

Mainstreaming Philippine Muslim History and Culture as Venues for Strengthening People's Nationalism and Nation-Building in the Philippines

ABRAHAM P. SAKILI

ABSTRACT

Muslim history and culture are generally misunderstood, especially by non-Muslims, whose encounters with Muslims may be dismal like only in marketplaces if not from the selective information one can get from the media, sad to say, that most of it are not positively helpful in understanding the rich history and culture of the Muslims. This problem of “representation” that marginalized the Muslims is aggravated by the lack of available educational

ABRAHAM P. SAKILI is a commissioner of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and professor at the Department of Art Studies, College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines Diliman.

materials and efforts to integrate Muslim history and culture in the different mainstream channels of information. Thus the challenge for historians to help fill the gap. This paper brings to the fore facts about Philippine Muslim history, culture and the so-called “Mindanao Problem” to help clarify some major misconceptions about these subjects in mainstream writings and scholarship.

KEYWORDS

Muslim history and culture, mainstreaming, representation, nationalism, integration, Mindanao problem

INTRODUCTION

THE NEED TO MAINSTREAM MUSLIM HISTORY AND CULTURE

In many instances, the Muslims in the Philippines are “represented” (or more accurately, “misrepresented”) in a manner that does not serve their needs and interests or reflect the realities about their history and way of life. In the mainstream information channels, what is commonly circulated about the Muslims is not the truth but “representation.”

What is “representation” and why is this a problem? Representation is not a natural depiction of the Muslims and their Islamic culture. Backed up by corporate institutions,

the construction of the Philippine Muslim people and culture in mainstream information channels has been a systematic means of *selection, exteriorization, exclusion* and *distribution* of these texts for managing, restructuring, and controlling the Muslim inhabitants of the southern Philippines. The representation of Muslims in mainstream information channels has significantly contributed to their marginalization as citizens.

Mainstream Philippine history has so far been socially constructed and tied to the structure of power. Its language and texts are framed and carefully selected to correspond to the culture of power operating in the sites of the production of knowledge. The reconstructed Philippine history is without meaning to the Muslims because an essential portion of the past, that is the real history of the Muslims in the Philippines, has been exteriorized or concealed. With this excluded portion of Philippine history, the present inhabitants of this country, Muslims and Christians alike, are denied of the more comprehensive narratives in the making of the present Philippines. Thus, as expressed by MCM Santamaria of the *Business Mirror*: “Our apparently biased dominant Christian discourse seems to disable us from recognizing the great achievements of the (Muslims in the Philippines)—the setting up of state organizations beyond the level of the *barangay* and the maintenance of military might with the well-tested capability to resist the West.”¹

To minimize the problem of (mis)representation, Muslim history and culture should be foregrounded and mainstreamed in major information channels in

the Philippines. This foregrounding and propagation of information about Muslim history and culture will help promote peace and intercultural understanding between the Muslims and their Christian co-citizens. In this regard, and for its part, the present Philippine government has been making adjustments to accommodate Muslim needs for heightened Muslim involvement and participation in national undertakings. Such Muslim accommodation in various governmental functions is essential in Philippine nation-building. This kind of historiography that pursues the building of a stronger and just nation of diverse cultural communities is truly representative of significant historical undertakings of its citizens, regardless of religion, race or ethnicity. An important government action to institute historical reform was the enactment of Republic Act No. 10086 in May 2010 renaming the National Historical Institute (NHI) to National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and mandating it with the task of “strengthening people’s nationalism through Philippine history.” The provision of the law “to build a Philippine national identity based on unity and pride in diversity” is aimed at strengthening “people’s nationalism” beneficial to all the cultural communities in the Philippines. Likewise, Section 7, subsection “h” of the law directs the nine-member NHCP Board “to discuss and resolve with finality, issues or conflicts on Philippine history.” This is a good opportunity to present the Muslim perspective of Philippine history beneficial not only to the Muslims themselves but to all citizens of the Philippines.

Relative to the preceding concern, this paper foregrounds and explains concepts and presents

documentary evidence and scholarly views on Muslim culture and history, including historical facts pertinent to the current problems in the southern Philippines. Most of the reference persons and scholars whose studies and ideas are cited in this paper are non-Muslims. Their ideas are relegated to the sideline in favor of mainstream views and conventional preferences. In this paper, the verities that they have uncovered about the Muslims as a subject of Philippine history and culture, are highlighted.

As preliminary views, two respectable Filipino personalities—one historian and the other, a known nationalist—made urgent appeals to the Filipino people to understand the Muslims as their co-citizens. Discussing the “Mindanao Problem,” Dr. Samuel Tan, a retired UP professor of history and former chair of the National Historical Institute (now Commission), stated emphatically: “This is not the time to hide the facts and tell lies. This is the time to tell the truth to make us free indeed. It is not enough to know adequately the Mindanao conflict. It is necessary to understand it.” Dr. Tan, made these remarks during the Cotabato City Peace and Development Forum on July 20, 2000. He added that “the failure of...the dominant (cultural group in the Philippines) to really remove the lingering anti-Muslim bias in historical consciousness, (is) the primary factor hindering the resolution of the Mindanao conflict.”²

For his part, former Senator Wigberto Tañada, in 1996, urged the Philippine government “to take the lead in enlightening people about the historic roots of the Mindanao Problem and (explain) why the rectification of

the historical wrongs inflicted on the Moro people requires extraordinary measures.³

The preceding remarks of Dr. Tan and Senator Tanada were reinforced by the following testimonies of reputable scholars who acknowledged variedly the historical achievements of the Muslims through time. According to a Jesuit historian, “(the Muslims in the Philippines) were sovereign and independent nation.”⁴ Other writers asserted that the Muslims had “the most developed social organization in the Philippines (prior to Spanish colonization),”⁵ they were able to consolidate commercial, political and military power due to their role in the international trade between England and China;⁶ their “institutionalized friendship,”⁷ caught the attention of anthropologists and studied it in relation to their conduct of warfare; and “as fighting men they occupy the first rank in martial history,”⁸ among others.

These views point, in particular, to history as a primary factor in understanding the Muslim people of the Philippines as a subject of scholarship. The other factor is culture. As a valid tool in Social Science studies, cultural analysis “is providing the analogies for theorizing about the reality of life and culture in a given society.”⁹ Emerging from this new perspective is the view of culture as an ideational system, rather than a formal or structural-functional one.

Until now, the structural-functional framework of analysis, which foregrounds the structural, legal, and other material considerations, has dominated the discourse on the Muslims in mainstream writings and information

channels. The dominance of such approach has relegated the historical and cultural aspects to the background. In mainstream analysis of the Mindanao Problem, for example, with no clear history compounded by a flattened Philippine cultural terrain in tri-media reporting, the historical truth and cultural reality as essential parameters for understanding the problem have been taken for granted, consequently resulting in the misreading of the problem itself. For example, it is a misreading of the problem when economic or legal factors, instead of history and culture, are regarded as the roots of the problem. The limiting and deviating effects of misreading the problem from the legal and economic parameters only have confused the *cause* from the *effect* of the problem, making the Muslims appear as the culprits rather than the victims of the problem imposed upon them in the southern Philippines. The Philippine Muslim struggle for freedom and justice is misread as a *cause* rather than an *effect* of the problem. Similarly, the state of poverty of the Muslims who subsist on meager resources in the poorest of the poor provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM),¹⁰ (now Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao or BARMM) is misread as the *root* rather than the *effect* of the problem.

CLARIFYING "CULTURE," "ISLAM" AND "RELIGION" AS SIGNIFYING TEXTS

As established by a number of recent scholarships, it is culture—not politics or economics—that has been acknowledged by scholars like Samuel P. Huntington and Edgar H. Schein, as the primary factor or force conditioning

international and organizational relations, respectively.¹¹ Culture, as a body of knowledge, serves as a model for perceiving, relating, and interpreting realities. As an ideational system, culture is hard to decipher. According to Schein “to understand a group’s culture, one must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions” which he defines as the “taken-for-granted and hard-to-decipher belief systems which are operational at the unconscious level.”¹²

To the Muslims in the Philippines who associate culture with their *Deen* or Islam religion and *addat* or customs, the “taken-for-granted” belief system has been proven to be the most meaningful and potent force in sustaining their life and identity as a people.

Applying culture and Islam or religion to understand the Mindanao Problem, Christians and Muslims differ in their perspectives. The Christians, many of whom are conditioned by political secularism and the structural-functional mode of seeing, are puzzled to see why the Muslims struggle for “secession” or clamor for autonomy. The Christians mention all the non-religious causes of the problem: power struggle, land squabbles, economic problems, etc. While many Christian Filipinos believe that the struggle in Mindanao has nothing to do with Islam or religion, the Muslims insist that they are struggling in defense of Islam¹³ and trying to chart their life and destiny as free, progressive, and peaceful community of people. What the Muslims mean by “religion” or “Islam” varies from what the rest of the Philippine inhabitants associate the term with. For the Muslims, Islam should be considered not only as a religion but a social phenomenon that calls

for a holistic approach in understanding Islam and the Muslims.

THE MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE OF PHILIPPINE HISTORY

THE TWO STREAMS OF PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Philippine Muslim history is a history of nationality antedating the history of the Christian North. Before the coming of Islam and Christianity to the Philippines, the progenitors of these two geography-based groups were racially related as Malays. The racial affinity, however, did not have significant socio-political bearing because of the lack of cohesive political construction and unifying ideology. To say that “before the coming of Islam and Christianity, the Philippines was inhabited by one people” is not accurate and has no meaningful socio-political sense. Pieces of evidence from Philippine pre-history and folk traditions suggest that inter-*barangay* and interisland warfare was common. Rivalry and hostility existed between highland and lowland people and between inland and coastal groups.¹⁴ If there was anything in Philippine history that brought a sense of unity which paved the way for the emergence of national consciousness, it was the adoption of Islam by some inhabitants and of Christianity by the others. Islam, which antedated Christianity in this country was responsible for the establishment of the first state construction in the Philippines—the Muslim Sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao. These Sultanates differ from the “native state construction” in other parts of

the archipelago not only in name—one non-Muslim and the other Muslim—but in substance of political power and extent of control. The Philippine Muslim state construction was strengthened and sustained by the following factors: 1) the force of Islamic ideology which provided the cohesion for national unity; 2) the political system of the Sultanate, which exercised sovereignty and jurisdiction over wide territories; and 3) Muslim-controlled international trade which generated the economic resources that sustained the growth and development of the Muslim principalities and fueled the resistance of the Muslims against foreign invaders for centuries.

The Philippine historical development before the advent of American colonization of the country proceeded along two different directions or orientations. As the Filipino Christian history took the path of European and Western historical development, the Muslims developed their history along the West Asian-Arab and Malay line. Separated by time, the Muslims and Christians met only in the battlefields as the latter served in many expeditions organized against the Muslims.

In the context of separate or parallel historical development one should also understand that the Muslims did not have participation in the Propaganda Movement and in the Katipunan-led Revolution because they were busy fighting their own wars against colonialism. The Muslim struggle for freedom was not a simple case of revolt, as bandied about or belittled in some Philippine history books. It was a patriotic resistance that even surpassed the

duration, scale, and magnitude of northern Philippine uprisings for national liberation. The accounts of the Moro Wars of Dr. Cesar Majul attest to the heroism and determination of the Muslims in the Philippines to sustain their struggle against Spanish colonialism for more than 300 years.¹⁵ These accounts are historical facts that could not be taken for granted. They are the bases of Muslims' clamor for their rightful place in Philippine history. The important role of the Muslims should be mainstreamed in Philippine history books and national symbols corresponding to the high degree of their historical contribution.

MUSLIMS' HISTORY OF POWER AND ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLE

The Philippine Muslims had for centuries maintained their sovereign independence. Their sultanates were political and territorial embodiments of their strong sense of nationality. The Sultanate's obligation to promote the interest of its inhabitants and to conduct foreign relations was an assertion of that sovereignty. Book Three of Blair and Robertson's *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* reveals that the Spanish accounts from the 16th and 17th centuries acknowledged that the Muslim rulers in Mindanao and Sulu "unlike those of Luzon are accustomed to power and sovereignty."¹⁶

The power achieved by the Sulu and Maguindanao Sultanates in history, and to some extent by the Maranaos through their *Pat a Pangampong* or Four Districts or Principalities of Lanao, was due primarily to Islamic

ideology and its comprehensive system of inter-people or interstate transactions and governance. Other outward influencing factors included Muslim geography, economic resources, international trade and commerce, and military capabilities.

The Maguindanao Sultanate reached the zenith of its glory during the time of Sultan Kudarat in the 1630s and 1640s when it had controlled most parts of Mindanao. Sultan Kudarat proved to be very strong when the Spaniards were made to ratify a Treaty which recognized the whole territory of Sultan Kudarat from Sibugay (which flows to Sibugay Bay in the present provinces of Zamboanga) to the Tagalook Bay (the present Davao Gulf). The interior mountain tribes (in the present Cotabato and Bukidnon) were considered part of his sphere of influence.¹⁷ As a powerful state, the Maguindanao Sultanate also demonstrated diplomatic and military capabilities in dealing with the might of Spain. In international diplomacy, the Sultanate of Maguindanao signed over 20 treaties with foreign sovereigns. Notwithstanding the power and success of the Maguindanao Sultanate, the Sultanate of Sulu had achieved even more progress and glory as a regional center of power in maritime Southeast Asia for over a century.

In the past, when Manila and Cebu were only enlarged villages, Jolo, the capital of Sulu, was the richest settlement in the pre-Spanish Philippines. Sulu's strategic location and rich maritime and forest resources made it a center of international trade. Having fitted into the trade patterns between Europe and China, the commerce

centered in Jolo dominated the trade activities involving Borneo, Celebes, Singapore, and Labuan, as well as Manila, Palawan, and southern Mindanao. The Tausug merchants established extensive linkages and developed complex set of interrelationships through trade pacts and marriages with other people, thus consolidating the Sulu Sultanate's power throughout its vast domains.

At the height of the Sulu Sultanate's glory, its rulers controlled vast territories¹⁸ including parts of Kalimantan, Northeast Borneo, Palawan, Basilan, and the islands in the Sulu archipelago. Foreign powers did not only trade goods with the people of Sulu but also accorded them with highest respect through the treaties that the Sulu rulers signed with foreign sovereigns. The Sulu Sultanate signed more than a dozen treaties with Spain, five with the British, two with the French, and three with the Americans.¹⁹ The agreement signed "was a treaty, strictly so-called that is one between two sovereign and independent states, each is recognized as such by the other," a Jesuit scholar wrote in 1935.²⁰

During the European colonization of Asia, the Muslims in the Philippines waged one of the longest resistance against the Western imperialist powers. They proved too strong for the Spanish *conquistadores* and too disturbing to the other invaders. Viewed from the larger Philippine historical context, the Muslim anti-colonial defiance should not be subsumed under the northern Filipinos' fight for freedom. Nevertheless, these were parallel anti-colonial struggles spearheaded by the Muslims and Christians—with the former defending hard to *maintain* their independence

while the latter fighting *to regain* the independence that they had lost to the colonizers. Both peoples helped bring about the present condition in the Philippines.

HIGHLIGHTS OF INFORMATION RELATED TO THE “MINDANAO PROBLEM”

SUMMARY OF THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CAUSES OF THE “MINDANAO PROBLEM”

The conflict in the southern Philippines, oftentimes misread or oversimplified in the Philippines as purely an economic problem, is a multi-dimensional and systemic problem which needs to be understood profoundly and dealt with positively. The causes of this problem are as follows: 1) lack of cultural awareness among the Filipino majority of the Muslim way of life; 2) exteriorization of Muslim history, especially those related to Muslim power and sovereignty, in Philippine history texts; 3) unitary set-up of the Philippine system which has proven to be inadequate in administering cultures with varying historical experiences together in a spatial setting; 4) unlevelled playing field in Philippine socio-political and economic affairs and the insufficient representation of Muslims in national governance; 5) economic problems that compel the Muslims to live in penury in the most impoverished provinces of the ARMM (now BARMM); 6) land problem and the need for juridical guarantee for the remaining Muslim ancestral domain, and 7) the persistence of the morally offensive and psychologically conditioned negative “Moro image” in the national psyche of the majority of Christian Filipino citizens.

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS AND THE MINDANAO PROBLEM

Structurally and administratively, the unitary or highly centralized Philippine government has been inappropriate in administering the indigenous, the Islamized, and the Christianized peoples of the Philippines. It is a burgeoning system that has been slow in responding to the needs of the Muslims for political empowerment and for adequate representation in the multiple tasks of governmental administration. The unlevelled playing field in Muslim-Christian relations has been generally taken for granted and assumed to be culturally neutral and innocent. However, in reality, it has conditioned the functioning of the government directly or indirectly in favor of the culture of those who are in the majority. This is particularly apparent in the allocation of power and the distribution of economic resources.

On the socio-psychological problem of Muslim-Christian relationship, the lingering negative Moro image in the minds of many, if not most Christian Filipinos, predominantly operates. On the agrarian issue, the same negative view has shaped or influenced the attitude of Christian Filipinos to regard them (the Muslims) not as a people with rights over their ancestral domain, but as a problem to be solved and their territories to be taken. This in effect aggravates the land problem, a major unresolved cause and underlying material underpinning of the Mindanao conflict.

HOW WERE THE MUSLIMS DISPOSSESSED OF THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS IN MINDANAO?

The Cadastral Act of 1913 which called for a general survey, parceling, and allocation of “public lands” to American planters and homesteaders opened up the portals of Mindanao that displaced the Muslims and other indigenous inhabitants. Between 1913 and 1917, seven agricultural colonies were established in Moroland—six in Cotabato Valley and one in Lanao. During this period alone, some 8,000 colonists and their dependents settled in Cotabato and Lanao.²¹ By 1930, Moroland received 4,194 families of colonists or a total of 19,441 persons.²² A vigorous program of agricultural colonization was implemented with the creation of the National Land Settlement Administration (NLSA) in 1939 to sustain the earlier aim of greater migration.²³ Upon the grant of independence in 1946, the Philippines embarked on an accelerated program of moving people into the areas inhabited by the Muslims and the *Lumad* in Mindanao. Several resettlement programs were organized after World War II.

SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS ORGANIZED IN MINDANAO AFTER WORLD WAR II

- The 1949 Rice and Corn Administration (RCA)
- The 1950 Land Settlement and Development Corporation (LASEDECO) during the time of President Elpidio Quirino
- The 1953 Economic Development Corps (EDCOR)

- The 1954 National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration(NARRA) during the time of President Ramon Magsaysay
- The Land Authority (1960s)

The impact of agricultural settlement and the consequent migration into Moroland can be discerned from the “phenomenal growth” of population in Mindanao since World War II. The following statistics show that the whole of Mindanao had a population that doubled in only ten years, or twice as fast as the national average:

DATA ON MINDANAO POPULATION

YEAR	MUSLIM (MORO) POPULATION	CHRISTIAN (INDIO) POPULATION
1850	500,000	89,500
1918	417,768	491,218
1939	920,436	1,285,868
1960	1,300,839	3,846,759
1970	1,584,394	5,610,709

YEAR	% OF INCREASE	% OF INCREASE
1918 - 1970	274.2%	1,141.8%
YEAR	ANNUAL INCREASE	ANNUAL INCREASE
1918 - 1970	5.3 %	29.9%

[Sources: In 1850 (McMicking,1967; Bowring ,1963; in 1918 (Forbes,1928), in 1939 through 1960 (Census of the Philippines). Above figures do not include the data from Palawan. These data, published in the *Moro Kurier*, January-June 1990 issue, were taken from the discussion paper of Dr. Federico Magdalena who read it at the Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawaii. Source of 1970 data: derived from the available statistics of Thomas J. O’Shaughnessy, Philippine Studies, 23/3 (1975), 375-382]

Regarding the population shift in Mindanao as a result of the government's program of migration and resettlements, a scholar commented that "it was aimed to obliterate the distinct character of the Muslims and the *Lumad*. The consequent dislocation and displacement of the local population by migrants, eventually led...to the takeover and control over economic resources and political power."²⁴

Another effect of migration in Moroland was noted by another scholar on Moro affairs, Dr. Federico Magdalena who said that "it is one of massive displacement of the native Moros deeper into the interior, where they are found today. They have become marginalized and minoritized in their own homeland where they were previously the absolute lords and masters."²⁵ Today, out of the more than 20 provinces in Mindanao, the Muslim population can still be found in 14 provinces (those identified in the 1976 Tripoli Agreement). However, the Muslims enjoy only a demographic majority in four of those provinces: Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi. Cotabato, which was once a bastion of Muslim settlement, literally became a Christian province after World War II.²⁶

How have the Muslims lost their lands to the settlers is described in the following account by Dr. Peter Gowing:

The Muslims have been protesting against the sending of settlers into their territories. They resented the detachment of lands, even those which had gone unused, from the traditional pattern of community and clan ownership, with its *addat* and

Islamic sanction. The Muslims resented the steady occupation of fertile lands by settlers. The land laws of the Government defined all unregistered land in Mindanao as 'public land.' The bureaucracy made it difficult for the Muslims to secure titles; not many Muslims bothered to apply, being either unfamiliar with the procedure or unable to pay the cost for the required survey and processing of papers. In some cases, powerful business interests or wealthy Christians, in connivance with corrupt bureau officials, took advantage of Muslim ignorance or indifference to Philippine land laws and grab from them large tracts of their best lands"²⁷

In 1963, the Senate Committee on National Minorities learned from the survey it conducted that the lands applied for by the natives were awarded to Christians and that the government surveyors did not pay attention to the minorities. The committee also reported that "ignorance and poverty on the part of the cultural minorities and connivance between influential people, local politicians and government agents in charge of disposition of land matters were blamed for the occurrence of land problems in Mindanao."²⁸ In 1971, the same committee came up with a more objective and well-documented analysis of the land problem in Mindanao:

Through either indifference, insincerity or lack of foresight, the seeds of discord were sown when the Commonwealth Government embarked on a policy of bringing settlers from Luzon and Visayas to Mindanao without a parallel program of helping

the natives legitimize their land holdings or assisting them in making their farms productive... After the second world war, the influx of settlers and immigrants to the verdant valleys of Cotabato continued...the prior rights of the natives were disregarded and even trampled upon.²⁹

Given the aforementioned problems, the Muslims have been left out in many aspects of development and have become vulnerably exposed to forces that threaten their identity as a *bangsa* and members of the *ummah* or community of Muslims.

FROM 1898 TREATY OF PARIS ONWARD: AN ACT OF INTEGRATION OR “INTERNAL COLONIALISM”?

The incorporation of the Muslims into the Philippines through the Treaty of Paris of December 10, 1898 signed between the two colonial powers, Spain and the United States, toward the beginning of the American colonial period is an ugly chapter in Philippine history. O.D. Corpuz describes the Treaty, regarded as an anomaly, as follows:

In Paris in 1898, when Spain and the new imperialist United States were selling and buying a country and people, Spain sold something it did not own or possess. What it sold was paper; pieces of paper that said that Sulu was part of the Spanish crown and that Mindanao and Basilan and Sulu and Tawi-Tawi were a province of Filipinas.... Now the United States had paid for a bill of goods. Its Senate consented to

the Treaty in February. The Congress appropriated the purchase price in March. The ratifications were exchanged in April. The money were paid in May. That they paid for paper was not a bother to the Americans. They could not get their money back from Spain was not a problem either. The Americans would collect what they paid for, by themselves and by force. And this was how the Americans bought themselves a war with the Moros.³⁰

A Mindanao-based scholar reflects on the event as follows:

...the supposed transfer of the Spanish possession to the Americans by the Treaty of Paris and the further transfer of the same by the Americans to the Republic of the Philippines is an exercise of the Regalian Doctrine, plain and simple...(F)or the Republic of the Philippines to base its possessory rights from the Americans is complete disregard of the historical realities before them. The Philippine possession is to sustain the legitimacy of the Regalian Doctrine and uphold colonialism. Worse, this colonial act is enshrined in the Philippine Constitutions of 1935, 1973, and 1986.³¹

The persistence of “internal colonialism” in Mindanao until today is a legacy of colonial tyranny that sustains the unlevelled playing field and perpetuate all kinds of social injustice on the Muslims. It is hoped that Filipino men and women of high moral integrity both in the corridors of power and the academe will lead in “rectify(ing) (such)

historical wrongs” through the institution of “extraordinary measures” called for by former Senator Tañada. For the Muslims, such promising recommendation when translated into policy actions will enable them regain their honorable and rightful place in the Philippines as a historical people worthy of respect and admiration of their co-citizens in the Philippines.

CONCLUSION

Philippine Muslim history and culture have been molded by religious consciousness, political struggle, and historical achievements—the amalgam that makes up the Philippine Muslim identity. The major aspects of these people’s identity are summed up as follows:

1. As culturally-rich people whose arts and other aspects of culture link them with the peoples of Southeast Asia and the Islamic world.
2. As historically sovereign nation of people with colorful and heroic history of struggles against Western colonization.
3. As economically-affluent and politically advanced people who had consolidated economic and political power as a result of its role in international commerce and trade, before their incorporation into the Philippines
4. As Muslim people with deep Islamic consciousness who are continuing with their struggle to preserve

their Islamic-based identity from being assimilated into the mainstream culture of the Philippines.

5. As a misunderstood *Bangsa* or nation of people, who because of their continuing struggle for freedom and social justice continue to suffer from the deteriorating peace and order condition and rising criminality in their midst and from other adverse effects of the problems they face.

Today, the Muslims in the Philippines face the challenges of preserving their identity and struggling to develop their way of life within a pluralistic society like the Philippines. The persistent problem in Mindanao remains the primary obstacle barring the institution of genuine intercultural understanding, peace, and social justice in the southern Philippines. The realization of these longings requires a common consensus based on sufficient and truthful information, not on exteriorized historical data or exclusion of the facts of history, culture, and religion of the Muslims.

Is there hope for peace and intercultural understanding? Yes. As observed and experienced by this writer, many young non-Muslim Filipinos, particularly those from the University of the Philippines, who are informed and enlightened about the historical and cultural root causes of the problem in Mindanao are readily disposed to rectify their misconceptions about the Philippine Muslims or overcome their prejudices in favor of granting the Muslims what are due them. For its part, the present Philippine government, albeit slowly, is accommodating demands

for Muslim development and rights which the Muslims hope will be institutionalized through Federal autonomy.

Up to the present, the Muslim citizens of the Philippines continue to live with their Islamic-based cultural identity intact and their sense of history deeply ingrained in their memory. They maintain their collective identity as a people by struggling to find their rightful place in the history of the Philippines. This they deserve to attain through the rectifications of historical wrongs inflicted on them as culturally distinct and historically sovereign people of the Philippines.

In closing, two remarks from two respectable individuals—Dr. Cesar Majul, a Muslim historian and Dr. Peter Gowing, an American scholar of Philippine Muslim affairs—are worth pondering:

At the end of his book *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon*, Dr. Gowing writes:

...the Moros (as the Philippine Muslims are sometimes called) have not come empty-handed into the Philippine nation. They contribute rich, bright colors to its tapestry of cultures; they add excitement and glory to the history of its struggle against foreign domination; and they enhance the intelligence, energy, and vigor of the nation's dynamic population. The Moros have the capacity to offer two more gifts to the Philippine nation: their love and loyalty. These particular gifts, love and loyalty, cannot be forced from the Moros. They are

gifts of the heart. Soldiers cannot seize them, robbers cannot steal them, and no amount of money can buy them. But a worthy nation, sincerely eager to treat all of its citizens with justice and respect will receive these gifts freely and in abundance.³²

For his part and as a timely call for both Muslim and Christians in the Philippines to understand one another, Dr. Majul reminds in his preface to his book *Muslims in the Philippines* that “the history of a conquered people who ultimately revolted has now merged with that of another who had remained unconquered.”³³ He exhorts “the young Muslims in the Philippines (to) know more about their past in order to direct their future better,” just as he calls on “the other peoples of the Philippines to know more about (Muslim history as) a potential source of strength for the national community.”

Indeed, it is through the realization of these calls for historical justice that the Muslims and other national cultural groups in the Philippines can truly say “we belong!”

NOTES

- 1 MCM Sta. Maria, in *Business Mirror*, July 16, 2008
- 2 Samuel K. Tan, “Understanding the Mindanao Conflict: Mindanao at the Crossroad” in http://bugsnbytes.tripod.com/bb_newsletter_0004_02.html. July 2000.
- 3 Wigberto Tañada, “Right Way to Peace?” July 3, 1996, 11.
- 4 Horacio de la Costa, S.J., 1935.

- 5 Renato Constantino, *A History of the Philippines from the Spanish Colonization to Second World War* (New York: Monthly Review, 1975).
- 6 James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985).
- 7 Thomas Kiefer, 1974.
- 8 Vic Hurley, *Swish of the Kris: The Story of the Moros* (1936; repr., Cacho Hermanos, Inc., 1985).
- 9 Linda Smircich and Marta Calas, "Organizational Culture: A Critical Assessment," in *Handbook of Organizational Communication*, ed. F.M. Jablin, L.L. Putnam, K.H. Roberts, and L.W. Porter (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987), 228-263.
- 10 The ARMM has the most number of poor people (63.0 %). Four provinces in the ARMM are in the list of 10 poorest provinces in the country where Sulu ranked first, Tawi-Tawi third, Maguindanao sixth, and Lanao del Sur seventh. Tawi-Tawi ranked worst in terms of some of the population not surviving to age 40 and of the percentage of population without access to improved water resources. Low unemployment rate and economic opportunities within the ARMM aggravate poverty problems (Philippine Human Development Report, 2002).

The provinces of the ARMM recorded Human Development Indices that fall below the national average. The five provinces of the ARMM occupy the five bottom provinces with very low Human Development Index (HDI). Low HDI includes poor health indicators in terms of life expectancy, maternal and child health, food and nutrition. In education, it means low enrolment and survival rates.

- 11 Samuel P. Huntington (1996). Also Edgar H. Schein, "Assumptions About Reality, Truth, Time And Space," *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 94-122.

- 12 Schein, 26.
- 13 Peter Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979).
- 14 Phelan (1959), 15–18.
- 15 See Majul (1974), 7–10.
- 16 Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson. *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, 55 vols. (Cleveland: A.H. Clark, 1903–1909), 3:190.
- 17 Majul (1970), 150 citing the data of Combes, 269–348, 425–433.
- 18 Sulu territory became very extensive in the 1760s as can be read from the account of European writer and traveler, Alexander Dalrymple, who was in Sulu in 1761 and 1764. He writes that “Sooloo...as an independent sovereignty had dominion so extensive (which included) Palawan, the Northwest and Northern parts of Borneo, and the intermediate islands were acquired from the King of Borneo... and were the price of the Sooloo aid in a civil war in the Kingdom of Borneo. About the year 1704, the Sultan of Borneo made a cession of the north part of Borneo from Keemanes northward with the islands of Palawan, Banguay, Balambangan, etc to Sooloos” (Majul, 1973:180–181, citing a London 1774 document, 18–19).
- 19 The Sulu Sultanate had treaty relations with Spain in 1578, 1646, 1725, 1737, 1805, 1837, 1851, and 1878; with the British in 1761, 1764, 1769, 1849, and 1878; with the French in 1843 and 1845; and with the Americans in 1842, 1899 and 1915 (Majul, 1973).
- 20 H. de la Costa S.J., (1935/1965), 97.
- 21 Federico Magdalena, “In Mindanao,” *Moro Kurier*, vol. 5, nos. 1 & 2 (January–June, 1990): 17.
- 22 Mastura (1981) and Magdalena, *ibid.*: 17.

- 23 Pelzer (1945), 125 in Magdalena, *ibid.*, 18.
- 24 Rudy Rodil, "Whose Ancestral Domain is Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan?" *Moro Kurier*, vol. 2 no. 3 (April–June 1987): 15.
- 25 Magdalena, 18.
- 26 Wernstedt and Simkins (1965) in Magdalena (1990).
- 27 Gowing, 190.
- 28 Philippine Senate Committee on National Minorities. "Reports on the Problems of Philippine Cultural Minorities. Manila, 1963, 4 (36 pp.)
- 29 Philippine Senate, 1971, 22–23.
- 30 O.D. Corpus, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, vols. 1 & 2. (Quezon City: Aklahi Foundation Inc., 1989), 507, underlined supplied.
- 31 Rodil, 28, underlines supplied.
- 32 Gowing, 251.
- 33 Majul (1973), xi.
- 34 *Ibid.*

REFERENCES

- Abbahil, Abdulsiddik. "The Bangsa Moro: Their Self-mage and Inter-group Ethnic Relations," *Dansalan Quarterly* 5, no. 4, (July 1984): 197–250.
- Arguellas, Carol, et. al. "Misunderstood war leads to misunderstood peace," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, January 29, 1996.
- Blair, Emma H. and James A. Robertson. *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, 55 vols. Cleveland: A.H. Clark, 1903–1909.

- Bulatao, Rodolfo. "Ethnic Attitude in Five Philippine Cities," *PSSC Social Science Information* vol. 1. no. 3 (January 1974): 8–11, 13.
- Congress of the Philippines. Republic Act 10086, "An Act Strengthening People's Nationalism Through Philippine History by Changing the Nomenclature of the National Historical Institute into the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, Strengthening its Powers and Functions, and for other Purposes." May 12, 2010.
- Constantino, Renato. *A History of the Philippines from the Spanish Colonization to Second World War*. New York: Monthly Review, 1975.
- Corpuz, O. D. *The Roots of the Filipino Nation (vol. I & II)*. Quezon City: Aklahi Foundation Inc., 1989.
- Diokno, Maria Serena. "Philippine Nationalist Historiography and the Challenge of New Paradigm." Paper presented at the Colloquium on Indigenous Southeast Asian Historiography, Tokyo, Japan, September 1994.
- Doronila, Amando. "Calls for Plebiscite Pointless" in "Analysis," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 10, 1996. 9.
- Fianza, Myrthena I. "Colonization and the Moro Land Question in Mindanao, Philippines and Some Continuing Issues." Paper presented at the 13th International Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan. September 5–9, 1994.
- Foucault, Michael. "Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language." Translated by Rupert Sawyer in *Social Science Information* (April 1971), 7–30.
- Fox, Robert. "Generalized Lowland Philippine Social Organization." Reprint, *From the Philippines vol. 1*.
- Gowing, Peter. *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979.

- Guillermo, Alice. "A Tausug Artist Viewed the Moro Problem," *The Daily Globe*, February 5, 1989, 11.
- Hall, Edward. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Anchor Books, 1969.
- Hausherr, Klaus, "Agricultural Colonization in the Kapatagan Basin, Lanao, Del Norte, Philippines," *Yearbook of the South Asia Institute* (Heidelberg University, 1968/69), 100–116.
- Hurley, Vic. *Swish of the Kris: The Story of the Moros*. 1936. Reprint, Quezon City: Cacho Hermanos, Inc., 1985.
- Kaye, Harvey. "Why Do Ruling Classes Fear History," *Index on Censorship* (March 1995).
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1993.
- Lacar, Luis and Cherter Hunt. "Attitudes of Filipino Christian College Students Toward Filipino Muslims and their Implications for National Integration," *Solidarity* 7, no. 7 (July 1972): 3–9.
- Magdalena, Federico. "In Mindanao." *Moro Kurier* 7 and 2 (January-June, 1990).
- Majul, Cesar Adib. *Muslims in the Philippines*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1972.
- Marcos, Ferdinand. *Tadhana: The History of the Filipino People* 2, part 1, Manila: National Media Production Center, 1976.
- Noble, Lela G. "Muslim-Christian Conflict: Its Religious Background," *Solidarity* 11, no. 2 (March–April 1977): 15–20.
- Pascual, Ricardo R. *The Philosophy of Rizal*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1962.
- Pertierra, Raul. "Anthropology and the Crisis of Representation," *Diliman Review* 43, no. 2 (1995).

- Philippine Senate Committee on National Minorities. "Reports on the Problems of Philippine Cultural Minorities. Manila, 1963. 36 pp.
- "Report on the Deteriorating Peace and Order Conditions in Cotabato." Submitted to the Senate (April). Mimeographed.
- Rasul, Jainal. *The Philippine Muslims: Struggle for Identity*. Manila: Nueva Era Press, 1970.
- Rodil, Rudy. "Whose Ancestral Domain is Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan?" *Moro Kurier*, 2, no. 3 (April-June 1987): 23-28.
- Sack, Robert David. *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. England, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand: The Penguin Group, 1977.
- Salazar, Zeus A. "Ang Pantayong Pananaw Bilang Diskursong Pangkabihasnan," *Philippine Currents*, 4, no. 9 (September 1989): 17-20.
- Saleeby, Najeeb. *The History of Sulu*. 1908. Reprint, Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1963.
- Sakili, Abraham P. *Space And Identity: Expressions in the Culture, Arts and Society of the Muslims in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Asian Center, University of the Philippines, 2003.
- Schein, Edgar. "Assumptions About Reality, Truth, Time And Space." *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.
- Silva, Rad A. "Two Hills of the Same Land." Mindanao-Sulu Critical Studies & Research Group, September 1979.
- Smircich, Linda and Marta B. Calas. "Organizational Culture: A Critical Assessment." In *Handbook of Organizational Communication*, edited by F.M. Jablin, L.L. Putnam, K.H.

Roberts, and L.W. Porter, 228-263. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987.

Tañada, Wigberto. "Right Way to Peace?" *Today*, July 3, 1996

Warren, James Francis. *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*. Quezon City. New Day Publishers, 1985.

Wirth, Louis. "Types of Nationalism," *American Journal in Sociology* 41, no. 6 (May 1936): 732-737.