RESEARCH BRIEF

Research Agenda on History and Culture in Relation to Peace and Development in Mindanao Focus on the Homeland

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Such concepts as "research agenda," "history," and "culture," including the idea of "Mindanao", occur in academic discussions, conferences, the echelons of power, the media, and everyday language. They have become too familiar that they have lost their explanatory power. They have to be reconsidered and problematized to reinvigorate and make them useful devices again in understanding such complex ethno-historical issues as peace and development in Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan (Minsupala).

The paper has two-fold aims. First, it calls into question the assumptions that underlie such taken-for-granted concepts as research agenda, history, and culture, and, in relation to the research agenda at hand, the idea of Mindanao. Second, it shows how such concepts may be deployed in understanding the tandem issues of peace and development in Mindanao focus on the "homeland." It pursues five propositions. It regards (1) research as a critique of stock knowledge and/or the production of "new" knowledge, (2) research as a "political" project, (3) research as niche-making, (4) history and culture as interdisciplinary "objects," and (5) peace and development, the homeland in particular, as offshoots of history-making.

Research as Practice

Research, meaning "to search" (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 1995, p. 995) is a 16th century concept that came into use with the rise of science as the new mode of knowledge production and as the arbiter of what constitutes knowledge. However, modern research, as the organized way of inquiry, is a 19th century construct that marks the movement of inquiry from the natural fields, for example, physics, biology, including biomedicine, to history, society, and culture as also scientific. It means "to investigate thoroughly" (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 1995, p. 995) , a "systematic pursuit of the not yet known" (Appadurai, 2006, p. 627) that is distinct from "knowing" that results from speculative thinking and "virtuosity". In the relational fields (Ingold, 1991), that is, in the social sciences, the "not known yet" (Appadurai, 2006, p. 627) is true to the researchers—outsiders to events and/or culture as it is to the actors or the group that the researcher is curious to study.

I take particular interest in the second idea in light of the trend towards privileging the emic approach over the etic. In research, particularly in ethnography, emic refers to the idea that what the insider to a

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culture, hence the native, says is authentic, thus close to what is said, if not what exactly is said. I consider this true only in so far as it provides us a perspectival understanding of a phenomenon, that is, as understood by the actor, the native, so to speak. It is important to stress that what the native says is only a version of the phenomenon because, to believe otherwise, is tantamount to silencing other amplifications of the phenomenon that maybe as informed, if not more, than the way the native understands it. Etic refers to the knowledge of the phenomenon by the researcher, who is an outsider to but an observer of the phenomenon. It is in this connection that Malinowski (1922), in his study of the *kula* among the Trobriand Islanders, maybe cited. He noted that an islander, no matter how smart he maybe, knew only so much of the *kula*. In contrast, a researcher, by combining fact and theory, has a better grasp of the *kula*, that kind of reciprocity in the Melanesian world that creates the social order in which the islanders live.

Today every academic department, branch of government, the corporate world, the media, the military, so on and so forth, establish not only their reason for being on the basis of research but also for respect and, to many, to attract funding. It is synonymous with scholarship in the academe where it has great potentials in transforming existing knowledge and the production of new ones. However, whether knowledge is "knew" or not, is an effect of erudite judgment; that is, when experts in the field recognize and accepted it based on globally acceptable criteria of research (Atheide & Johnson, 1994). The criteria need to be stated, briefly:

- First, it convinces experts that it adds something new or interesting to what is already known through a good grasp of the topic by tracing its genealogy (Foucault, 2006) from a system of knowledge from which it arises.
- Second, it is based on a systematic methodology and procedures in terms of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation.
- Third, in qualitative historical and anthropological research, the citations are verifiable for the re-examination of sources and replicability of the findings (Vidich & Lyman, 1994).
- Fourth, it is subject to peer-evaluation as a collegial enterprise, besides ushering entry to an intellectual community united by a common research ethic.

But how do we make the production of new knowledge "routine"? One undertakes research for heuristic reasons or for funding agencies that may be local or international. Notwithstanding the agency of individuals for research, the establishment of institutes guarantees research as expected activity in an organization. It is important to consider the research objectives (Morse, 1994) because those that try to answer too many questions or too few, usually local, most likely will be refused funding. New knowledge must seek longer "shelf life" (Appadurai, 2006, p. 629) through topicality and relevance, which may be regional in platform or context, such as Warren's *Sulu Zone* (1985) and *Iranun/Balangingi* (2002), comparative, such as Che Man's (1990) study of Muslim separatism in the Philippines and Thailand, or trans-national, such as Sopher's (1977) account of Samal diaspora in the island world of Southeast Asia.

The Politics of *Programme* Agenda

Research agenda, which is derived from the French *programme* agenda, refers to "an underlying ideology or program" (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1995, p. 931). A program is a "brief,… printed order to be followed,… and the persons participating" (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1995, p. 931), for example, the *Program* of the conference. What concerns me here is program as "a plan or system under which action maybe taken toward a goal" (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1995, p. 931). *Programme* agenda is problematic because program is concrete, while agenda, as ideology—false consciousness (Geertz, 1995: Asad, 2006)—is not. My interest in ideology is neither its discreteness nor falsity but its programmatic nature, implicitly or explicitly, something motivated by political interests.

Unmasking the political interest of texts is an exercise in criticism (Denzin, 1994: Asad, 2006).

Texts, both colonial and post-colonial, are burdened by political intent (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Tan, 1967, 1977). The difference lies in misrecognition. Colonial texts do not mask intent, while post-colonial ones do. Majul's writings are examples of masking for misrecognition so as not to sound propagandist. *Muslims in the Philippines: Past, Present and Future Prospects* (1971) and *The Historical Background of the Muslims in the Philippines and the Present Mindanao Crisis* (1972) are endorsements of Muslim separatism. Interestingly, *Muslims in the Philippines* (1973, 1999) is the scholarly version of the two early works (1971, 1972), rolled into one, for the same political end. I say scholarly in that Majul went to the Netherlands for archival research to lend erudition to the arguments that he had argued so persuasively in the first two writings. Masking for misrecognition is no longer necessary today because times have changed, and we have become more tolerant, if not acceptable, of each other's different takes on, for example, peace and development, in Mindanao.

A research on peace and development in southern Philippines should welcome the idea that texts are fabrications of the author. For instance, texts on the quest for peace through development cannot be final because they are only versions of a phenomenon. This opens up the mind to the partiality of "truth" claims (Clifford, 1986) to challenge the "totalizing" outcomes of "expert" views (Foucault, 2006), especially over disputed issues.

Historical approaches are well represented in writings on peace and development. By historical approach, I mean the intent to establish the basis of Muslim separatism on Muslim nationhood and history that do not only precede those of the dominant Christian groups but also parallel them (Majul, 1971, 1972, 1999). Although early Muslim history begins with the works of Saleeby on Maguindanao (1976) and Sulu (1908), Muslims writing on Muslim separatism in southern Philippines mention only Majul. This is probably because Majul's works are post-colonial, while those by Saleeby are colonial because they were written during American times. Saleeby was an American, and his works the American government in Manila commissioned him to do. The roots of separatism in Muslim history are represented by many post-colonial writings such as those by Thomas (1971), Tan (1977), George (1980), Abinales (1998), and McKenna (1998).

Peace and development itself and as an end point in struggle are less represented in anthropological texts. There is then a need for more ethnographic studies this time around. Ethnography can be traditional or new. Traditional ethnography is taxonomic in nature, an inventory of traits considered unique to a particular group like a thing in nature. Many of these ethnographies deal with non-Muslim indigenous groups found in many places claimed by the Muslims as part of Muslim territory. Consider, for example, the works of Christie (1909), Frake (1955), and Laviña (1979) on the Subanen, Copper-Cole (1913) on the natives of Davao, and Garvan (1931) on the non-Christian peoples of Mindanao. A few tackle change and continuity, such as the works of Lynch (1955) among the Bukidnons (Cooper-Cole, 1956), and Wulff (1980) among the Yakans, the indigenous Muslims of Basilan.

I endorse a new ethnography that is multi-sited or multi-locale as suggested by Marcus (1986). It is of two types. The first follows the movement of peoples and the flows of finance, commodities, technologies, and ideas in a globalizing world, to account for trans-national processes, their manifestations on communities, and their outcomes on notions of peace and development. The second tracks the movement of cultures from a place of origin to a destination to understand the portability of culture as knowledge, its mutability and manipulability, and the porosity of host cultures. To this maybe added such notion as "ethnographies of the particular", as propounded by Abu-Lughod (2006), that tries to unsettle the assumptions of traditional ethnography for the stability, homogeneity, and coherence of culture. Culture is not only in flux, it is also diverse, multi-vocal, and marked by raptures and tension between conflicting interests and impulses due to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, positionality, and so forth.

A "New" Cartography

Research in social and human sciences is partly about place-making, an exercise in a kind

of cartography. Consider for example the usage of Mindanao in peace and development studies and forums. It is a gloss for four referents, without benefit of interrogation, which can diminish the relevance of research. The referents need to be clarified.

- First, Mindanao is synonymous with *Magindanao* (Saleeby, 1903, 1905, 1976). *Magindanao*, in turn, can be used in three ways: the floodplains of the Lower Pulangi or the Rio Grande de Mindanao (Ileto, 1980); the name of one of six settlements in the Rio Grande that converted to Islam; and the seat of the sultanate of same name in the underbelly of Mindanao (Saleeby, 1903, 1905, 1976; Majul, 1973, 1999; Laarhoven, 1989).
- Second, it refers to the island of Mindanao. Saleeby (1903, 1905, 1913, 1976) suggested the name for distinction.
- Third, it refers to the island of Mindanao and adjacent archipelagoes, which includes Sulu, Siasi, and Tawi-Tawi, as used by Combes (1903) first in 1667.
- Fourth, it refers to Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan, thus Minsupala, as a military department during the first decade of American rule (Forbes, 1928; Gowing, 1983).

I suggest Minsupala toward a new cartography for peace for three reasons. Geographically, Minsupala designates an ethno-historical region where the quest peace and development continues. Historically, it was integrated into the colonial state at the same time under American rule (Gowing, 1983). And, culturally, in contrast with the rest of the country, it is home to Indigenous Peoples and the Muslims. This entails claiming an ethno-historical place for an appropriate area and context of specialization.

Interdisciplinary "Objects"

History can be defined in at least three ways: as a discipline or specialization in the social and human sciences; as past events or simply the past, for example, Islamization, Spanish colonialism, the presidency of Arroyo; and as a narrative, text, or literature. Let me cite some examples of history as a literary genre, such *Mandate in Moroland* by Gowing (1983) and *Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle* by Tan (1977). I suggest a fourth: history as practice, without regard to the dichotomy between professional and non-professional historians as it happens in history as social science. Consider for example the works of the following non-historians by profession: Combes, Saleey, and Majul. Combes, a Jesuit assigned in Mindanao during the second quarter of the 17th century, wrote the first history of Mindanao and adjacent island in *Historia de Mindanao, Jolo y sus adjacentes* (1667). Muslim historiography since the Spanish period hence begins with Combes. Saleeby, a medical doctor, was a Lebanese-American who served the forces that occupied the Philippines. After his tour of duty in the military, he became enumerator of the 1903 Census for Maguindanao, translator and interpreter of the 1848 and 1951 treaties between the sultan of Sulu and the Spaniards, Superintendent of School in Moroland, and author of *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (1905, 1976) and *History of Sulu* (1908). Majul, an academician and political scientist with a specialization in the political thought of Mabini, was a convert to Islam and author of *Muslims in the Philippines* (1973, 1999). It is a peculiarity of Muslim historiography that non-historians by profession and non-Muslims, except Majul, wrote its cannons.

Originally a master concept germane to anthropology, culture has become an important analytical tool in the social and human sciences, including medicine (Foucault, 2006). Anthropologists use culture in so many ways, namely, as civilization, system of values and beliefs, representation of what society considers important, patterns of behavior, adaptation, symbolic system, mode of thought, ideology, and so forth (Perry, 2003; Kuper, 1983). Notwithstanding these ideas of culture, two more views maybe offered: culture "consists of what one needs to know in order to behave as a functioning member of one's society" (Ingold, 2000, p. 138); and culture is "situated practice" (Abu-Lughod, 2006), an experience, action that happens in time and space (Ingold, 1991).

History and culture are "objects" of memory, transmitted through language across generations. Without memory, remembering and interpreting history and culture would be impossible. Memory is "something like an inner cabinet of the mind… an encyclopedic resource" from which individuals retrieve "guidance" for the present (Ingold, 2000, p. 138). I argue that remembering and interpretation are creative and regenerative processes. History and culture, including memory, belong to no one, with potentialities for interdisciplinary studies. I need to quote Barthes for this:

> Interdisciplinary work, so much discussed these days, is not about confronting already constituted disciplines (none of which, in fact, is willing to let itself go). To do something interdisciplinary it's not enough to choose a subject (a theme) and gather around it two or three scientists. Interdisciplinarity consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one. (as cited in Clifford, 1986)

History and culture are no longer confined to the disciplines where they were originally used because they have become interdisciplinary objects. It is suggested that scholars should engage these objects under the lens of ethno-history in order to account for change and the meanings (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994) that actors assign to their experiences.

Peace and Development Prospectus

Peace

Peace and development issues are well represented in literatures (Saleeby, 1913; Thomas, 1971; George, 1980; Abinales, 1998; McKenna, 1998). They are different concepts, with different epistemological origins and histories. Peace is an eternal enigma, a conundrum, a riddle for humanity; while development is a post-Westernization and post-modernization project. I do not intend to add to what already exists and to more than what is necessary here.

Peace is regarded in either of two ways. First, when defined in terms of the absence of physical violence, it elides on the functionings of power. Power, as force, is not at issue here because it is power as control, through persuasion, cajolery, co-option, and acquiescence (Foucault, 2006), that I consider relevant in the discussion. Notions of peace, thus, have to be decoupled from the pernicious dichotomy between violent and non-violent means to be meaningful. Second, peace, in a structuralist sense, refers to a regime of social equity alongside justice, freedom, and material wellbeing. It partakes of the nature of development, which can also be defined in same terms, or, in a more straightforward way, development as freedom from all want and injustice (Sen, 1999). Since considering peace with development is prone to conflation, my engagement with structural peace ends here.

My concern is the subtlety of power as control that erudite knowledge exerts on consciousness and experience, the kind that obtains only from knowledge-power relations (Foucault, 2006). The entry of erudite knowledge into the juridico-legal system makes this possible and, in the process, lends the system a voice of authority. Expert knowledge and its effects are epistemologically violent in that they silence other voices, other ways of knowing, and experience. New knowledge must have the efficacy of freeing the mind, to consider peace and development as a process, emergent, and incomplete. It needs to be sensitive to the influence of gender, religion, ethnicity, and power on knowledge production and replication in everyday life (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Geertz, 1995).

Development

Development is an academic construct (Banton, 1994) that has penetrated statist vocabulary, including the jargon of the United Nations, global funding institutions (Sen, 1999), and advocates. It is a poverty alleviation issue (Esteban, 2010b) and, as rationalized, not unique to Minsupala, because it is also about the poor and therefore for every poor in the country, regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender, age, and so forth. This is a risky proposition because it effaces the specificities in Minsupala: the links between

peace and development and separatism, which does not exist in the rest of the country. No matter its meanings, peace remains associated with an end to conflict between separatists and the government (Esteban, 2004a). This view, right or wrong, arises from twinning peace with development. It has been familiarized, routinized, and naturalized that it would be difficult for experts, and for many of us too, to look the other way and see things in different light.

It is against this backdrop that Human Security (HS) is proposed. Human security is grounded on Human Rights (Human Security Now, 2003). The objective of Human Security "is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment" (Alkire, 2003, p. 2). This, however, maybe stated differently, as follows:

1. The objective of human security is to protect the vital core of all human lives.
2. The objective of human security is to protect the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment.
3. The objective of human security is to guarantee a set of vital rights and freedoms to all people, without unduly compromising their ability to pursue other goals.
4. The objective of human security is to create political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental conditions in which people live knowing that their vital rights and freedoms are secure.
5. The objective of human security is to keep critical pervasive threats from invading the vital core of human lives (Alkire, 2003, p. 2).

Human Security makes a clear statement on insecurities that are obtained from conflict, and does not conflate insecurities due to conflict with those from poverty (Human Security Now, 2003). It is "person centered", not states, and emphasizes the protection of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fears" (Ogata & Sen, 2003, p. iv), that is to say, freedom from hunger or right to food and freedom from violence or right to life as among the vital core of human life. It is about people living in conflicted areas, people recovering from conflict, people on the move, health, opportunities for a better life, and so forth, at all times (Human Security Now, 2003). It improves on the way development is understood that, in the case of Minsupala, is about security not only in times of conflict but at all times. While security at all times is global and a national issue at the same time, there is specificity to Human Security in Minsupala: the localization of insecurity that obtain from conflict and the violence that it breeds.

The homeland. A list of peace and development issues can be a long one. For a difference, I would like to focus on the homeland, land, or ground (Ingold, 2000), because from it many issues flow in dendritic fashion. The parties in conflict assign the homeland a central position in their discourses and counter-discourses, akin to a battlefield of ideas, each trying to smother the other. The state argues for the indivisibility of the homeland, as national territory, while the separatists refer to the "land of our forefathers" since time immemorial. I contend that claims to territory have to be validated in history because the homeland is not a primordial attribute of human groups but an effect of struggle (Esteban, 2010b). My interest, though, is in separatist discourse, its assumptions, and implications to notions of the homeland.

The homeland is an extremely difficult subject that can be understood, at least sufficiently, in relation to a group in conflict, the Muslims. But the Muslims are a diverse population. Various ways of identifying and grouping the Muslims in the Philippines exist. I prefer, however, data from the Human Relations Area Files (1956) because, in so far as could be ascertained, typologies of the Muslims in the country are based on the HRAF. Thirteen ethno-linguistic groups compose the Muslims, namely, Badjao, Illanun, Jama Mapun, Kalagan, Kalibugan, Maguindanao, Maranao, Molbog, Palawan, Samal, Sangil, Tausug, and Yakan. Except for a common religion, Islam, they do not speak a common language and therefore do not understand each other, except those who live close to one another and therefore know the language of their neighbors. Besides religion, they also share a common history that centers on Islamization, which differs from one group to another (Saleeby, 1905, 1908), and struggle (Majul, 1999; Tan, 1977; Che Man, 1990). Two groups present some problems. First, the Badjao

are nominal Muslims, they speak a Samal language, and therefore they are Samal. Second, the Palawan are a diverse group. Those on the coasts south of the island of Palawan are Muslims but those on the north and in interior settlements are not.

Moreover, the homeland that the Muslims claim does not constitute a compact territory. Krejčí, J., & Velímský, V. (1992) classified the land-people nexus into three basic types, as follows:

> The main body of the ethnic group lives in *compact* settlements in the territory;
> The group lives mixed with another in the territory;
> The group has no country of its own and is scattered over a wider area (diaspora).

The first is irrelevant in the case of the Muslims in the Philippines. The reality, instead, is that they live with other groups in the territory that they claim. However, five groups live in places where they are the majority: the Maranaos in Lanao del Norte and Lanao de Sur; the Maguindanaos in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, and North Cotabato; the Tausugs in Jolo; the Illanuns in Lanao del Sur; and the Yakans of Basilan. Although autochthony is problematic, these groups, except the Samals and Badjaos, maybe considered autochthonous to the places associated with them but only in relation to groups with more recent histories of settlement in these areas (Esteban, 2004a). The Samals and Badjaos are new arrivals; that is, the Spaniards observed their movement from the lands south of Mindanao to southern Philippines during the first half of the 16th century (Combes, 1903). This is to say, they are not autochthonous to the Philippines, who, until recent times, were true marine wanderers and therefore had little need for land, as territory (Esteban, 2004a), except land to bury their dead.

Territory is not a given in ethnicity. I would like to quote Geertz here because of the import that his primordialist ideas bear on territory. He says,

> By primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the 'givens' – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed 'givens' – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. (1996, pp. 43-44]).

Territory, thus, as an object of attachment and conflict, is altogether a different proposition born out of the assumption that "a nation must be territorial" (Armstrong, 1996, p. 209). It arises from an ancient myth about the relationships that the Muslims have with the homeland, whose antiquity goes back to the time of the sharifs who introduced Islam in Mindanao. I would like to tell the myth about the white earth in Maguindanao in reverse order. Forrest (1969), writing in 1774, noted that the *raja muda*, heir apparent, to the sultanate of Maguindanao was made to stand on white clay on his installation as sultan for potency and prosperity. Mangiguin, the last sultan of Maguindanao lacked the power and means of his predecessors because, according to stories, he did not perform the ritual (Saleeby, 1976). The myth of white occurs only in Mss. No. IV: The Genealogy and History of the people of Mindanao, which states that:

> The land of paradise was brought by the angels from the west (Arabia) to Mindanao. Later the angels moved paradise to Madinat, but the earth did not balance and tipped on the side of Mindanao. They then measured the earth to find its center, but it had none. Then the angels took paradise and carried it to Mecca, but a part of it remained in Mindanao. (Saleeby, 1976, p. 24).

The myth, thus, is more than the potency and wealth that it symbolizes. In fact, the meanings imputed on the myth do not occur in the *salsila* (genealogy) at all: it is, instead, an innovation on the myth. The myth is a narrative about Maguindanao as sacred ground, that is, Muslim and the seat of Islam and Muslim rule in the Rio Grande. It is also about Maguindanao, as annexed territory, that Sharif Kabungsuwan, the last

pioneer of Islam in Maguindanao, acquired from Tabunaway and Mamalu, the brothers who ruled Maguindanao when Kabungsuwan arrived (Saleeby, 1976), sometime in 1515 (Majul, as cited in Saleeby, 1976). There is evidence that Kabungsuwan ruled the conquered peoples and the first Muslims from Maguindanao, and the Muslim dynasty that he founded also reigned in Maguindanao beginning with his son Macaalang (Saleeby, 1976). Hence, the territory that the Muslims claim in Mindanao is an effect of conquest and its expansion through war and intermarriages (Saleeby, 1976), including colonization in subsequent times, east and west of Maguindanao (Esteban, 2004a). The same myth is known to exist in Sulu (Saleeby, 1908), perhaps also for the same symbolic importance—to legitimate conquest and Muslim rule over a territory deemed "Muslim". To say the least, there was no Muslim territory before Islamization. What existed, instead, was land occupied by the natives today called the "Indigenous Peoples" of Mindanao, whose claim to indigeny is their being neither Muslims nor Christian.

The Muslim elite trace their ancestry to the sharifs, while the rest of them trace their origins to the first Muslims who converted to Islam. They were, as the Muslims would say it, "our forefathers", hence, the idiom or frame, is the familiar way of expressing something, such as "the land of our forefathers". The forefathers, those "who were there first," were the inhabitants of the land who made first contact with outsiders. This needs some elucidation. Those who were there first were either "*of* the land" or "*on* the land" (Ingold, 2000). If *of* the land, they were nomads and did not conceive of the homeland because it was irrelevant to migratory existence. If *on* the land, they were settlers, and land was an object of occupation, not memory, without which the homeland would be illusory.

This takes us to another idiom, the homeland, as an effect of struggle, which was anti-colonial and continues to the present (Tan, 1977). This is troublesome because it implies that there was no homeland before the struggle. The struggle was protracted and marked by victories and defeats, gains and losses. What were the effects of the victories and defeats and gains and struggles on the homeland? The question needs to be entertained because it bears on an objective issue mustered to foster rights to self-determination. Without the homeland, the struggle vitiates its justificatory power to mobilize the less ideologized.

The homeland as an effect of struggle is never constant, meaning, the territory where Muslim rule prevailed was contested, fluid, never fixed, besides the fact that the sultanate of Sulu had claims to land separate from those of the Maguindanao sultanate. This raises the question, "Whose claims" or "Whose lands"? The optimum claim for territory occurred in the first half of the 17th century when Kudarat was sultan of Maguindanao and had influence east and west of Maguindanao, including some parts of Zamboanga Peninsula in the north. It was also at about this time when the Sulu sultanate was at the apex of its power (Combes, 1903). When the Americans arrived in Mindanao in 1899, they observed that Muslim influence was palpable only on the coasts, while the interior of Mindanao was free from such influence (Gowing, 1983). The agreements that the Philippine government signed with groups representing the Muslims, the *Tripoli Agreement* and the *Jakarta Accord*, suggest only one thing: Muslim claims to territory are not only subject to the limits of the Philippine Constitution; they are also objects of negotiation and, therefore, shifty and malleable (Esteban, 2004b).

A third idiom maybe considered – "the unconquered", that, in itself, is myth traceable to Majul. In his Preface to *Muslims in the Philippines*, Majul said, "The history of a conquered people who ultimately revolted has now merged with that of another who had remained unconquered" (1973, p. xii). In retrospect, part of the work that Saleeby did in 1903 was to interpret the treaties that the Sultan of Sulu and prominent datus signed with the Spanish government in Manila in 1848 and 1851. Saleeby (1903, 1908, 1963) considered the 1848 treaty as a treaty of sovereignty by which the sultan and datus became subjects and pensioner of the Spanish government, while the 1851 treaty was a trade agreement. Majul (1973, 1999) only made brief mention of the 1848 treaty in *Muslims in the Philippines* and moved on, discussing the actions of

the sultan, wheeling and dealing with the British like the sovereign that he used to be, without due respect to or recourse to the treaty. This act of effacement creates the mistaken notion that, indeed, the Muslims were unconquered.

Nowhere in his subsequent writings did Majul mention that the sultan of Sulu was bound to the agreement that he signed with General Bates in 1899, which had the effect of treaty (Gowing, 1983). He did not also consider the inclusion of Muslim land into the territory that the Spaniards ceded to the Americans in the Treaty of Paris in 1898, as constituting conquest (Gowing, 1983), which territory the Filipino government assumed from the Americans in 1946, as also signifying conquest. Instead, he elides on this, saying,

> In time, the political fortunes of the Muslims in the Archipelago came to be determined by the by the rivalries of European powers in the Age of Imperialism. Ultimately, all these produced the situation in which the Muslims in the Philippines now find themselves. As a result of inevitable historical forces, they have become members of an independent Philippine state with emerging aspirations and new directions. (Majul, 1973, p. xi)

Majul (1973, p. xi) also argued that Muslim history does not only precede that of the Christian majority, it is also "not the same". In short, the Muslims, though sharing same culture base with the rest of the peoples of the Philippines, has a different history, whose destiny, independence, and unfortunate historical forces thwarted. The difference begun with the formation of Muslim communities (Esteban, 2005b) and the quest for self-rule based on distinct identity—the unconquered (Majul, 1972). This is niggling because it suggests that first, before Islamization and before anti-Spanish struggle, there was no homeland and, second, the homeland is recent, not primordial (Eller & Coughlan, 1993).

Notion of history formation. I would like to expand on such notions of history by inviting into the discourse Taufik's idea of "notion of history formation" (as cited in Geertz, 1995, p. 50), which can be extended to culture as well. It means that history is first something imagined and fabricated and replicated next. But what is the beginning of that history? Saleeby (1976) offered an answer by positing that before Islamization the past was mythological. This leads us to the notion of history that feeds into conceptions of time and linearity. To repeat an important point, Muslim history started when those who were there first made contacts with the pioneers of Islam and converted to the new faith (Saleeby, 1976, 1908, 1963; Majul, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1999). All before this was time immemorial (Majul, 1999; Tan, 1967), or mythological (Saleeby, 1903, 1905, 1976), when events centered on the exploits of the cultural hero that constitute the epic cycle (Manuel, 1958; Coronel, 1986; Esteban, 2005a), the circular manner by which time was recalled, broken only by Islamization (Saleeby, 1903, 1905, 1976; Esteban, 2005a).

An archeology (Foucault, 2006) on the homeland based on a reconsideration of myths is necessary. Moving back into "deep time" requires different knowledges, analytical concepts, and methodologies (Esteban, 2005a). If the forefathers were *of* the land, many such groups may have no myths, with the exception of the Samals (Revel et al., 2005) and perhaps others, too; and, if *on* the land, the myths are about "little" wars between groups (Manuel 1958; Coronel, 1986; Revel et al., 2005). Besides, little is known about the homeland in time immemorial because myths make grand claims that may not yield to examinations for facts.

Islamization collapsed events into a moment and defined the formation of Muslim communities in specific localities at a single point in time (Saleeby, 1903, 1905, 1908, 1963, 1976; Majul, 1971, 1973, 1999; Esteban, 2004a, 2005a, 2005b). This is doubly difficult: one either grants those who were there first a homeland or not. At the point of contact, the homeland was land-people nexus specific: groups lived in separate homelands for identity (Saleeby, 1903, 1905, 1908, 1963, 1976). It may be argued that the distinctions dissolved with the adoption of a new religion, so narratives of the homeland recoil back to Islamization. It should. Scholars concerned with the homeland have to go back to the *salsilas*, the only known sources on Islamization, which constitutes

early Muslim history (Saleeby, 1903, 1905, 1908, 1963, 1976; Low, 1880), and work on what are possibly the earliest notions of history formation that implicate the homeland. It maybe added that some of the *salsilas* contain myths that Saleeby tried to interpret for their reality postulates and symbolic significance (Rapport & Overing, 2003), which Majul (1973, 1999) generally dismissed as a "thing" for folklorists.

Ethno-history. What then constitutes the homeland in the end? I propose an ethno-historical research agenda to provide answers to the inquiry. Ethno-history, with its concern for change (Barth, 1969), is a formidable combination of archival research for diachronic analysis and ethnography for synchronic description. It can account for the permanence or ephemerality of the homeland by going to as far back to mythological times, moving on to Islamization by reinterpreting the *salsilas*, and advancing to anti-colonial and contemporary struggles. The idea of "notion of history formation" can help in understanding the homeland as claim-making, a process in search of significance in history and culture, for primordiality (Grosby, 1994) or its instrumentality (Eller & Coughlan, 1993; Banton, 1994).

New texts. Scholars write: narrative-descriptive for historians based on archival research and fieldwork for oral history (Bornat, 2004); and narrative-descriptive or descriptive-interpretive for anthropologist (Clifford, 1986) based on ethnography and participant observation (Atkinson & Gubrium 1994). I propose a descriptive, narrative, and interpretive text that is first after the fact (Geertz, 1995) and interpretation next. It shows the transmogrifying force of large, long-term processes that manifest in localities, regions, and the nation. It highlights not only the historicity of the object but also its constructed quality (Geertz, 1995; Abu-Lughod, 2006; McKenna, 1998). It is an effect of the research imagination (Appadurai, 2006, p. 625), and something invented (Clifford, 1986). It should focus on the experienced and present contesting explanations and interpretations by different actors and their stakes.

Positionality. A text is written from a certain position, a vantage point, or perspective, and is perceived as voice. Every view, every voice is always from somewhere that needs to be stated because of the situatedness of knowledge (Abu-Lughod, 2006). I suggest the disclosure of the writer's position in terms of gender, social class, profession, practice, and ethnicity for transparency and accountability (Moore, 2007; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; McKenna, 1998).

Historical and cultural phenomena are too complex to be represented by a single expert, an outsider to the events being narrated and to the practice being described. The expert, usually, male and white, speaks for what I call the "imperialized other" or the "anthropological other" (Rapport & Overing, 2003; Abu-Lughod, 2006). Expert knowledge is totalizing (Foucault, 2006) because it aims for hegemony, for consensus, and the singularity of truth. Research must aim for multi-vocality by giving voice, if not face, to the silenced and effaced.

Researchers are harvesters of information. The historians are intrigued by the distant past, the traumatic, or the arcane, while anthropologists are "dealers in exotica" (Keesing, 2006, p. 265). This is true to white researchers as well as to indigenes and halfies or hybrids (Abu-Lughod, 2006). Regardless of identity, they write with multiple audiences in mind and are responsible for their works. White scholars bear lesser responsibility after the research and can speak freely, with detachment. The indigenes and halfies, however, may suffer the Rushdie effect (Abu-Lughod, 2006). There is no guarantee against this, except for a research ethic that subscribes to international standards.

Language. Ethno-historians encounter history and culture as texts. Textual analysis objectifies language and is mediated by language (Moore, 2007). Language is either verbal (written or oral), non-verbal (gestural), performance (ritual), or signing. It is an inner resource used to explain, understand, and rationalize the world or reality (Fishman, 1980). A researcher can never enter the subject's mind (Geertz, 1995) but he/she can try knowing what is in the mind. I suggest the analysis of multiple, shifting, and competing statements that individuals and groups make (Abu-Lughod, 2006; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; McKenna, 1998), and the analysis of contradictions, misunderstanding, and misrecognitions in texts (Abu-Lughod, 2006;

McKenna, 1998) to restore difference in texts, traditions, and thought processes that traditional ethnography flattens (Abu-Lughod, 2006).

Connectivities. History and anthropology need to reorient their interests from the analysis of phenomena per se to connections and interconnections (Wolff, 2006; Appadurai, 2006). The primary ones maybe enumerated, as follows: the historical and contemporary; the researcher and the community; the researcher and those who preceded him/her; Western society and communities, and the changes in the latter; national and transnational; forms, media, techniques, and communities; and shifting groupings, identities, and interactions within and across borders (Abu-Lughod, 2006).

Hospitality. Post-colonial writings on peace and development tend to be hostile to colonial ones or those considered as such because of the nationality of the author. This appears to intensify as more indigenous historians and anthropologist have acquired a reputation as such. This can slip to reverse racism (Abu-Lughod, 2006). Scholarship is independent of race: "new" knowledge is new no matter what. I suggest hospitality in scholarship, an attitude predisposed to other scholars and to theory and methodology for systemacity, especially for the place of theorizing on research issues and problems. Research is never an individual practice; it will always be between equals, partners, mentors, and students. Ideology must not override collegiality, exchange, and accountability.

Conclusion

Research is a practice of scholarship that makes possible not only the critique of stock knowledge but also the production of new ones based on a systemacity in method and procedures that meet global standards for lasting relevance. Research agenda, both colonial and post-colonial, is ideologically oriented, impelled by well-defined political interests. It is cartographic in nature toward creating a "just right" niche of expertise in terms of platform, context, or topicality. History, culture, and memory are interdisciplinary objects that invite deployment in the social and human sciences. Peace and development issues are upshots of notion of history formation, which can be extended to culture. A research agenda, regardless of the thematic considerations, for example, the primordiality and/or instrumentality of the homeland, should be disposed to ethno-history for approach, text as representation, the partiality and multiplicity of truths, semiotics, positionality, connectivities, and hospitality.

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