoli was the forward base at Tobungku, on the east coast of Sulawesi. The Iranun hunted down the coastal population of western Sulawesi and the Spice Islands, attacking Dutch VOC shipping wherever they were found. The Iranun were joined in their raiding activities by diverse groups of dislocated peasants, tribal dissidents, fugitive slaves, indentured servants, and predatory head-hunting people forced into exile by Dutch repressive policies.⁵⁸

By the early 1820s Tobungku, like Marudu on the northwest coast of Borneo, had become a primary staging center for financing and outfitting Iranun slave raiders in east Sulawesi and the Moluccas. Tobungku prospered as large numbers of slaves were put to work in an economy divided between agriculture and marine-based activities—fishing, strand procurement and maritime raiding. A steady stream of captives was supplied to the local rulers

from the regional slaving expeditions of the Tobungku-base Iranun and Tobello and those settled at Tontoli.⁵⁹

The Dutch and their local allies, alarmed at the damage the Iranun raids from Tontoli and Tobungku inflicted on the people and trade of eastern Indonesia, organized a naval campaign to drive them off Sulawesi. “Several Iranun settlements were burned, 50 raiding prahus were destroyed and 40 Iranun killed.”⁶⁰ A number of survivors left Tontoli and relocated to another piratical forward base at Tunku, northeast Borneo.

Tunku prospered as a principal Iranun base and boasted some of the boldest and most feared maritime raiders. These slavers of Tunku and Sibat maintained an “intimate correspondence” with their brethren in Illana bay, whose fleets they frequently joined. They had settled at three small rivers, Tunku, Sibahat and Mekawa, which were situated within five miles of each other south of Cape Unsang. Tunku, located 8 miles upriver, had a population of over 1,000 Iranun warriors, and could be attacked only by small boats. Captain Belcher described Tunku, in the early 1840s, as a major Iranun “slave market and pirate den.” [Tunku] the upstream settlement ... comprising about 70 houses with a stockade and some large and small *prahus*, but no fort.... They cruise to the northward among the Philippines, and to the southward in the Celebes and Java seas.⁶¹

It is important to point out again that Iranun and Balangingi slave raiding in maritime Southeast Asia was a bloody pursuit driven by the prospect of profit and wealth through plunder. It is thus difficult to assume that these raids were connected to lofty ideals of defending religion and territory from Spanish colonizing schemes. The contradiction between brute force and “consent of the governed” presented here could not be more stark.

AFTERTHOUGHT: THE ANOMALIES OF CONVERSION, COERCION, AND PRE-NATIONALISM

In conclusion, it might be instructive to briefly summarize here our attempt to compare Majul's and Warren's perspectives on the Sulu sultanate for the light that both provide on the general question of legitimated and coercive relations in society, specifically relative to the history of Islam and of slave raiding/slavery in Sulu. We have already seen how Majul regards the "coming" and "spread" of Islam in the Philippines as a function of the general expansion of Islam in Malaysia; that in general Islam came unaccompanied by coercion; that people were attracted to it for its ideological worth;⁶² that the establishment of the sultanate was based on the consent given to it by a generally Islamized people.⁶³ To explain this peaceful spread of Islam in the region, he cites several theories he labelled as "trade, missionary, political, economic, psychological, and crusader," which are relevant singly or in combination. In the Islamization of Mindanao and Sulu, he claims these theories have been likewise operative in diverse ways.

the early stages of the Islamization of Sulu followed a pattern similar to those elsewhere in Malaysia: the initial existence of a foreign Muslim settlement, members of this colony exercising some political power or the rulers of the principality becoming Muslims, the coming of missionaries strengthening Islam among the older Muslims and effecting some conversions, the introduction of additional Muslim institutions, and increasing contact with other Muslim kingdoms and principalities, thereby heightening Islamic consciousness at home. As it were, Sulu presents in miniature what had generally happened in Malaysia as a whole regarding Islamization.⁶⁴

The sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao were the end process of a sociopolitical evolution of Islamized communities

in their respective areas. These early communities of Muslims, according to Majul, had existed for some time here before they were transformed into a political community under the form of a sultanate. Thus a distinction can be drawn between the prior presence of a Muslim community and the subsequent emergence of a sultanate to coordinate the affairs of several communities. This twofold process is illustrated in the historical trajectory of both Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates.

The first qualification for a founder of a Muslim dynasty is that he is a foreign Muslim, one who is typically an Arab of noble descent with the title *sharif* or *sayyid*. These titles, used interchangeably or simultaneously, signify that the person can trace descent from Prophet Mohammad. The founder of Islam in Maguindanao was Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuwan, from Johore; he founded a dynasty but did not claim the title sultan; it was his descendant who achieved this status as Sultan Kudarat.⁶⁵ Thus there was first the formation of a Muslim community in Maguindanao before it could achieve the status of a sultanate.

The founder of the Sulu sultanate was Sharif ul-Hashim, said to have been an Arab coming via Palembang and Brunei. Previous to assuming the title sultan, Sharif ul-Hashim was known as Sayyid Abu Bakar. He was preceded by several pioneering Muslim traders and missionaries who introduced elements of Islam among the natives of Sulu. Two of these early Muslims were Karim ul-Makhdum believed to be a Sufi missionary, and Makhdum Amin-ullah, probably a trader with links to some Chinese Muslims in an early trading settlement in Sulu. And then there was Rajah Baguinda from Menangkabaw, Sumatra, who established a dynasty in Sulu but did not found a sultanate.⁶⁶ Again, the twofold process of evolution from community to sultanate appeared in the political evolution of Sulu.

A second criterion is for a foreign Muslim to marry into the native aristocracy of his host community, into families with pre-Islamic authority and influence over people and territory.

This practice is designed to balance the foreignness of an Arab wanting to be sultan among a non-Arab people. “That is why the Muslim who comes to establish a dynasty usually marries a local girl, preferably a princess belonging to the older aristocracy. In this manner the succeeding sultans can claim as much right to own land as the chieftains belonging to the older aristocracy.”⁶⁷ A sultanate comes into being when there is a preexisting Muslim community prepared to accept Islam as a religion and a system of political rule. “*In brief, the establishment of the sultanate was based on the consent given to it by a generally Islamized people.*”⁶⁸

In contrast, Warren’s perspective on the Sulu sultanate is broad and expansive as he places it at the center of regional trade in the Sulu zone. He takes the sultanate as a given political fact and sees no need to account for its origin, as his interest pivots around Sulu’s emergence as a regional entrepôt in a triangular exchange between European and Chinese and Tausug traders. He does not see Sulu, as does Majul, through the lens of Muslim resistance and pre-nationalism in a long-term conflict with Spanish Christianity. Instead he portrays Sulu in terms of its economic and political transactions, in managing its strategic role at the center of a global/regional trade network, dealing autonomously with Spanish, British, Dutch, and Chinese agents interested in the products and commerce of the Sulu zone. It is this economic and political dynamism that brought about “one of the largest population movements in recent Southeast Asian history, with hundreds of thousands of individuals sent into slavery across the zone.”⁶⁹ Even though it was at the cost of so much death, human exploitation, and coercion in the course of organized slave raiding, it cannot be denied that the resulting incorporation and integration of former slaves over time have substantially contributed to the historic expansion of the economy and society of the Sulu sultanate, and in the process enriched the polygenetic fabric of the diverse peoples within its political borders. It thus appears that it was naked political coercion—not exclusively the consent of the governed to an attractive foreign

religion that was actually intrusive to Mindanao and Sulu—that brought about the amazing sociopolitical expansion of the Sulu zone at the center of the Philippine South.

A crucial problem consequently arises relative to the treatment of captives. How does one explain “the consent of the governed” under the sultanate in cases where the captives are non-Muslims, who are still pagans or are Christian converts? How is the rule of the sultanate legitimated without the consent of the governed in these instances? This is the crux of the question of legitimate versus coercive rule, the issue of compliance and resistance to religious or political rule. It is a problem difficult to solve at the level of normative political theory, although attempts have been made to address this problem in the literature on resistance to hegemony and power in society, in works associated with Antonio Gramsci’s theories on hegemony, James Scott’s writings on resistance and “weapons of the weak,” and Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities.”⁷⁰ My approach to this problem is at the level of actual practice, as shown in three anecdotal cases and historical narratives cited below.

Most of the materials on the early history of Islam found in Najeeb Saleeby’s, *History of Sulu*, and those found in the *tarsilas* or family genealogies and in *khutbas* or Friday sermons, recount edifying stories about the sultans and were clearly laudatory of Islam.⁷¹ One particular account is given to illustrate Sayyid Abu Bakar’s wise and especially compassionate disposition in dealing with the non-Muslim hill tribes of ancient Jolo, the ancestors of the *taugimba*.

[1] The hill people were still unconverted. The coast people said, “Let’s fight the hill people and convert them to Islam.” But Abubakar would not allow it and instead told the people to pound rice and make cakes and clothing. Then the coast people marched inland to a place now called Pahayan. Abubakar sent word to the

head man that he was an Arabian who could be spoken to by writing on paper. The head man, called in those days “Tomoai,” said that he did not want to see him for he did not want to change the customs of his ancestors. So Abubakar approached and threw cakes and clothing into the houses of the Moros. The children ate the cakes, but the older people thought them poison and gave them to the dogs. The dogs were not killed and the children went out to the camp of Abubakar where they were treated kindly. The two tribes came to an understanding. That night Abubakar slept in the house of the chief. The chief had a dream that he was living in large house with beautiful decoration. Abubakar interpreted the dream saying that the house was the new religion and the decorations its benefits. The news spread and after much difficulty the people were converted.⁷²

There is also one non-allegorical account that points to the generally accommodating and non-coercive methods Muslim missionaries used in their dealings with native societies. The following observation, written by Francisco Gainza around 1851, applies to Mindanao, but this pattern can be easily predicated of Sulu as well.

[2] The social conditions of these people must have been similar to those in the rest of the (Philippine) Archipelago until the arrival of some Arab missionaries who instructed them in Islam while settling permanently in the Rio Grande (Pulangi) to be more acceptable to the people and make them more tractable (to their teaching). They introduced some religious practices, intermarried with the women, adopted the native language and many customs of the country, adjusted themselves to the social order, acquired many slaves to enhance their importance, and merged themselves into the datu class which was the highest class. Working together with more skill and

harmony than the natives, and possessing slaves like the latter, they progressively consolidated their power and formed a confederacy till they finally established a form of monarchy [sultanate] which they made hereditary in a family among whose members the datus would elect a sultan.⁷³

A third historical observation is on the earlier Islamization in Malaysia where the process is claimed to be peaceful, as shown in the following scenario.

[3] The success of *Mohamedan* missionaries, contrasted with the failures of the *Christian*; it is not difficult to trace to the true cause. The Arabs and the other Mohamedan missionaries conciliated the natives of the country, acquired their languages, followed their manners, intermarried with them, and, melting into the mass of the people, did not, on the other hand, give rise to a privileged race. Their superiority of intelligence and civilization was employed only for the instruction and conversion of a people, the current of whose religious opinions was ready to be directed to any channel into which it was skillfully directed. They were merchants as well as Europeans, but never dreamt of having recourse to the iniquitous measure of plundering the *people* of the produce of their soil and industry.⁷⁴

In light of these anecdotal materials and observations, it can indeed be conceded that “in general Islam came unaccompanied by coercion,” that one may conclude that “people were attracted to it for its ideological worth,”⁷⁵ and that Islamic rule through the sultanate “was based on the consent given to it by a generally Islamized people.” This much can be accepted, that they are indeed representations of historical facts.

All the above notwithstanding, there is still need to weigh them against other historical facts and to place all of them in

the balance in the larger context of Majul's other influential interpretations. One interpretation is that Islam in the Philippines fostered a form of pre-nationalism, a view that has definitely influenced a number of Philippine historians who have accepted it without question. One version of this became the orthodoxy behind the ideology of the separatist rebellion launched by the MNLF and the MILF—namely, that the rebellion is rooted in and a prolongation of the Moro Wars; it has been proclaimed a form of Moro nationalism separate from Filipino nationalism.

Outside such creative but questionable ideological interpretation, alternative findings in anthropology and recent regional histories show that Sulu was not a “single nation” but a multiethnic society, a multipolar polity technically called a segmentary state. The Maguindanao n Muslim communities likewise formed a multipolar, segmentary state in Cotabato. Sultan Barahaman in 1693 is reported to have said: “The people of Maguindanao certainly are known under one name, but consists of many different nations.”⁷⁶ These two feudal, premodern states of Sulu and Maguindanao never saw themselves together as constituting a single “Moro nation.” The very rivalry between the MNLF and MILF attests to this contested issue of a unified single people. The Spaniards, Dutch, and British dealt with them as distinct polities, not as a single nation; otherwise, there would not have been a series of separate treaties with each of these sultanates. There was never a treaty with a single, centralized Bangsamoro nation in history, because there was none. Abinales, in his book, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim Mindanao Narrative*, has criticized this interpretation of a unified Muslim political history as myth, a product inspired by a revisionist history married to an ideology. In reality, there have been periods when some members of the Muslim elite collaborated with Spain and the United States, and others who subsequently participated as Filipino public servants, elected as senators and representatives in the Republic of the Philippines. And in recent years, some MNLF revolutionaries have turned

into state managers. “The Bangsamoro Republik is nowhere in sight, the MNLF has been integrated into the state it once fought, and the MILF is having second thoughts about the viability of armed struggle.”⁷⁷

There is yet another interpretation still rooted in Majul, mentioned in the opening section, which imagines the Muslim struggle as not in contrast to but aligned with the struggle for freedom of the natives of Luzon and the Visayas. “From a more restricted perspective, the Muslim struggle in the Philippine South can be considered part of the heritage of the entire Filipino people in the history of the struggle for freedom.”⁷⁸ He expressed the noble hope that “a future generation of Filipinos would consider the struggle of the Muslim South as part of the struggle of the entire nation—and the epic exploits of its heroes may well be the nation’s heritage.”⁷⁹

Such twists in viewing Muslim history in the Philippine South have resulted in some strange reinterpretation and application of the Moro Wars construct, recasting massive predatory marauding and exploitation of captive slaves as instances of “civic virtues.” For instance, in Luis Camara Dery’s book, *The Kris in Philippine History* (1997), we find this passage: “The persistence of Moro attacks highlighted the consistency of the Moro inhabitants’ adherence to the ancient and universal ideals of liberty, freedom, and self-rule.”⁸⁰ It is rather difficult to accept such acts as idealistic portrayals of freedom loving, when one puts them against horrific acts of plunder, slave raiding, and oppression of slaves captured from the coastal villages of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia by Iranun and Balangingi mangayaw warriors.

The battle over interpretation never ends. Some recent studies have reexamined the basic issues surrounding the “consent of the governed” question, and the related issues of compliance and coercion, accommodation and resistance, in the nationalist historiography of the Philippines and of Muslim separatism. One study interrogates the transcendent

nationalism of the mainstream historians, questioning how “nationalist historiography can serve as means to implicitly justify localized acts of class oppression.”⁸¹ Another study is Thomas M. McKenna’s *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, a well-grounded ethnography and theoretically sophisticated analysis of the Muslim rebellion in Cotabato. One of McKenna’s findings is that “the Muslim nationalist identity that undergirds the separatist movement—a movement that describes itself as Islamic and anticolonial—originated only during the American colonial period (1899–1946) with the active encouragement of American colonial authorities.”⁸² His interpretation of the evidence “contradicts the prevailing view among scholars of the Muslim Philippines that Philippine Muslim (or Moro) identity was forged over the course of three hundred years of resistance to Spanish aggression against the Muslim polities of the South.”⁸³ The other interpretation is that “the notion of a Philippine Muslim nation (Bangsamoro) had little or no resonance among the movement’s rank-and-file adherents. Most ordinary followers neither denominated themselves as ‘Moro’ (the term chosen by their leaders to denote the citizens of the new nation) nor proclaimed that they were fighting primarily for the sake of the new nation.” This second finding is critical inasmuch as it challenges the core assumption contained in almost all contemporary theories of nationalism “that ordinary adherents of nationalist movements are principally motivated by the resonant force of elite-generated nationalist ideas.”⁸⁴

FURTHER RESEARCH WITH A BROADER DATA BASE

And so there is need yet again to dig deeper into the sources to advance the frontiers of knowledge. There is need for more comparative ethnographic research in the region at the ground level; and for fuller utilization of existing archives in Southeast Asian countries, and especially those of Spain, the Netherlands,

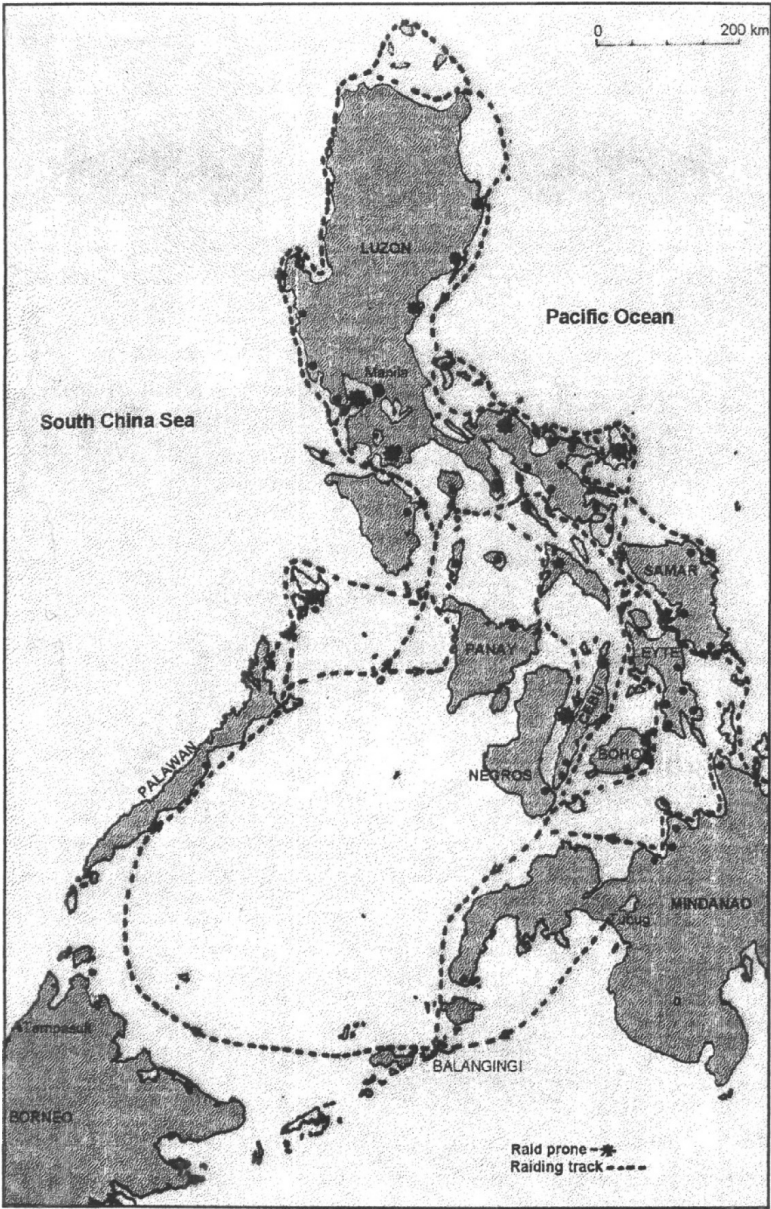
Great Britain, and Australia. The difference between Majul and Warren, it seems to me, does not lie only in their central questions. For Majul it was the trials and triumphs of a transcendent Muslim *ummah*; for Warren it was the rise and fall of the political economy of the Sulu zone constructively engaging the commercial expansion of Great Britain. The real difference may lie ultimately in the richness of the archival materials that each had access to. Majul built on the foundation provided by Najeeb Saleeby's pioneering work on Sulu and Mindanao; he added a few materials from a somewhat limited set of Dutch sources,⁸⁵ integrating more comparative materials on Islamic polities and commerce in Southeast Asia, and commenting expansively on the existing Spanish documents that tend to have a Manila-centric, anti-Muslim bias. Warren, on the other hand, was more fortunate in having access to a much broader and more diverse archival sources in both Southeast Asia and Europe. Moreover, he was able to integrate a number of ethnographic studies that may not have been available to Majul. Warren's perspective was thus multidimensional and international, less ideological and more empirical, so that the Sulu zone did not appear as just a small appendix on the margin of the Philippine archipelago fighting against Spanish colonialism, but an autonomous world of its own at the strategic confluence of the colonial worlds of Dutch East Indies, British Malaysian and Borneo settlements, the Spanish Philippines, and the old Nanhai commerce of South China.⁸⁶ Learning the languages needed to access and profit from these diverse sources will have to be consciously factored in and integrated into the formation of future historians and social scientists interested in the ethnohistory and evolving political economy of Southeast Asia.

For future historical and anthropological research in these areas and on these contested questions, it is important to maintain a measure of objectivity or controlled subjectivity, and clearly confront events and practices that appear discordant, contradictory, chaotic, and barbaric—outside the norms of

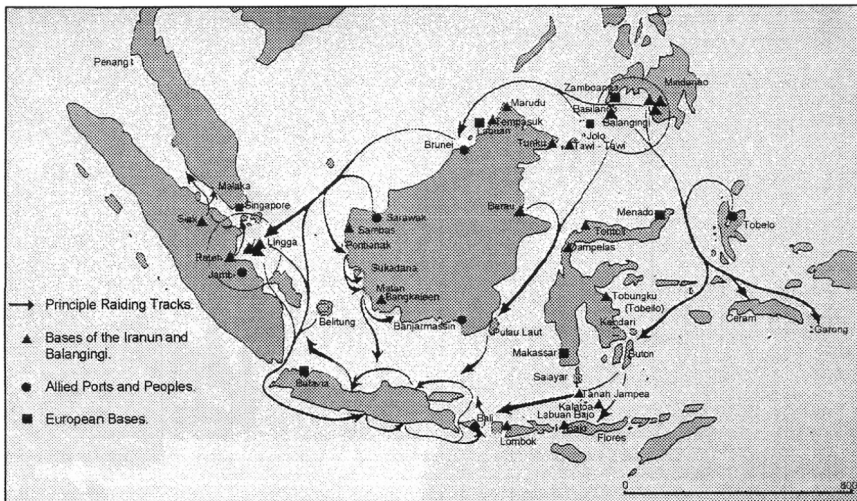
morality and orthodoxy that a given scholar may hold. It is better to include such contrarian and contradictory data in historical narratives rather than smooth them out to serve some ideological purposes like re-constructing a primordial “nation.” How to reconcile multiple contradictory expressions of convergent and coercive currents in Muslim history inside and outside the Philippines will continue to challenge the moral sensibilities and historiographic imagination of all students of society and culture. I believe in the importance of a research program that investigates social reality from top to bottom, from both ends of Van Leur’s looking glass, and both inside and outside the box of Majul’s jihad perspective.

in a new history of island Southeast Asia, the “little people”—fishers, “raiders,” traders, highlanders, forest dwellers, pioneers and slaves—both men and women, should be visibly present as part of the cultural landscape and environment.... The fundamental problems in the everyday lives of such maritime and tribal peoples—making their livings and losing them, entangled in globalising events beyond their own geographic borders and worlds, is the work of future ethnohistorians of Asia, east by south.⁸⁷

APPENDIX



Map 1. Slave raiding in the Philippines, 1768–1868⁸⁸



Map 2. Iranun-Balangingi maritime raiding in the Malay Archipelago, first half of the nineteenth century⁸⁹

NOTES

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- 31 Horacio de la Costa, *Readings in Philippine History* (Manila: Bookmark, 1965), 197.
- 32 James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State*, 2nd ed. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), 36.
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- 35 Casiño, *Mindanao Statecraft and Ecology*, 51.
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