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CIVIL WAR, GUERRILLA WARFARE, AND TERRORISM: UNDERSTANDING NON-STATE POLITICAL VIOLENCE THROUGH THE PHILIPPINES' MORO CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

Civil wars are traditionally studied as distinct from other forms of political dissidence. If a given political conflict does not reach a battle-related death threshold – a standard criterion for classifying a conflict as a civil war – it would fall out of most civil war datasets. I argue that this distinction is arbitrary, and that separating the study of civil war from the study of political conflict both limits and distorts our understanding of all forms of political conflict. In lieu of the separate study of different forms of conflict, I propose a framework from which to consider a particular form of conflict (self-determination) holistically, placing different non-state actor political strategies – terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and interstate war-like conventional warfare – on a spectrum, hypothesizing that actors choose their tactics based on their strength relative to their opponent, the government. In this way, we can understand when, where, and why a non-state actor seeking self-determination will employ terrorism as opposed to attempting to build a de facto state from which to challenge the government. I use the case of the 47-year Moro conflict in the southern Philippines to demonstrate the merits of an approach to understanding strategy choice in self-determination movements.

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I. The non-state actor and modern political conflict

Interstate war – war between or among countries – is increasingly rare in the post-Cold War international system. It has been replaced in relative frequency and in political and societal significance by wars and armed conflicts involving non-state actors, which has driven the international political system to shift its attention from interstate war toward non-state war. That world powers are now more concerned with political violence perpetrated by non-state actors is evident in initiatives such as the U.S.-led "War on Terror," precipitated by a non-state actor (al-Qaeda) and its September 11th attacks, and in countries' response to the threat imposed by the cross-border war waged by the non-state Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

This paradigm shift in attention toward non-state conflicts, sometimes dubbed "new wars" (Lemke 2008, 774), is mismatched with much of international relations research on war, which has traditionally focused on interstate conflict. Theories about why wars begin, what influences the severity of a war, why wars end, or how to prevent the recurrence of war – phenomena worth understanding in the context of a given non-state "new war" – were developed with the interactions of countries in mind. Much of the available international relations datasets, too, are compiled with official states as the unit of analysis. As a consequence, theories about and models of non-state actors behavior – why such actors might start wars, for example – have not been thoroughly explored until recently, and when scholars seek to initiate such research, data are often scarce and unreliable.

The civil wars research program illustrates this asymmetry in what has been studied and what conflicts the world has been facing. Consider that civil wars are the most common type of what Sarkees and Wayman (2010b, 2) define as an intrastate war – a conflict within a state's

boundaries, reaching a threshold of deadliness[1], which includes at least one non-state actor. Intrastate wars, in turn, are the most common type of any war (Sarkees and Wayman 2010a, 2). Yet the Correlates of War project, from which most lists of civil wars are compiled and whose data have been used in much of the empirical analyses of civil wars, did not formally distinguish a civil war from other conflicts until 1982, with the release of Resort to Arms (Sambanis 2004, 816). About two decades earlier, the United States initiated a now-infamous military campaign in civil war-afflicted Vietnam (Sarkees and Wayman 2010b, 67-68). More than a century earlier, the United States itself suffered through a four-year intrastate conflict that resulted in an estimated 618,000 deaths in battle: the American civil war (Sarkees and Wayman 2010a, 65). Today, ISIL threatens U.S. and global security in large part due its role in the civil wars of two countries, Syria and Iraq (Mapping Militant Organizations).

That non-state violence is important (and may be increasing in relative importance) does not diminish the value of understanding interstate conflict, however. On the contrary, there exists evidence to suggest that insight gleaned from the study of wars between states can be used to understand civil wars. Cunningham and Lemke (2013) find many causes and effects of interstate and civil wars to be relatively analogous, suggesting that theories developed to explain aspects of the former might be applicable to the latter. Generalizing interstate war theory to the study of civil war is not unprecedented; Benson and Kugler (1998) find support for the explanatory power of power parity theory, developed for the study of interstate wars, when used to study civil war severity.

[1] This threshold is set at 1,000 battle-related deaths per year by Sarkees and Wayman (2010b, 2). Some of the meta-literature on civil war research debates the appropriateness of this commonly used threshold in defining a civil war (Sambanis 2004, 817-820).

A corollary to treating interstate and civil wars as analogues suggests that the distinction among types of political conflict are perhaps arbitrarily drawn, given the difficulty of deconstructing a given political movement into neat, black-and-white categorizations such as "interstate war," "civil war," and "terrorism." This is a challenge that Sambanis (2004) points to in a study of how civil war has been defined in research – "Too many cases are sufficiently ambiguous to […] question the strict categorization of an event of political violence as a civil war as opposed to an act of terrorism, a coup, genocide, organized crime, or international war," he writes. Taking Sambanis' words to heart, I believe that it might be more appropriate to consider types of political conflict on a spectrum – in the case of violent political opposition, for instance, a rebel group might choose to engage in a "type" of conflict based on its strength relative to the government it is rebelling against. On the "weak" end of the spectrum, the actor might choose terrorism. On the "stronger" and "strongest" end, it might choose guerrilla warfare (non-territorial civil war) or conventional warfare (territorial civil war)[2].

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil-Eelam, commonly known as the Tamil Tigers, seemed to have made such power parity considerations in their strategies toward seceding from Sri Lanka and creating a Tamil state. Where it was strongest, the Tamil Tigers were able to wage semi-conventional warfare with the government from its territory[3], whose border resembled a divide between "two-nation states" (Stokke 2006, 1022; Martin 2011, 355). Where it was weakest (and

[2] "Terrorists are too weak to impose their will directly by force of arms," write Kydd and Walter (2006, 50). Guerrilla warfare and conventional warfare, in contrast, represent progressively stronger manifestations of force of arms.

[3] "Travelling from government-controlled to LTTE-controlled areas resembles a border crossing between two nation-states," writes Stokke (2006, 1022).

where the government was strongest), they opted for terror tactics, where such a strategy was their best shot at inflicting costs of continued war on the government (Fernando 1998, 145). ISIL's behavior also seems to follow this parity calculation; in pursuit of the establishment of an Islamic state, it engaged in terrorism when it was weakest relative to U.S.-supported Iraq (as its previous incarnation, al-Qaeda in Iraq); guerrilla warfare as it gained in relative strength; and now, territorial civil war, at its strongest (Mapping Militant Organizations).

These linkages between arguably arbitrarily differentiated types of political conflict suggest that, rather than studying a form of government opposition like civil war in a vacuum, studying all political violence in a given conflict holistically may be more appropriate. Applying this approach to the case of the decades-long Moro conflict in the Southern Philippines, where a number of non-state actors have been vying for secession through several forms of political violence, demonstrates the value of studying armed conflict in such a fashion.

Three non-state actor groups have claimed to hold the banner for the independence bid of the Moros, a sort of pan-ethnic movement for the aggrieved[4] Muslim minority groups in the Southern Philippines. One, an umbrella organization of Muslim minority groups, engaged in a decade-long, high-casualty armed conflict that is coded as a civil war (Sarkees and Wayman 2010a, 98) despite the organization's failure[5] to secure political control of territory and the

[4] These grievances against the government of the Philippines include the minoritization of Muslims in a historically Muslim region because of government-sponsored Christian transmigration; underdevelopment of the historically Muslim region relative to the rest of the country; and Muslims' unequal access to government positions relative to non-Muslims (Rivera 2008, 39).

[5] "The [Moro National Liberation Front], in the view of many scholars, was never much of a political organization because while it enjoyed mass support, the organization lacked a leadership consolidated around common goals and visions […] The MNLF, per Che Man's observation, was a loosely knit organization that did not 'manage to bring into its structure all the Moro groups fighting the Marcos government or to control the behavior of many groups under it'" (Gutierrez 2000a, 51).

disunity in its loose control over its constituent groups (Gutierrez 2000b, 51). Another, in contrast, established de facto governance over territory[6] at least as early as 1997 and, as late as 2011, continued to exert political control in place of the government over a substantial portion of the Southern Philippines (Abuza 2011, 98). This group nearly succeeded where the other failed, in that it nearly won meaningful autonomy from the central government (Abuza 2012, 5) through a protracted armed conflict, yet it falls out of a major civil wars dataset except for one year of high-casualty conflict (Sarkees and Wayman 2010c, 96-97). The final of the three groups, variously described as a terrorist organization or a criminal outfit, purports also to fight for the creation of an independent Moro state but is denounced by the two other groups and academics as an apolitical organization "motivated by purely mercenary of criminal intentions" (McKenna 2007, 7). Though it is rumored to draw from similar roots as Islamist terrorism in the mold of al-Qaeda (Taylor 2010, 41-42) and claims to have been linked directly to al-Qaeda at one point in its existence (Santos Jr. and Dinampo 2010, 130), this group is arguably the least significant – both politically and in human cost – in the context of the Moro secessionist movement. Despite its relative insignificance, however, it has at times eclipsed the other two groups in drawing the political and military attention of both the government of the Philippines and of the United States (Tuazon 2008, 81). But because this group has wielded influence disproportionate to its relative threat to the government, I believe that that it is useful to examine the hypothetical incentives facing the Moro movement to engage in or support terror tactics.

[6] De facto governance by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in its territory is evident in Gutierrez and Guialal's (2000, 270) account of a South Korean development project that was to be conducted in MILF-controlled territory. The South Korean contractors on the project coordinated with the MILF rather than with the government on the logistics of the project. The nominal governor of that territory would force the scuttling of this project when she complained to Manila that "she could not even visit the project sites" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 270).

These groups' activities together comprise a single period of armed conflict in the Southern Philippines that has endured from 1968 to the present day. They share many key characteristics: political objectives (the creation of a Moro state), perpetrators (Muslim ethnic groups), and geographic area (the southern islands of the country). In other words, the Moro conflict extends beyond when it is coded as a civil war and even beyond when it is coding as an armed conflict, which requires a lower threshold of battle-related deaths (Uppsala Conflict Data Program; henceforth, UCDP). The conflict is the collective contribution of three groups' political strategies – non-violent protest, terrorism, non-territorial guerrilla warfare, and territorial conventional warfare – toward what can be broadly defined as "self-determination," the right of all peoples[7] to "freely determine their political status." To exclude parts of this conflict on the basis of "type," then, is to limit or distort what can be learned from their choosing to engage in a "type" of conflict. Thus, to fully understand any political opposition to a government, especially ones with multiple "types" of opposition strategies, I believe that it is necessary to first consider all of the political strategies undertaken by its actors, and then study what led them to engage in one tactic or another.

I use this approach to study the Moro conflict in the next two sections. In the first, titled "The non-state actor and modern political conflict," I look at the choices of these tactics and the context of their usage in the Moro independence movement through a narrative of the entire conflict. This narrative starts with the emergence of to-be revolutionary class from the southern Philippines, who transformed a university-centric and Manila-based protest movement into a

[7] As defined in UN General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples."

broad-based organization of political dissidents. It then moves into how this organization became an insurgent army fighting the government in a civil war; how this organization briefly settled the civil war in a regional autonomy agreement with the government; and how this organization resumed hostilities after the autonomy agreement failed to meet its expectations. I then shift focus to a splinter faction of this organization that supersedes the original as the leader of the independence movement, while offering context into why the splinter became the dominant group while the original faded into the background. With the splinter group, I examine the circumstances around its establishment of a Moro de facto state in the southern Philippines. I conclude the narrative with a look into the rise and fall of this de facto state, and the indeterminate political significance of terror activities also emerged around this de facto state's creation.

In the second section, titled "Explaining non-state actor-government relations in the Southern Philippines," I assess the progression of the conflict from non-violent protest to violent rebellion, using insights from several large-N statistical analyses of civil war onset. I then explore the distinction between territorial and non-territorial civil war, why actors choose one or the other, and how the research on this distinction applies to the case of the Moros. Finding this distinction significant, I look into the applicability of a few theories of interstate relations to an analogous "interstate" relationship – between an official state, the Republic of the Philippines, and the MILF de facto state – including a theory on what drives state sponsorship of terrorism.

II. Non-state political violence and the southern Philippines

The island of Mindanao and the series of smaller islands to its southwest collectively comprise the "southern Philippines," or the Mindanao region. Most of the country's Muslim population lives in the Mindanao region, though they account for only 20 percent of its population on the island of Mindanao and just 5 percent of the population nationally (Beary 2011, 53). Mindanao Island is the second largest in the archipelagic Philippines[8]; Luzon, home to the national capital of Manila, is the largest.

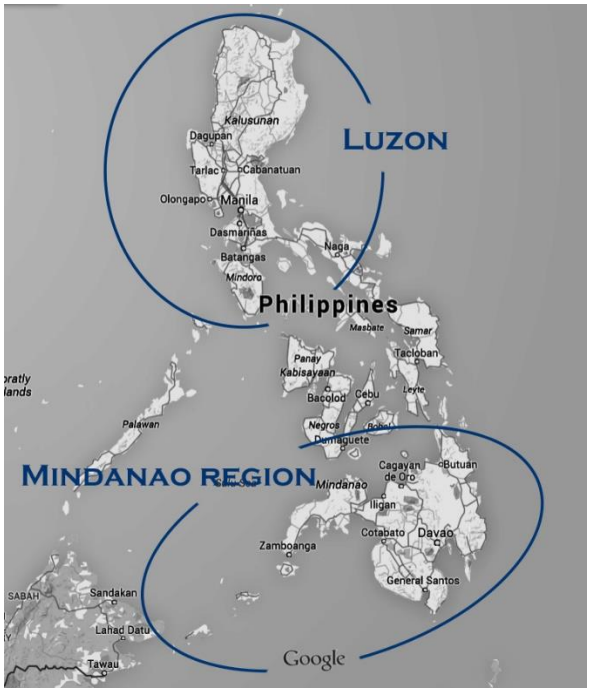

Figure 1: Luzon and the Mindanao region (Google Maps)

The current minority status of Muslims in the Philippines contrasts sharply with their historical dominance of the region. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, Muslim sultanates governed the southern Philippines and operated what was the "strategic terminus" in the world

[8] The Philippines consists of 7,100 "largely mountainous" islands spanning a land area of 296,170 square kilometers (Dolan 1993, xvi).

economy as early as the 9th century. The region was a trade hub with routes that ran "from China to India, through the Malay regions, onward to the Arab Peninsula, and then branched off to the ports of the East Mediterranean in one direction, and to Egypt and the richly endowed East African ports in the other" (Ahmad 2000a, 8). The two largest sultanates (Sulu and Maguindanao) had already expanded into what are now the Visayas, a group of islands in the Central Philippines, and were poised to begin expansion into what is now Luzon, too, until the Spanish defeated the first Muslim Sultan of Manila in 1571 and began their colonization of the Philippines (Ahmad 2000a, 8). Though the Spanish never military conquered the Muslim sultanates (Human Development Network 2005b, 65; henceforth HDN), they were able to cut the southern Philippines off from the global economy, reducing the merchants to pirates, while "constant warfare" with the colonizers stunted economic development of the region, as agricultural producers were forced to divert resources toward military production (Ahmad 2000a, 11; Majul 1988, 897).

The current secessionist conflict hearkens back to this moment as the beginning of the Moro struggle for independence – from what the secessionists perceive as de facto colonialism continued by the Philippines after rule by the United States and by Spain. "Moro," in fact, is a pejorative name given to all Muslims by the Spanish empire; at the onset of the current Moro conflict, it was transformed by the leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) into a shared identity to be proud of (McKenna 1998, 143).

But while the MNLF advanced the idea of Morohood – a united Muslim resistance to "Spanish aggression" – as the roots of its claim to independence, to claim that Muslims in the Philippines have always existed a unitary ethnic group is to retroactively manufacture an

ethnicity (McKenna 1998, 164). In reality, the Muslims descended from the Sulu and Maguindanaon sultanates of old identified as (and in some ways continue to identify as) Tausugs and Maguindanaons, first. In fact, the MNLF, as an umbrella organization for these various Muslim ethnic groups, factionalized along these entrenched ethnic divisions following the controversial decision of Nur Misauri, its leader, to sign an autonomy agreement with the government (Gonzales 2000, 116).

What the various ethnic groups of Mindanao share, however, are provinces where the economic conditions are substantially poorer than the others in the country, a far cry from their days as some of the wealthiest shipping societies of the world. At the onset of the Moro conflict and even today, the southern provinces were and continue to be the most neglected of the Philippines by various measures of economic and social well-being.

The five provinces with the shortest life expectancy were all located in the Southern Philippines in 2003:

Top-10 provinces	Years	Bottom-10 provinces	Years
Cebu	72.6	Antique	62.6
Pampanga	72.2	Kalinga	62.5
Batangas	71.8	Apayao	62.4
Bulacan	71.4	Eastern Samar	61.7
Camarines Sur	71.3	Western Samar	61.4
Nueva Ecija	71.2	Basilan	60.6
Davao del Sur	71.1	Lanao del Sur	57.9
Rizal	71.0	Sulu	52.8
La Union	70.6	Maguindanao	52.0
Cavite	70.5	Tawi-Tawi	51.2

Figure 2: Top- and bottom-10 provinces in life expectancy (years), 2003 (HDN 2005a, 19)

Poverty rates in the Southern Philippines far exceed those of the rest of the country, too, and even grew worse in the region as the country moved into the new millennium:

	Poverty Incidence		
Territory	1997	2000	% Change
Philippines	25.1	27.5	10
National Capital Region	3.5	5.6	60
ARMM	62.5	73.9	18
Basilan	30.2	63.0	109
Lanao del Sur	40.8	48.1	18
Maguindanao	24.0	36.2	51
Sulu	87.5	92.0	5
Tawi-Tawi	52.1	75.3	45

SOURCE: World Bank (2003).

Figure 3: Comparative poverty rates in the Philippines and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), 1997 and 2000 (Rabasa 2007, 119)

Well-being in the 1970s at the onset of the conflict, though, is perhaps best measured by changes of Muslim ownership of land in the Southern Philippines. "The majority of landowners in Mindanao and Sulu [a major grouping of islands in the Mindanao region] in 1912 were Moros," writes Aquino (2009, 47), "but by 1982 they represented about only 18 percent of total land ownership." What land they do control is in "remote and infertile mountain areas that lack marketing facilities and infrastructure[9]," and land ownership is concentrated in the hands of the few Muslim elite, reducing more than 80 percent of Muslims in the Philippines to landless

[9] In the 1970s, there were "only 20.4 kilometers of road for every 100,000 Muslims, compared with 397 kilometers for every 100,000 non-Muslims. Only 20 percent of the Moro had access to safe water, compared with about 50 percent among non-Muslims. Only 12 percent of Muslim Mindanao had electricity, despite its abundant hydro-electric potential" (Gonzales 2000, 108).

tenants (Ahmad 2000a, 13). This trend in land ownership was driven by transmigration of Filipino Christians into the southern Philippines with encouragement and policy support started by the colonial government of the United States[10] and continued by the government of the Philippines (GRP), which in the 1960s instituted a series of predatory land ownership policies designed to transfer traditionally Muslim lands to transnational agricultural corporations (Abreu 2008b, 59).

What resulted from these waves of transmigration has been a gradual minoritization of Muslims in the Mindanao region. Prior to colonization by the Spanish, the southern Philippines were almost entirely controlled by Muslim ethnic groups; when the colony was transferred to the United States, Muslims were still a strong majority in the region. By the 1960s and 1970s, however, Muslims only accounted for around 20 percent of the population of Mindanao. It was around this time that tensions over land rights between migrant Christians and the native Muslims began escalating into pervasive communal violence, eventually to be fanned into full-blown civil war.

Total population		**Moro population**		**Non-Moro population**	
			as % of Mindanao		as % of Mindanao
year	number	number	population	number	population
1903	327,741	250,000	76	77,741	24
1913	518,696	324,816	63	193,882	37
1918	723,655	358,968	50	364,687	50
1939	2,244,421	755,189	34	1,489,232	66
1948	2,943,324	933,101	32	2,010,223	68
1960	5,686,027	1,321,060	23	4,364,967	77
1970	7,963,932	1,669,708	21	6,294,224	79
1975	9,146,995	1,798,991	20	7,348,084	80
1980	10,905,243	2,504,332	23	8,400,911	77
1990	14,269,736	2,690,456	19	11,579,280	81

Figure 4: Estimated Moro and non-Moro population in Mindanao, 1903-1990 (Gutierrez 2000e, 318)

[10] See Figure 13: Colonial roots of discrimination against Muslims in the Philippines (Abreu 2008c, 23).

The Muslims in the Philippines found Christian encroachment on their lands especially egregious due to their differing conception of land ownership from that of the migrants and the government. To the general Muslim populace, land cannot be owned by individuals; both[11] Quranic principles and the cultural practices of the various ethnic groups dictate that land instead belongs collectively to the community (Abreu 2008b, 61). The Maranaos[12], for instance, believe in *kakola*, a "communal land that belongs to the whole *agama* (local community), *inged* (equivalent to town), or *pangampong* (principality), not to be owned but used in common" (Abreu 2008b, 61). Consequently, the average Muslim landowner in the region either did not comprehend or refused to accept foreign concepts of individual land ownership imposed on them by colonial rule (Aquino 2009, 61-62). It was "not unusual" for migrant settlers in the southern Philippines to take advantage of this divergent perception of land ownership; many applied for legal titles – "either intentionally or unintentionally" – to "already-occupied lands," and the victims of these land grabs were "mostly […] ordinary Muslims" (McKenna 2007, 3).

Land taken by non-Muslim migrants was in turn taken by multinational corporations, drawn to the southern Philippines' natural resource wealth, said to be among the "most natural resource rich" in Southeast Asia (Tuazon 2008, 82). In the decades prior to the onset of the armed conflict, U.S. multinational firms such as Del Monte, Dole, and United Brands opened plantations on historically Muslim-held land; today, one of the primary incentives facing the

[11] "Even with Islamic inroads in the Bangsamoro society, the new ideological framework did not displace the laws governing land ownership, control and use traditionally held among the Islamized ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. They persist even with the promulgation of colonial laws from the early years of the 20th century" (Abreu 2008a, 61).

[12] The Maranaos, along with the Tausugs and Maguindanaons, comprise the three dominant ethnic communities among the Muslims of the Mindanao region (Ahmad 2000, 9).

Philippines to make peace with the Moro secessionists is to draw in further investment in and development of the southern Philippines (Tuazon 2008, 82-83). Extraction of natural resources by these investors often exceeds the rate of replacement – the timber industry, for instance, cut the region's forest covering by 80 percent between 1971 and 1991 (Tuazon 2008, 83). The extent of the usage of what Muslims perceive to be the commons comes into conflict with values such as the Tausug *sukuh*, "the right to usufruct without the right of disposal as applied to the forests, virgin uncultivated areas, rivers, falls, and streams" (Abreu 2008b, 61). But because land held by multinationals were not taken directly from Muslims, generally – the lands they own instead were mostly taken from settlers who had originally displaced the Muslims – corporations were rarely the target of political or armed opposition from the Moros (Ahmad 2000a, 19). Today, however, the predominant Moro secessionist group (the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, abbreviated MILF) demands jurisdiction over regional natural resources in its negotiations with the GRP and has, in the past, exerted its de facto political authority in some parts of the region over foreign development of Mindanao (Gutierrez 2000d, 157; Rivera 2008, 51).

Beyond agricultural resource wealth[13], the southern Philippines are also rich in marine and fishing resources; oil and natural gas; deuterium (used as coolant in nuclear reactors); and mineral deposits[14] of gold, nickel, zinc, and manganese (Tuazon 2008, 82-84). Among the countries said to "covet" these resources include the United States, Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia (Tuazon 2008, 82-84). In 2007, the U.S. Agency for International

[13] Of total Philippines agricultural output, Mindanao produces "50 percent of all the corn and coconut, 20 percent of all rice, 50 percent of the fish, 40 percent of the cattle, almost 100 percent of banana and pineapple exports […]" (Ahmad 2000a, 14).

[14] Mindanao produces "89 percent of the nickel and cobalt, 90 percent of the iron ore, 62 percent of the limestone, and almost 100 percent of the aluminum ore in the Philippines" (Ahmad 2000a, 14).

Development (USAID) created a five-year, $190 million grant toward building "market-oriented and private-initiated economic opportunities in Mindanao." (Tuazon 84, 2007).

While the multinational corporations and other societal elites – wealthy Christians from the north and traditional Muslim leaders that collaborated with the government – arguably drive the engine of economic oppression of Muslims in the southern Philippines, the Moro secessionists in the 1970s were careful not to frame the conflict purely in terms of economic grievances. The idea of social class, for one, violates the same Quranic principles that prohibit private holding of land, the determinant of class status in an agrarian society like that of the Moros (Ahmad 2000a, 9). Another threat to the viability of the movement was the stigma of communism – a class-based rebellion against the government, then, would have invited labels of Marxist-Leninism and unwanted association with another insurgency in the other parts of the country led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (McKenna 1998, 167). Perhaps most significant in the Moros' unwillingness to wage a conflict against so-called economic imperialism[15], though, was the secessionist movement's reliance on both the explicit and implicit support of the traditional Muslim leadership of the southern Philippines. These leaders, known as Datus, controlled much of the physical resources and the manpower that the Moros needed to operate their insurgency in the 1970s; also, as descendants of the Muslim sultans that first fought colonization of the southern Philippines, the Datus served as an enduring symbol of the Moros' historical claim to sovereignty in the region (McKenna 1998, 165).

[15] That is to say, perpetuation of social class stratification by societal elites.

Thus, the first Moro insurgency against the GRP was largely fought on religious[16] rather than economic lines: by the ordinary Muslims and an emergent class of Muslim counter elite against the Christian settlers of the southern Philippines and their government defenders.

[16] This framing necessarily precluded any possibility of a united front between similarly aggrieved Muslims and non-Muslims (Christians and national minorities) in the economically "oppressed strata" (Ahmad 2000a, 9-10).

Guerrilla warfare without territorial control: The Moro National Liberation Front

All told, the Muslim-Christian turf wars that escalated into civil war between the MNLF-led Moros and the GRP killed 60,000, wounded 54,000, and displaced 350,000 between 1969 and 1976, by one estimate (HDN 2005b, 72). This war was not one of a unitary entity facing off against its perceived colonial oppressor. Instead, it was a shared struggle of many parties toward the same goal, an independent Moro homeland, that met at the confluence of conflicts between colonized and colonizer; parochialism and common identity; new political power and old; secular goals and religious; and domestic politics and international intervention.

The roots of a Moro movement for independence were planted at opposite corners of the world in the 1950s – in the national capitals of both the Philippines and Egypt. In Manila, a scholarship established by the government to "'integrate' Philippine Muslims into national life" brought a young man from a poor Tausug family to the University of the Philippines. There, he came in contact with a national culture that looked down on Muslims as a primitive population needing to be civilized and a campus culture of activism against such discrimination at the school (de los Santos Jr. 1978, 211; McKenna 1998, 140-141). This man, Nur Misuari, was to become the first face of the Moro struggle for independence, as leader of the MNLF. In the years before the advent of civil war, he was teaching in the department of political science of his alma mater. His calls for separatism would later draw upon his days as a professor, through rhetoric borrowed from "the language of revolutionary Marxism" and the "political influences of the university-based activism" (McKenna 1998, 141). His was an appeal to Muslims as a people, rather than a "specifically Islamic discourse" (McKenna 1998, 141).

Meanwhile, in Cairo, a Maguindanaon of average upbringing received a scholarship from the Egyptian government to study Islamic faith and practice at al-Azhar University (McKenna 1998, 144). Salamat Hashim, like Misauri, would return to his homeland to join the Moro struggle, and in fact would later succeed Misauri as leader of the Moro struggle for independence. Hashim would first come in contact with the MNLF firebrand through a "most unlikely[17] intermediary": Datu Udtug Matalam, a member of the traditional Muslim elite and a recent convert to Moro nationalism who, in 1967, was pushed out of the governorship of his province as part of national political party squabbles led by the then-president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos (McKenna 1998, 145).

Back in Mindanao, Muslim-Christian conflicts over land were being fought by private armies controlled by elites from both sides. The largest Christian group (the "Ilagas," or "rats") was said to be led and financed by "seven municipal mayors and three provincial governors" and numbered as many as 35,000 at the height of the civil war in 1975 (Ahmad 2000b, 29). In opposition were two Moro groups, the Barracudas and the Blackshirts, associated with a Muslim congressional representative and a prominent Muslim family, respectively (Gonzales 2000, 113). Both groups were reported to have engaged in atrocities – Ilagas massacred Muslim civilians, leaving their signature with "cut ears of people killed"; the Barracudas and Blackshirts would then attack Christian villages in retaliation (Gutierrez 2000c, 356).

It is unclear who initiated the land conflicts, but some argue that "Muslims neither wanted the war nor were prepared for it" and that their response was largely a "defensive

[17] Matalam was previously a government collaborator who advocated for Muslim-Christian cooperation in his province (McKenna 1998, 144).

insurgency" (Ahmad 2000b, 28; McKenna 1998, 185). According to Robert McAmis, a Christian missionary working in Mindanao at the time, in the late 1960s Christian militias started attacking Muslims in areas "where the overwhelming majority of the population was Christian," with the "sole objective" of evicting the remaining Muslims (Ahmad 2000b, 28). These attacks by Christians on Muslims were rumored to be financed by "timber merchants who sought Muslim lands for their logging operations" (Ahmad 2000b, 29). The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were also rumored to have collaborated with the Christian militias in conducting "'search and destroy' missions" (Ahmad 2000b, 28).

Amid this environment of sectarian violence, the revelation of a particular military atrocity toward Philippine Muslims was enough to spur Misauri, Hashim, Matalam, and their fellow to-be secessionists into open rebellion. In March 1968, Benigno Aquino, a newly elected senator and to-be leader of the opposition to Marcos, presented a report detailing the summary execution of at least 14 and "perhaps as many as 28" Muslim army recruits by Christian military officers, to the Philippine Senate (McKenna 1998, 140). This "Jabidah massacre[18]" enraged Muslims in the Philippines of all ethnic backgrounds. To them, this incident symbolized the worst of the Philippines' treatment of their people – "Philippine Muslims who had volunteered to serve the republic had been deceived, exploited, and treacherously murdered by Christian agents of the states," writes McKenna (1998, 143) of the Muslim perspective toward the Jabidah incident. "Efforts by Muslims to contribute to the Philippine nation as Muslims were repaid with abuse and betrayal."

[18] Why the Muslim recruits were executed "has never been made clear," McKenna (1998, 143) writes. They are commonly supposed to have been part a planned military operation, under Marcos, where they were to invade the Malaysian state of Sabah from the Mindanao region as a force that "could not be directly linked with the Philippine Army."

The deaths of the Muslim recruits sparked the birth of the Moro: an imagined people, at the time, comprised of the united body of Muslims in the Philippines. As the Spanish treated them as one people to be subjugated and denounced them as "Moro," Misauri and his fellow separatists appropriated this pejorative name as the rallying cry for a Bangsamoro, a Moro nation. They rejected their "hyphenated identities as Muslim-Filipinos" and, by reaching back to the time of Spanish colonialism, they took on the identity of a people that the Spanish never conquered and whom the rest of the colony "feared and distrusted" (McKenna 1998, 143).

Two months after Jabidah, Matalam announced from Cotabato the establishment of the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM), the first recognized call[19] for Muslim independence (UCDP). Manila and the national press viewed the MIM as a southern declaration of war in response to the Jabidah incident – headlines such as "War Brews in Cotabato" ran in the newspapers while the GRP transferred troops into Matalam's home province (McKenna 1998, 146). On the ground in Mindanao, though, Muslims did not take to the MIM's call for secession, but its sensationalist reception in the rest of the country gave Udtug considerable political clout with the politicians in the nation's capital (McKenna 1998, 146). Udtug, never a devoted Moro nationalist, is said only to have thrown in his lot with the secessionists in a "dramatic gesture[20] to seek renewed respect and recognition" after his ouster as Cotabato governor; indeed, he would

[19] The Uppsala Conflict Data Program codes the establishment of MIM as the "date of first stated goals of incompatibility" in the Philippines' Mindanao conflict (UCDP).

[20] McKenna (1998, 147) argues that Udtug was likely "making use of media attention and Muslim anger generated by Jabidah for personal ends," since the Jabidah recruits were from the island of Sulu, not Udtug's home province of Cotabato. Indeed, Udtug "played a very limited role in MIM activities" and thereafter spent the rest of his life "farming his land" until his death from old age (McKenna 1998, 147).

later leave the movement to join Marcos as his presidential adviser on Muslim affairs (McKenna 1998, 146).

Figure 5: Political map of Mindanao (Google Maps)

What the MIM did accomplish, though, was to bring together a group of "mostly young, educated Muslims" that would later found the MNLF. The MIM managed to unite both of the future leaders of the Moro secessionist movement, Misauri and Hashim. Misauri would then bring in two members of the established Muslim elite: Salipada Pendatun of Cotabato, and Rashid Lucman of the Lanao province, both Philippine congressmen in the *Liberalista* opposition to Marcos' *Nacionalista* party. Pendatun and Lucman, whose "previously […]

unassailable" seats in Congress were being targeted by *Nacionalista* political campaigns[21], represented the few Muslim elite who joined[22] the secessionist movement. Most of the datus chose instead to pledge their allegiance to the GRP and the eventual martial law state under Marcos, declining to incur "government reprisals and the forfeiture of their political positions" (McKenna 1998, 161). Those that chose loyalty to the state represented the long-standing choice since colonization of many of the Muslim elite to appease the government and thereby "protect their marginal privileges" relative to the rest of the Muslim population of the Southern Philippines (Ahmad 2000a, 18).

Misauri and his fellow nationalists would soon discover that even Lucman and his colleagues were not wholly devoted to the secessionist cause. Though the politician from Lanao arranged for 90 Muslim recruits, among them Nur Misauri, to train in the Malaysian province of Sabah under the auspices of his acquaintance Tun Mustapha[23] (Sabah's then governor), Lucman and his fellow elites were "primarily concerned with raising private armies to protect their own interests" (South-South Network for Non-State Armed Group Engagement 2010, 328; henceforth SSNNAGE). Realizing this, Misauri and his fellow trainees chose instead to break off and form a group singularly focused on the pursuit of secession. Misauri became the leader of this

[21] The Marcos regime was funneling money and arms – the means to gaining political power in the southern Philippines – into campaigns against Pendatun and Lucman in 1969. The congressmen's forays into separatist politics, in turn, are described as a "novel weapon for opposing an unusually aggressive ruling party"; they could deploy the Moro nationalists as an armed force without having to pay for its training (which came from Malaysia) while reserving the ability to deny their links to the Moro forces (McKenna 1998, 148-149).

[22] To align themselves with Marcos was to risk loss of political legitimacy amongst the Mindanaon Muslims at the very least, or armed retaliation from the to-be Moro rebels at the other extreme (McKenna 1998, 161).

[23] Mustapha was angry with the GRP for announcing a claim to his province of Sabah, and angrier more with the AFP's alleged attempt to invade Sabah using the Jabidah recruits. An ethnic Tausug with relatives in Sulu (a Tausug province), Mustapha was "incensed" with the recruitment of his fellow Tausugs from Sulu to invade Sabah (McKenna 1998, 148).

embryonic organization of Moro nationalists, his followers having selected him for his "seniority, intellectual prowess, and links with influential politicians of all three major Moro tribes" (SSNNAGE 2010, 328).

Along with a second class of Sabah recruits (the "Batch 300"), Misauri and his batch of trainees met in Mindanao's Zamboanga province in mid-1971 to discuss the formation of what was to be named the MNLF (McKenna 1998, 155). However, the MNLF, then an underground organization, did not officially engage with the GRP militarily until after Marcos' Sept. 21, 1972 declaration of martial law, which ironically cited the Muslim insurgency in the Southern Philippines as one of the principal justifications for suspending democratic processes (McKenna 1998, 156). Muslim-Christian violence at the time had been "on the wane, with no serious incidents reported in the previous six months" (McKenna 1998, 156). Neither had there been any political assertions of the right to Bangsamoro independence for "more than a year" (McKenna 1998, 156).

The Moro insurgency, then, was in ways the consequence rather than the cause of Marcos' declaration of martial law (McKenna 1998, 156). The Philippine president's fledgling authoritarian regime first met Muslim pushback after it initiated a preemptive "collection and confiscation" of firearms that was conducted "especially in Muslim areas" (Santos Jr. 2010b, 71). Then, a rogue faction of Maranao forces associated with the MNLF initiated what was to be known as the "Marawi Uprising" without "official consent" of the MNLF Central Committee; it attacked Marawi City in Lanao del Sur a month after the start of martial law (Santos. Jr. 2010b, 71). This was followed soon after by MNLF military campaigns in the strongholds of the other

two major Muslim ethnic groups: the island of Jolo, home to the Tausugs and Nur Misauri, and Cotabato, home to the Maguindanaons and Salamat Hashim (Santos Jr. 2010b, 71).

By this time, Moro forces flying the figurative MNLF banner had reached "the military capacity of an organized army," driving the Marcos regime and the AFP to create a permanent military presence in the region, the Central Mindanao Command (Santos Jr. 2010b, 71). The rebels were said to number between 10,000 and 30,000 strong, all fighting as members of the MNLF (McKenna 1998, 157; Ahmad 2000b, 32). By the peak of the civil war in 1975, the AFP had deployed three-fourths of its 250,000 total troops to the region in an effort to quell he rebellion (Ahmad 2000b, 25)

Initially, MNLF forces attempted to face the AFP head on through conventional warfare. In the early stages of the civil war, it operated military bases with "relatively large contingents of up to 1,500 combatants" and attempted to hold back the Philippine forces from those fixed positions (Ahmad 2000b, 30). The AFP, however, held the comparative advantage in this form of warfare, subjecting the MNLF bases to siege tactics and bombing campaigns, all the while compensating for its numerical disadvantage vis-à-vis the Moros with its superior weaponry (Ahmad 2000b, 30). The most devastating defeat MNLF forces suffered during its days of conventional war tactics was the battle of Jolo City, capital of the Tausug homeland, when they occupied the city in an attempt to force the AFP to abandon the air and to fight a ground battle between armies (Ahmad 2000b, 31).

The Philippine forces, far from abandoning their siege tactics, burned Jolo City to the ground. MNLF had rolled the dice on the AFP response, surmising that the GRP would not risk the political fallout of attacking "civilian inhabitants of the proudest Muslim city in the southern

Philippines" (Ahmad 2000b, 31). They lost the gamble – AFP declined to hold back its indiscriminate response to the Moro insurgents, and in one fell swoop created "60,000 refugees and 2,000 corpses" (Ahmad 2000b, 31).

The strategic disaster of Jolo forced the MNLF to reconsider its approach to fighting the government. From then on, MNLF forces transitioned from a strategy of conventional warfare from fixed positions to a guerrilla strategy of mobile base commands (Ahmad 2000b, 31). They retreated into the rougher terrain of Mindanao's marshes and jungles, an advantageous battlefield for the Moros relative to the AFP due to their superior knowledge of the land (McKenna 1998, 158). The AFP responded to MNLF's shift to guerrilla warfare by itself shifting from suppression tactics to "massive occupation": surveillance, torture, assassinations, and bombings entered the Philippine army's repertoire in an effort to eradicate the Moro resistance from the southern Philippines (Ahmad 2000b, 31).

Never during this first civil war was the MNLF able to carve a significant part of Mindanao out as its own undisputed territory. It was able to marshal together groups of fighting forces that together resembled a small country's standing army, though the MNLF is generally thought to have exerted little central control[24] [25] over these individual armed groups. And MNLF-led forces were capable of holding strategic positions for short periods of time, as they did when they occupied Jolo City. But the war was less one between territorial powers and more

[24] "The MNLF never controlled all of the rebels fighting the government and was, in fact, a loosely knit group, with the borders between those fighters who were members of, aligned with, or exterior to the MNLF never very clear," writes McKenna (1998, 157).

[25] "The MNLF, per Che Man's observation, was a loosely knit organization that did not 'manage to bring into its structure all the Moro groups fighting the Marcos government or to control the behavior of many groups under it,'" writes Gutierrez (2000b, 51).

a war of attrition on the part of the Moros, whose tactics seemed to follow the model of hurting the AFP when it could, thereby maximizing the cost to the government of occupying the southern Philippines. In the province of Cotabato, for instance, the MNLF was able to hold[26] the areas surrounding Mindanao's second-largest city, the government-held[27] Cotabato City. However, the most the Moros were capable of was to "harass" AFP positions on the city outskirts while attacking the city itself from afar with mortars (McKenna 1998, 159). The MNLF's struggle to muster an army capable of defeating the AFP was further exacerbated by the lack of central leadership; Misauri and the Central Committee had been forced to flee the country[28] and to direct the rebellion from exile in Libya, leaving coordination and day-to-day decisions to the commanders on the ground in Mindanao (Ahmad 2000b, 32-33).

The war grinded to a stalemate by 1976 – the AFP was unable to crush the Moro resistance just as the MNLF-led forces were unable to push the AFP out of the southern Philippines (McKenna 1998, 159). This stalemate was broken by Marcos in two ways. First, his administration pursued what was known as a "policy of attraction," in which he brought key rebel leaders into the government fold by offering "amnesty, livelihood projects and business opportunities, as well as political positions that allow them to surrender with 'dignity'"

[26] "Grass grew on the main highway linking the city and the airport," one source recounts (McKenna 1998, 158).

[27] "The full military occupation of Cotabato City established in late 1973 stripped virtually all nonmilitary authorities, Muslim and Christian, of any effective power. The military ejected the Christian mayor of the city, Teodoro Julian, from office and jailed him for three years for too strenuously protesting the usurpation of his mayoral powers. Local datus were quite fearful of the military and attempted to maintain low profiles" (McKenna 1998, 177).

[28] The MNLF leaders had been compromised by a betrayal from Udtug, according to Hashim, who had apparently "signed an 'affidavit' against [the MNLF's leadership] and turned it over to the Philippine Army" after the declaration of martial law (McKenna 1998, 157).

(Gutierrez 2000a, xvi). Most of the defectors were among the few traditional elite that had joined the secessionist movement. “By 1980, virtually all members of the traditional elite had abandoned the rebellion,” McKenna (1998, 163) writes, in effect leaving “‘mostly the poor remaining’ to carry on the armed revolt,” in the words of one MNLF commander (McKenna 1998, 163). Additionally, the surrenders were a victory for government’s war of words where its propaganda had failed. Nothing the government could say was able to “diminish the legitimacy of the Bangsamoro cause inside and outside of the Philippines,” writes Gutierrez (2000e, 328). But the “parade of surrendered or co-opted guerrilla chiefs enjoying the good life, rising as local despots, and maintaining power through corruption” was able to wear down the “integrity and credibility” of the secessionist movement’s leadership (Gutierrez 2000e, 328). In this way, the GRP under Marcos was able to weaken the MNLF on two fronts: by physically draining it of its leadership and by damaging its reputation as a dignified political movement.

The regime’s second strategy was to sow discord within MNLF ranks. Recognizing that its leadership did not agree on the organization’s end goal – whether it’d be independence or partial autonomy – Marcos decided to put an offer for a peaceful settlement via autonomy on the negotiation table, reasoning that it was “likely to bring dissention into the open” (Ahmad 2000b, 32). Marcos, of course, had no intention of ceding meaningful autonomy to the Moros. The peace agreement he would sign with the MNLF would condition autonomy on majority support by the population via plebiscite; the now dictator of the Philippines, having seized complete control over the country’s electoral process, reasonably expected that he could rig the results of the plebiscite and thus the extent of the autonomy given to the Moros to his liking (Gutierrez 2000a, xvii). Simultaneously, by nominally offering autonomy to the MNLF, Marcos was able to

suppress the one diplomatic weapon the secessionists had in their arsenal: international political pressure to end the Moro conflict from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which had taken interest in the plight of the Moros after the civil war was brought to its attention by Libya (Ahmad 2000b, 31).

Then-Libyan leader Muammar al Ghadaffi is said to have "developed a personal interest in the situation of Muslims in the southern Philippines" after learning of Manili massacre, the killing of 70 Muslim women, children, and old men inside a mosque by the Ilagas during the period of intense sectarian violence between Muslims and Christians from 1970 to 1972 (Santos Jr. 2010b, 70). Ghadaffi's Libya would become one of the MNLF's primary benefactors, supplying the secessionists with funding, "weapons, military equipment, and other supplies" (SSNNAGE 2010, 367). In the diplomatic arena, Ghadaffi secured for the MNLF the support of the OIC, which pressured the GRP to end the civil war with the threat of "using its influence in OPEC to support an oil embargo" (Santos Jr. 2010b, 68). The OIC would play a significant role in the MNLF's negotiations with the GRP for the rest of the conflict. Later, when Marcos would only partially implement the agreed-upon autonomy agreement with the MNLF, the OIC would help the secessionists condemn the government's betrayal and subsequently would grant the MNLF observer status in recognition of its claim as "legitimate representative of the Muslim movement" (Rivera 2008, 44).

The OIC, however, never supported MNLF's ambitions of seceding from the Philippines. It was "always keen to accommodate Marcos," writes Ahmad (2000b, 33), keeping its distance from MNLF's claim to sovereignty. Misauri would later lament the OIC's role in the withdrawal of MNLF's independence demands. "Due to the pressure of the OIC, I was persuaded to put

[secession] aside but, of course, with the concurrence of my brothers in the MNLF. Thenceforth, we opted for autonomy," he said in 1999, while serving as governor of a then-newly created autonomous region in Mindanao (Bauzon 2008, 122).

Whether or not Misauri secured the "concurrence" of his "brothers" when the MNLF settled for autonomy is impossible to know. But that concurrence did not last long after the 1976 Tripoli agreement, the OIC-facilitated treaty signed by the MNLF with the GRP that was supposed to provide for the creation of an autonomous region in the southern Philippines.

When it became evident to the Moros that meaningful autonomy would not be implemented, several to-be splinter factions of the MNLF filed votes of no confidence against Misauri's continued leadership. Some of these factions followed roughly ethnic lines; Hashim led one comprised predominantly of his fellow Maguindanaons while another[29], of mostly Maranao MNLF leaders, filed a similar petition against Misauri to the OIC (Abreu 2008a, 136). Other dissent came from the remaining traditional elite in the organization – Pendatun and Lucman, namely, who also sought to take over the MNLF. Misauri, in response, expelled both the ethnic and elite dissidents from the MNLF, having retained the backing of Libya despite the fragmentation of the Moro movement under his leadership (Gonzales 2000, 116). These splits within the movement were as Marcos anticipated. Finding itself suddenly without a common enemy to fight against, the MNLF – never more than a loose coalition of fighting forces – split into its constituent groups along its many inherent fault lines.

[29] The Maranao faction would emerge in 1982 as the "MNLF-Reformist" group under Dimas Pundato, former police chief of Marawi; the faction folded when Pundato was appointed by Aquino as head of the Office of Muslim Affairs (Abreu 2008a, 136).

The remaining Misauri-led forces resumed hostilities with the GRP shortly after, denouncing the autonomy agreement as a farce and resuming its calls for secession (Ahmad 2000b, 37). They remained militarily capable: the Moros are reported to have killed "over a thousand government troops" between September and December 1978 (Ahmad 2000b, 37). The AFP responded with counterinsurgency tactics via "resource control," the "denial of food and medicine to combatants," limits to food purchases by civilians, and military control of any purchase of medicine in the region (Ahmad 2000b, 27). What resulted again was a military stalemate, with neither side able to achieve a decisive victory over the other (Ahmad 2000b, 37). But by mid-1981, AFP suppression efforts had succeeding in deescalating the conflict in terms of death toll; Sarkees and Wayman (2010c, 98) code the civil war as having ended on April 19, 1981, and the Marcos regime too had declared the MNLF "liquidated" during that year (Ahmad 2000b, 28).

By this time, the elites that had been involved with the MNLF had rejoined the government. Lucman had been named leader of what claimed to be the true representative of the Moro struggle, the "Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization," which was later found to have "incontrovertible links" to the AFP and U.S. intelligence agencies (Ahmad 2000b, 35); Pendatun in 1980 had "publicly pledged his services to President Marcos and the martial law government" (McKenna 1998, 162); and the so-called "Magic Eight," who had been leaders in the MNLF movement, were co-opted by Marcos and who, as regional governors in Mindanao, became "efficient paramilitary fighters against the Moro movement" for the GRP (Gutierrez 2000e, 328). Order had been restored in the southern Philippines by the government through its collaborators

– as the region had been governed by the datus since the fall of the sultanates, Mindanao was again placed[30] under the control of the traditional leadership (McKenna 1998, 217).

Armed conflict on the scale of civil war having largely ceased[31] during the 1980s (McKenna 1998, 217), the secessionist movement laid dormant until the "people power" overthrow[32] of the Marcos regime on February 25, 1986 (Dolan 1993, 58). It was then revived by the "national reconciliation" initiative of the new president of the post-martial law Republic of the Philippines, Corazon Aquino[33] (Dolan 1993, 292). This met opposition with some of Aquino's advisers, among them Major General Fortunato Abat of the AFP, also formerly the GRP's ambassador to China. Recalling his opposition to Aquino's negotiating with Misauri in Jolo, Abat told Gutierrez and Guialal (2000, 281) that "Sovereigns of any state do not accord rebels such gestures," and that "Misauri was [politically dead], but that visit resurrected him." Nevertheless, Misauri's MNLF and the GRP began negotiations on the implementation of a new autonomous region in the southern Philippines, which would run into deadlock (Dolan 1993,

[30] "Despite the tremendous political upheaval of the 1970s, the structure of Muslim politics in 1980 looked remarkably similar to that in 1968: formal political power in Muslim Cotabato (now politically circumscribed as Maguindanao Province) remained in the hands of those most closely tied to the powers that controlled the central state," writes McKenna (1998, 168).

[31] "Muslim and government forces only occasionally clashed during Marcos's last years in office," writes Dolan (1993, 292).

[32] The bloodless coup that toppled the Marcos regime is described by Dolan (1993, 58) as "broad-based" and primarily "urban-based," comprising members of the "Roman Catholic hierarchy, the business elite, and a faction of the armed forces."

[33] Aquino also enjoyed the support of "rural, working-class, [and] middle class" Filipinos due in part to their "disgust" with the Marcos government but also because she was the widow of Benigno Aquino, a long-time leader of the opposition to Marcos who had been exiled by the martial law regime and assassinated by it when he attempted to return to the country (Dolan 1993, 58). Benigno Aquino had in 1968 brought the Jabidah incident to the attention of the Congress of the Philippines.

292). The GRP then unilaterally[34] created the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) without "formal negotiations with the MNLF" (Abreu 2008a, 134) to the consternation of the Moros, who engaged in low-intensity skirmishes with government forces in protest (Dolan 1993, 293).

As was the case with the Marcos-era autonomous region, the decision of which provinces were to be included in ARMM was to be left to the vote of the provinces' residents; in the initial plebiscite that followed the creation of ARMM in 1989, though, only four of the 13 provinces that were included in the 1976 autonomy agreement voted to join the new autonomous region (Rivera 2008, 45). The MNLF protested, arguing that if ARMM was to be the long-delayed implementation of the 1976 Tripoli agreement, it should include all 13 provinces that the original agreement had provided for (Rivera 2008, 45). But under "strong pressure from the OIC and Indonesia," who were helping facilitate the MNLF-GRP negotiations, Misauri gave up his boycott of the ARMM and signed the "Mindanao Final Agreement" in 1996 (Rivera 2008, 45). Shortly after, he was elected as ARMM's first governor, while a number of ex-MNLF cadres began training for integration into the national armed forces (Minorities at Risk Project). Misauri's tenure as the head of the autonomous government, however, was marred by inefficiencies and allegations of corruption. Under his leadership, economic well-being in the ARMM regressed sharply[35].

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[34] Misauri explains this apparent deviation from Aquino's "national reconciliation" as a reflection of her advisers' goals, not hers. "I credit Corazon Aquino for her enthusiasm to comply with our agreement. But then again, it was the advisers […] the people around that caused the failure," said Misauri to Kenneth Bauzon (2008, 127) in a 1999 interview. The MILF similarly blamed Aquino's advisers, whom it accused of negotiating with the politically weaker MNLF in an effort to crowd out the MILF's increasing influence and to divide and conquer the Moro movement (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 282).

[35] See Figure 3: Comparative poverty rates in the Philippines and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), 1997 and 2000 (Rabasa 2007, 119).

Whether Misauri was responsible[36] for ARMM's dismal performance is unclear, but his image and the reputation of the MNLF suffered nonetheless. Like the datus that had been co-opted by Marcos following the civil war of the 1970s, Misauri was in effect installed as the government's steward of the Mindanao region and, in ways, became both the vehicle and symbol of continued "Manila imperialism" in the southern Philippines (Gutierrez 2000e, 329). The ARMM's success was at the mercy of the central government; according to the World Bank, "the ARMM regional government has almost no independent source of income and has little flexibility in budget management. It depends hugely on the National Government for financing of significant devolved responsibilities, including human development" (Rivera 2008, 48-49). Meanwhile, the MNLF began fragmenting due to differences over the "political intrigues and financial considerations" in running the ARMM; these schisms were reportedly fueled by elements of the national government in Manila (Abreu 2008a, 135).

Out of the perception that ARMM was not given a chance to succeed, Misauri's faction of MNLF (the largest of the factions) broke off from its foray into institutional politics in November of 2001 to resume armed opposition to the GRP (HDN 2005b, 77; Abreu 2008a, 135). For his role in leading this insurrection, Misauri was charged with rebellion and arrested (UCDP); however, forces loyal to him (dubbed the "Misauri Breakaway Group," abbreviated MBG), remained active in his absence and, in February 2005, conducted another round of attacks against the GRP in Sulu (HDN 2005b, 77). As of 2010, this group continues to exist in the Tausug province of Sulu, where it is thought to have collaborated in opposing the government

[36] Misauri, on the GRP's commitment to ARMM, said in 1999 that "I am not now sure myself if, indeed, they want us to succeed, or if they want to help us succeed" as to bolster his and the MNLF's credibility (Bauzon 2008, 119).

with other breakaway elements of the Moro mainstream (Cragin et. al 2007, 33). It consists of at least 700 militants, according to an AFP estimate, or as many as 5,800 militants by another that asserts that the AFP "grossly underestimated the size of the MNLF mainstream" (SSNNAGE 2010, 333-334).

Despite its continued activities, the MNLF today no longer holds the figurative banner of the Moro secessionist movement (UCDP). After it institutionalized in the late 1990s through the 1996 Mindanao Final Agreement, a new Moro group had emerged as both a threat to spoil the new peace agreement and to displace the MNLF as leader of the Moro people. This was Salamat Hashim's Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which had been quietly building up its strength while the government's attention was fixed on the MNLF.

Civil war as waged by a de facto state: The Moro Islamic Liberation Front

When, in 1986, Aquino anointed Misauri as the "undisputed spokesperson of the Bangsamoro people," Hashim's MILF cried foul. They perceived Aquino's negotiations with the "politically dead[37]" leader of the MNLF as a "divisive" act, meant to diminish the clout that the MILF had been quietly building in Mindanao after Hashim and his followers broke from the MNLF in 1977 (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 282). The MILF had built a cohesive, centrally organized secessionist organization, something that the MNLF had never accomplished; the success of Salamat's organization relative to Misauri's would later be credited to the former's explicit identity as a religious organization, first, Islam having historically been the "cohesive glue and common identity for diverse linguistic groups in Mindanao–Sulu" in the Moro wars against both Spanish and American colonization (Podder 2012, 499).

Officially, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was born in March of 1984, its debut to the public as the "Islamist revivalist" alternative to Misauri's "secular-nationalist" Moro National Liberation Front" (Santos Jr. 2005, 4). As early as 1981, however, the MILF had already established what was to be later described as a "micro-Islamic state": Camp Abubakar, the organization's long-time[38] central operating base in Maguindanao located at the foot of Mount

[37] Granted, much of Misauri's political power drew from the reputation he built during the 1970s. He was the Moro conflict's link to the international community, via Ghadaffi; he was a signatory of the Tripoli agreement while Hashim was not; and he was already acquainted with the Aquinos (Hashim was not) through Benigno and his brother, with whom he had met abroad early in the 1980s. In addition, Misauri was considerably more experienced at "obtaining media access than were Salamat and the MILF" (McKenna 1998, 242).

[38] Today, "farms planted to corn, abaca and coconut trees" cover the former territory of Camp Abubakar, suggesting that the area was far from a remote hideout in the mountains (*Mindanews.com* 2010). It had been overrun by the AFP as part of then-president Joseph Estrada's "All-Out War" campaign against the MILF from 2000 to 2001 (Abreu 2008a, 137).

Bitu, one of Central Mindanao's many mountains[39] (Abreu 2008a, 138; ICG 2004, 5). By 1985, the MILF was operating "at least seven more camps" in the region, from which the separatists were covertly exerting political control over parts of Mindanao, nominally under the control of the GRP, to a "degree more effective and binding than that of the enemy administration" (Santos Jr. 2005, 4; McKenna 1998, 209). Even in Cotabato City, a noted government stronghold, the MILF was reportedly omnipresent in local political affairs during the 1980s. McKenna (1998, 209) illustrates the extent of its political presence through his accounts of life at the time in Campo Muslim, a Muslim-majority district in the Christian-majority Cotabato City.

In absence of effective GRP-run institutions, Muslim residents of Campo Muslim had come to rely on the social services provided by the local Catholic diocese, in particular the Christian Children's Fund (CCF). McKenna (1998, 209) writes that the residents participated in CFF with "considerable anxiety," worrying that the MILF would disapprove; one of his interviewees had, after receiving a letter from the MILF regarding the CCF program, immediately traveled from the city to an MILF camp in the mountains to discuss Muslims' participation[40] in the program. This behavior reflected Muslims' respect for the MILF when it came to decisions with political implications, such as participation in CCF. Reportedly, no "collective political activities were undertaken without at least the implicit approval of the MILF" in Campo Muslim, and if community members were summoned to the MILF headquarters, they "always endeavored to respond promptly in person" (McKenna 1998, 209).

[39] When the AFP attacked Camp Abubakar in 2000 as part of Estrada's All-Out War, the MILF fired at AFP troops from Mt. Bitu using "heavy caliber" machine gun emplacements (*Mindanews.com* 2010).

[40] McKenna's interviewee told the vice-chairman of the MILF's local political body that it would have put "great hardship on recipient families" to end the CCF program, an assessment that the MILF apparently agreed with given its inability to offer a replacement social institution at the time (1998, 212).

Additionally, the MILF coordinated the collection of a sort of revolutionary tax in Campo Muslim, the *zakat* (in this particular case, a religious obligation of believers to support *mujahideen*, those fighting for Islam). On the basis of *zakat*, the MILF skimmed off the "largest portion" of religious offerings collected by local religious leaders (*imams*) and required the *imams* to "keep a list of contributing households" (McKenna 1998, 229). While some residents disputed MILF's religious claim to *zakat* to McKenna (1998, 229), arguing that it was only an obligation in times of fighting (the MILF was not militarily active, then), there nevertheless seemed to be "a great deal of community support for the leaders of the Cotabato MILF forces," according to McKenna (1998, 228). And although members of the MILF seemed to be "somewhat shadowy figures" in the Campo Muslim community, they did manage to offer some tangible services, most frequently the adjudication of cases "from homicide to land disputes to adultery" in sharia law courts which, beginning in 1983, also offered marriage contract registration[41] (McKenna 1998, 213).

The MILF's political influence at the time was such that when Aquino announced new negotiations[42] between her administration and Misauri, the secessionist organization was able to organize what was "by far the largest, and longest, mass demonstration ever staged in Cotabato City" (McKenna 1998, 243). Through its network of *ulama* (religious leaders) in the community (who were led by the Aquino-appointed governor of the province, Zacaria Candao), the then-underground MILF staged a three-day "consultative assembly" calling for Moro support of

[41] Muslims in the southern Philippines "very seldom registered births or marriages with government agencies" (McKenna 1998, 213).

[42] This was the Jeddah Accord, an agreement between the MNLF and the GRP to continue autonomy discussions, signed on Jan. 3, 1987 (UCDP).

Salamat Hashim and for negotiations[43] between the MILF and GRP (McKenna 1998, 244). McKenna (1998, 242) called it a "self-conscious imitation of the Manila 'people power'" demonstrations that had overthrown the Marcos regime; between 50,000 and 100,000 people attended the MILF's demonstration on each of its three days.

Manila and the national media barely noticed[44] (McKenna 1998, 246). Thus, prior to a scheduled visit by Aquino to Cotabato, the MILF flexed its military muscle for five days in an effort to get the attention of the new administration, attacking police and army garrisons; bombing government targets in Cotabato City; and burning the provincial capital building in Maguindanao's capital, Maganoy (McKenna 1998, 246). Aquino, now having recognized the MILF's ability after its "5-Day War," arranged for a meeting with its leadership to discuss a ceasefire (Santos Jr. 2010c, 73; McKenna 1998, 246).

But the Aquino administration ultimately decided to "resume formal negotiations with the MNLF" in implicit recognition of Misauri as the "sole legitimate representative of the separatist movement" (McKenna 1998, 246). The MILF was thus relegated to the background for the remainder of the tête-à-tête between the MNLF and GRP that would result in the 1996 Mindanao Final Agreement and the implementation of ARMM. However, the disappointing performance of the ARMM coupled with Misauri's decline in authority, having joined forces

[43] The MILF, in a Dec. 1986 "Official Declaration," rejected the draft constitution for the post-Marcos republic proposed by the Aquino administration, on grounds that it would not provide for a "meaningful and genuine autonomy as envisioned in the duly-signed [Tripoli] accord" (McKenna 1998, 246).

[44] McKenna (1998, 245) attributes the lack of national press coverage to both the "Manila-centric focus national media" and to the relative inexperience of the MILF in "attracting media attention."

with the government, gave the MILF the opening[45] that it had been preparing for more than two decades: the opportunity to take over as the face of the Moro secessionist movement.

Since Hashim and his followers first broke off from the MNLF in 1977, they and the MILF have sought to develop a new model of Bangsamoro sovereignty: a secessionist movement, first, but one that was consciously and publicly Islamist, that could demonstrate to the GRP and the world that the Moros were capable of governing themselves, and that would be able to defend itself against attempts by the government to encroach upon its perceived sovereignty. The MILF's journey to create a de facto Bangsamoro state in the southern Philippines began in Hashim's exile in Egypt after the MNLF schism, after which he spent a number of years traveling the Middle East, making "international connections with various radical Muslim leaders" (Gutierrez 2000a, xviii; Rivera 2008, 41). From 1982 to 1987, Hashim was based in Pakistan where, across the border, "as many as 500" of his future MILF cadres were training alongside the *mujahideen* in the Afghan war against Soviet occupation (Rivera 2008, 41). There, MILF fighters are said to have forged "lifetime solidarity linkages with various Islamic leaders and militants from different parts of the Muslim world," a history (Rivera 2008, 41) that would later invite U.S. attention into the Moro conflict following the September 11th attacks.

[45] The MILF denounced the 1996 agreement as a "sell-out" and a "total deviation" from the 1976 Tripoli agreement (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 276).

At home, the MILF was busy building a series of both political and military bases in the areas absent of the government's presence[46], focusing early on where the terrain was harsher[47] – in the mountainous areas, and along the "forested boundary of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Bukidnon" (Abreu 2008a, 137). Eventually, the Moro rebels expanded these bases into all 13 Mindanaon provinces, from which they are said to have exerted de facto political authority[48] with support from "the majority of the Moro population" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 276).

Where they were strong[49], the rebels from their camps operated a hierarchical "executive, legislative, and judicial[50] structures" from the MILF Central Committee level to the *barangay* (village) level. In each of these *barangays*, the MILF's equivalent of the civilian police, the "Internal Security Force," performed the dual duty of "keeping peace and order" and ensuring that "the Koran [was] followed" (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 111). Where it was weak[51], the MILF maintained a more limited political presence through a "shadow government," run in parallel with GRP institutions from more remote camps, as was the case with residents of Campo Muslim in Cotabato City responding to MILF inquiries at its mountain hideouts. The official stance of

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[46] "[MILF camps] constitute pockets of autonomous areas outside government control and are self-sustainable communities in themselves," write Ozerdem, Podder, and Quitoriano (2010, 310).

[47] The MILF threat in the 1980s was limited to guerrilla attacks from its "secure mountain camps"; it "lacked the strength for sustained armed engagements with the Philippine military" (McKenna 1998, 234).

[48] Where the MILF camps were based, "formal local government structures [were] practically inoperative"; in one instance, when the AFP turned over territory it had reclaimed from the MILF to the civilian government, it was the "first time in 20 years" that a civilian police chief had set foot in the area (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 280).

[49] The MILF is described to have controlled significant territory in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Liguasan Marsh – the traditional strongholds of its supporters – at least as late as 2005 (Abuza 2005, 462).

[50] A "three-tiered sharia court system," according to Abuza (2011, 98).

[51] The MILF maintained a lesser presence in Maranao, which was known for its "innumerable petty fiefdoms", and in the Christian-dominated provinces of Southern Cotabato, Davao, and Zamboanga (ICG 2004, 10-11).

the MILF was that these camps were not military in nature, and were instead primarily committed to development of Moro government institutions. In support of this assertion, an MILF spokesman offered that the camps had no defensive walls; the land was "used for food production"; and that the camps were also places of prayer (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 277).

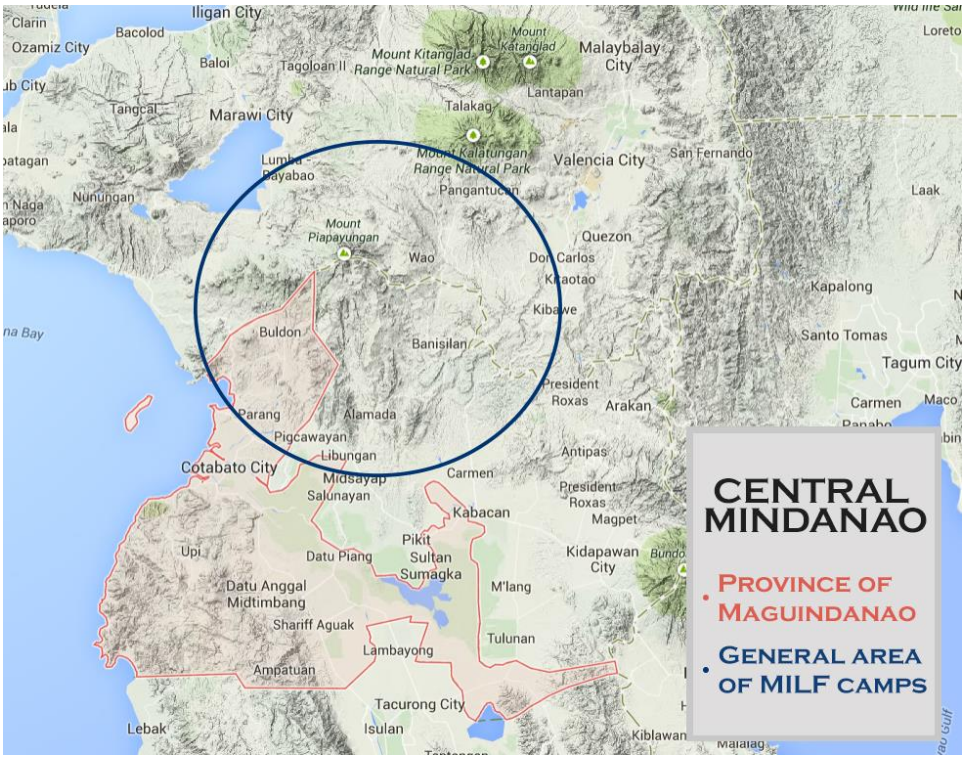


Figure 6: Map of central Mindanao, location of the MILF's earliest base camps (Google Maps)

At the center of this de facto state apparatus was the MILF's stronghold, Camp Abubakar, in essence the capital of the to-be the independent Bangsamoro that Hashim's secessionists wanted to create. The MILF presented Abubakar as a model Islamic state – a demonstration that the Moros were able to productively govern their own homeland. As a show of sovereignty, Abubakar's public face was perhaps particularly salient due to the inefficiencies of then-newly formed ARMM, a GRP institution.

In the late 1990s, Abubakar was "opened to visitors" as a part of a propaganda campaign to boost its support in "social sectors influential in shaping public opinion" in the Philippines, such as the church, the press, academics, traditional politicians, and NGOs (Abreu 2008A, 138). Abubakar featured a public-to-high school Islamic education system and a mosque; a "small commercial complex" with "variety stores, drugstores, hardware, and even a boutique"; and both farms (growing rice, fruit, and vegetables) and "multi-purpose cooperatives" (Abreu 2008a, 138; Vitug and Gloria 2000, 114). The MILF, in 1997, even claimed to operate "computers and a website that [could] send electronic messages to supporters all over the world" from Abubakar (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 279). Abubakar operated in direct contrast to the purely military camps of the MNLF – the miniaturized Islamic law community was an experiment in a "parallel government where [the Moros] run their own affairs" (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 109).

Of course, as a military installation first, Abubakar was also capable of supporting semi-conventional warfare from its fixed position. It was armed with artillery and a stockpile of weapons (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 279). A "modest" factory in the heart of the complex was able to supply weapons "a cut above that of other non-state armed groups" – "M79 grenade launchers, pistols, improvised M14 automatic rifles copied from the US Garand rifle, mortars (60 mm and 81 mm), and anti-tank weapons" (SSNNAGE 2010, 355). The complex was also the location of the Abdurahman Bedis Military Academy, which had been training MILF recruits since the establishment of the camp in the early 1980s (Abreu 2000a, 137). According to Quimpo (2000, 117), it was a "sprawling permanent encampment […] that the government forces could no longer easily attack – a virtual stronghold" (Quimpo 2000, 117).

Abubakar was, by conservative estimates, an overgrown military base, analogous to the AFP's Camp Aguinaldo; others called it a "small province," said to have an area of "1,198 square kilometers" (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 107; Quimpo 2000, 119). Those seeking to travel into the complex's interior were to traverse rough, unpaved terrain, a "grueling hour-long journey […] by four-by-four jeep" from Abubakar's periphery, where then-president and (former AFP general) Fidel Ramos had built a "friendship highway" – a few kilometers of road – as a gesture of cooperation during the GRP's period of diplomatic negotiations with the MILF (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 107). The far edge of the camp's territory was located just 90 minutes away from Cotabato City by car; official GRP policy during the Ramos administration to "keep off Camp Abubakar and [the MILF's] other main camp, Camp Bushra in Lanao del Sur," then, was perhaps a de facto recognition of the Moros' sovereignty in the area (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 110). Legal recognition of this sovereignty, albeit a limited recognition, came on July 18, 1997 with the signing of the "General Cessation of Hostilities" between the GRP and the MILF. As part of this agreement, the Ramos administration conceded control of seven rebel camps to the MILF as its territory, provided that it would "not move 'outside of [its] identified areas' without clearance from the government (ICG 2004, 30).

According to then-AFP chief of staff, this policy was an effort by the GRP to "give the peace process a chance." "Our strategy toward the MILF is to prevent them from expanding their areas of influence," General Joselin Nazereno told Vitug and Gloria (2000, 149). "I tell them: I'm not interested in occupying Abubakar and Bushra."

The GRP, according to Nazereno, was less concerned with "who controls the area" and more with "what to do with it so it becomes productive." "We should develop Abubakar, to uplift lives," he said to Vitug and Gloria (2000, 149).

But development for the sake of development in the MILF's Central Mindanao strongholds was often not satisfactory to the GRP, especially given that the MILF was "sitting on what could be the most resource-rich areas in Mindanao" (Gutierrez 2000d, 157). When South Korean engineers came to the region to implement a $600 million U.S-led irrigation project, they consulted with the MILF, the "de facto political authority" in the region, rather than with the local government. The project coordinators were then instructed by the MILF to hire laborers it suggested; this perceived encroachment on the government's sovereignty irked the region's governor, Rosario Diaz, who complained to Manila that "she was governor 'yet she could not even visit the project sites'" (Gutierrez 2000d, 157; Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 270). Manila responded by sending in the AFP; the "resulting firefights and controversies forced the Koreans to abandon the project," according to Gutierrez (2000d, 157).

At Rajah Muda, disputes over natural resources allegedly precipitated one of the deadliest military engagements between the MILF and the Ramos regime. The battle itself occurred on June 16, 1997, a day before scheduled peace talks between the MILF and GRP. Officially in pursuit of kidnappers of 43 Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) personnel, the AFP launched an "armored, air, and river assault" on MILF-held territories in Rajah Muda, where the kidnappers were hiding, according to the AFP (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 267). The resulting firefight between AFP and MILF forces killed a hundred each on both sides, reportedly (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 267). That the PNOC personnel were taken during oil exploration

in the region and that the AFP employed an indiscriminate response[52], however, led some to believe that the AFP had arranged for the kidnapping, as an excuse "drive the MILF out of resource-rich areas" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 267). Both the MNLF and MILF have "categorically" asserted that the perpetrators, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), had been infiltrated by the government to be used as a "justification for a military solution" (Gutierrez 2000b, 62; Gutierrez 2000c, 354).

The MILF's response to Rajah Muda was a threat: it would "declare total war[53] if the military offensive continued" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 268). In the fighting following the initial battle, the MILF made a show of its strength by engaging the AFP on a major national highway (the Narciso Ramos Highway), "holding up traffic for hours." A few days later, on June 30, 1997, General Arnulfo E. Acedera "ordered a unilateral ceasefire" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 268).

About a year later, the Narciso Ramos Highway – named in honor of President Fidel Ramos' father – would be described as the "Ho Chi Minh Trail" of the MILF (Tiglao 1998, 26). Almost entirely under the control of Moro forces, it was "virtually a commuter route" between Camp Abubakar and Camp Bushra, near Marawi (Tiglao 1998, 27). In December of 1997, MILF cadres didn't even bother disguising themselves when traversing the highway; to get from one camp to the other, "fatigue-clad MILF rebels sped along the route, while Philippine Army

[52] The AFP sent in attack planes, helicopter gunships, and armored vehicles in pursuit of the kidnappers. "We didn't want to take unnecessary risks," said Major Jolly Mabanta Jr. of the 40th Infantry Battalion to Gutierrez and Guialal (2000, 268).

[53] The MILF would later reveal that this "total war" would have consisted of "simultaneous military operations" by the MILF in major Mindanao cities. This threat was likely credible; the MILF, with its camps dotting Mindanao, could at the time strike from everywhere in the region (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 279).

checkpoints were either empty or manned by a token unarmed soldier" (Tiglao 1998, 27). The "occasion for the rebels' brazenness" was Hashim's first public appearance in "more than a decade," at the MILF's 15th general assembly at Camp Bushra, guarded by "about 4,000 guerrillas with rocket-propelled grenade launchers" (Tiglao 1998, 27). It was far from a covert meeting of rebels in hiding; the MILF, in fact, had advertised the gathering "weeks before in the national newspapers" (Tiglao 1998, 27). The MILF, apparently confident in its ability to protect Hashim, flew banners "nearly every kilomet[er]" welcoming 15th general assembly delegates on the highway, which to the Ramos regime came "to symbolize the refusal of Muslim-separatist movements in the south to fade away" (Tiglao 1998, 27).

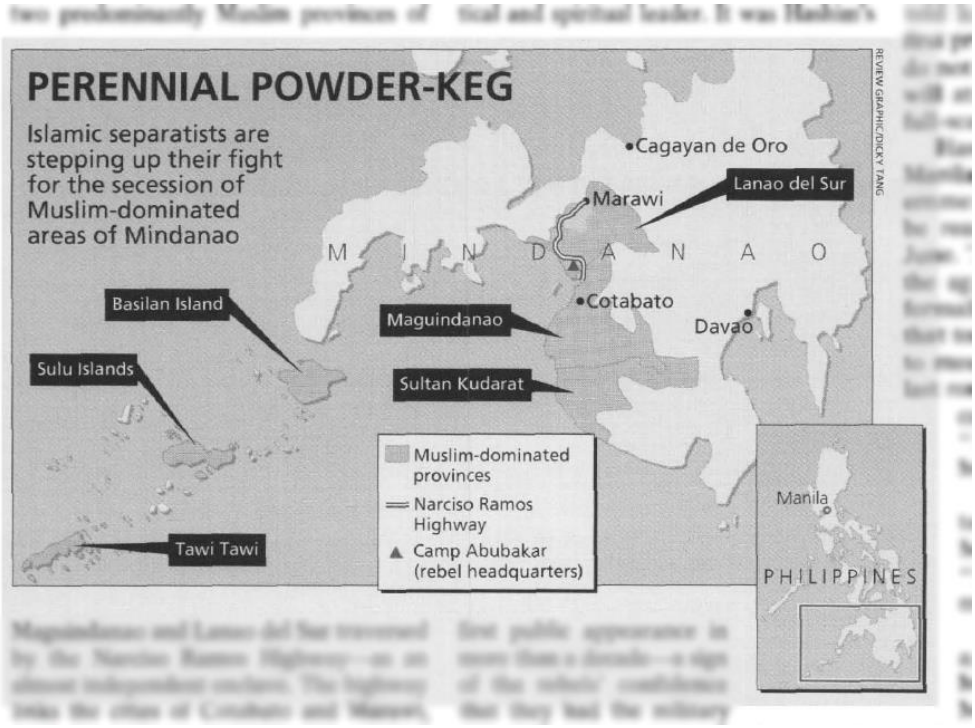


Figure 7: Map of Muslim-dominated areas of Mindanao in 1998, including Camp Abubakar and the regions surrounding the Narciso Ramos Highway (Tiglao 1998, 27)

The MILF in large part owed its success to the GRP's unwillingness to crack down on its challenge to the government's sovereignty, as Marcos did in the 1970s. Having just made peace

with the MNLF, the Ramos regime seemed hesitant to initiate a new civil war by militarily displacing the rebels from their territory (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 149). It was instead content to "contain" the continued growth of the MILF camps and to engage its militants in low-level skirmishes. Perhaps its accommodation of the rebels was in part a reflection of its lack of apparent interest in governing parts of Mindanao; where MILF was replacing GRP political structures with its own were often where the local government was "practically inoperative" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 280; Taya 2007, 65). Regardless of the reason, the relative peace that resulted allowed the MILF to exert de facto governance over its "almost independent enclave" that included 80 percent of Moro areas, by the rebels' estimate, or "roughly a tenth of Mindanao" predominantly in Maguindanao and Lanao, according to one press account (Taya 2007, 63; Tiglao 1998, 27).

That the MILF was recognized as the sole political authority in the area is reflected in the respect it received from its "citizens." The people "perceive the MILF as their army[54]" and, despite their own poverty, would "never forget to set aside a scoop of rice for the rebels," recounted Danda Juanday, a "respected medical doctor and civic leader in Cotabato City," of his experiences in MILF territory (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 276). As late as 2007, civilians in MILF-controlled areas "refuse[d] to cooperate with" the AFP's intelligence-gathering activities in the region (Taya 2007, 66). And, if the MILF were to call, these Moros were willing to take up arms as a sort of auxiliary for the rebel forces. "Generations of fighting and injustice have predisposed ordinary Moro villagers to respond to such calls to war easily. They provide an

[54] The MILF in 1998 claimed that its army numbered 120,000; AFP intelligence put its strength at 10,500 guerrillas. Western intelligence sources estimated its strength at 45,000 (Tiglao 1998, 27).

almost inexhaustible supply of reserves to any insurgent force they perceive to be fighting for their interests," write Gutierrez and Guialal (2000, 276).

The GRP and Ramos, perhaps recognizing that resumed hostilities would only drive more Moro civilians to the MILF ranks, instead adopted a soft power-influenced counterinsurgency strategy: diplomacy through an offer of regional autonomy like that extended to and accepted by the MNLF, coupled with immediate socioeconomic development efforts in Moro areas, with the threat of a "mailed-fist" military response looming in the background (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 285). The mailed fist took the form of military deployments "within 500 meters" of MILF encampments and the stationing of 13 infantry battalions and "more than 2,000 marines" to North Cotabato and Maguindanao (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 285). The carrot of development manifested itself through rebuilding projects that sought to "erase the scars of war" by restoring roads and schools that had been destroyed in skirmishes with the MILF (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 285). In particular, the GRP made a concerted effort to introduce development projects into MILF territory, including Rajah Muda and Camp Abubakar, driving the MILF into a corner. If it was to refuse development aid from the GRP, which threatened to bring MILF supporters back into the government fold, it risked being "isolated not only locally but also from the mainstream international Islamic community" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 285). If it was to continue its pursuit of secession in the face of what seemed to the international community as a reasonable offer of autonomy from the government, the MILF risked losing the "support and sympathy of the OIC composed of the Muslim countries in the world and the members of the international community" (Boac 2001, 14).

What resulted from this AFP strategy was a stalemate, with the MILF unwilling to agree to a negotiated settlement with the GRP – "The only thing we can compromise on is the extent of the territory of the Islamic state," Hashim said to Tiglao (1998, 27). And thus several attempts by the Ramos administration to engage the MILF in talks inevitably ended with continued low-intensity fighting between the sides, a "negotiating tactic (however myopic) used by both sides to strengthen their respective positions for the bargaining table" (Bolongaita Jr. 2000, 76). This back-and-forth would continue into the new administration of Ramos' successor, Joseph Estrada, who, despite winning the presidency in a landslide in 1998, won few votes in Moro areas and was beholden to his constituency of Christian Filipinos, many of whom had "business interests in both Christian and Muslim areas of the Southern Philippines" (Hedman 2009, 4).

Estrada, who would by 2000 be threatened with impeachment for corruption and in 2001 be thrown out of office[55] by a second "people power" movement, ended the GRP's attempts at peace[56] with the MILF with the declaration of "All-Out War" in April of 2000 (Labrador 2001, 229; Labrador 2002, 141; Abuza 2005, 455). Viewing the Ramos-era policies as little more than "coddling the MILF" and having no political ties to pro-Moro interests, Estrada in January 2000 established a hardline position with the threat of a military solution if the MILF did not acknowledge through capitulation "that there is only one government and one armed forces in

[55] Estrada, also former movie actor in the Philippines, is as of this writing, the current mayor of Manila (having assumed office on June 30, 2013), reflecting a pattern of personalistic politics in the Philippines where even shamed politicians have enjoyed success in their return to politics. Even Imelda Marcos, widow of the former Philippine dictator, currently holds office in the Congress of the Philippines.

[56] Though, the AFP under the Estrada administration had been engaging with the MILF on a smaller scale for almost half a year prior to the official declaration of "all-out war," having attacked Camps Uthman, Omar, Badre, and Bilal between December 1999 and March 2000 (Taya 2007, 70). Three of these four camps had been recognized by the GRP as MILF territory in October of 1999 (ICG 2004, 6).

the Philippines" (Hedman 2009, 4; Abuza 2005, 455; Labrador 2001, 225). The renewed war with the Moros in Mindanao became a centerpiece of Estrada's presidency; he dedicated "over half" of his July 2000 State of the Nation address to his administration's efforts in the southern Philippines, calling for an end to the secessionist movement ("Secession as a dream is out of tune with history," he said) while also promising to develop the region after peace was achieved (Labrador 2001, 225). Through this "get tough" policy, the beleaguered president was able to divert attention away from his impending impeachment trial and to boost his "sagging approval ratings" (Labrador 2001, 225).

Citing alleged violations of a GRP-MILF ceasefire[57], the AFP launched offensives against the Camps Abubakar and Bushra in April and May of 2000, respectively, and advanced to the literal doorstep of the rebel's headquarters – Abubakar's outer perimeter – after retaking the Narciso Ramos Highway from the MILF (Taya 2007, 70; *Mindanews.com* 2010). On July 10, 2000, the AFP captured Abubakar's central complex, marking the demise of the de facto Bangsamoro state that the MILF had been building in Central Mindanao since its inception (Taya 2007, 70). The AFP's victory over the MILF at Abubakar was absolute to the point that Estrada, "so elated" with his military's "prized catch" of Abubakar, personally flew to the conquered rebel base to pose for photo ops with his generals and to raise the Philippine flag on its ruins "in assertion of sovereignty" (*Mindanews.com* 2010). And in celebration of capturing the "nerve center" of the MILF's planned Bangsamoro state, Estrada "brought trucks of […] cold beer" to AFP troops that had participated in the operation, to considerable criticism from "devout

[57] The Estrada administration accused the MILF of sheltering elements of Jemaah Islamiyah, an al-Qaeda inspired and affiliated terrorist organization based in Indonesia which purports to wage *jihad* in the region in pursuit of the formation of a pan-Southeast Asian caliphate (Wilson 2009, 30; Cragin et. al 2007, 25).

Muslims" – who considered Abubakar "a sacred ground for Islamic revival" – and even from the Catholic clergy and the media, who criticized the president's "lack of sensitivity" (*Mindanews.com* 2010).

Facing this new willingness of the GRP to defeat the Moro rebels at any cost, the MILF was forced to reconsider its military strategy. Prior to Estrada's All-Out War, the MILF's army, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), was organized along "standard lines" and was in fact "loosely patterned after the AFP" (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 4; ICG 2004, 10). However, after the "poor performance" of the BIAF in conventional warfare[58] with the AFP, the MILF forces were reorganized into smaller, "highly mobile" units across the areas where the secessionist movement was most influential[59], that would "raid or ambush government troops in places and at times of their own choosing, disappearing as suddenly as they would appear" (Podder 2012, 502; Pobre and Quilop 2009, 4). When the MILF was not actively engaged in battles with the AFP, BIAF soldiers would hide in plain sight, living in "their communities and pretend[ing] to be just like anybody else around to conceal their identity" (Podre and Quilop 2008, 4). In other words, this reorganized MILF army practiced archetypical guerrilla warfare, in direct contrast to its prior conventional war strategy against the GRP, which was perhaps more analogous to an interstate war between the Philippines and the MILF de facto state.

The MILF was apparently led to reconsider its political strategy, too, likely due at least in part to its weakened military position relative to the GRP (Cragin et. al 2007, 29). The possibility

[58] Prior to their defeat at Abubakar, the rebels fought with "front and rears, in fixed positions and in great numbers, like the way conventional armies fight their battles" (Podre and Quilop 2008, 4).

[59] These units were "spread across MILF strongholds in North Cotabato, Maguindanao, and Lanao del Norte" (Podder 2012, 502).

of the MILF accepting a regional autonomy agreement in lieu of secession was further aided by the natural-causes death of "hardline MILF founder" Salamat Hashim on July 13, 2003 and his succession by the "more pragmatic" Ebrahim el-Haj Murad (or Haji Murad), the MILF's former vice chairman for military affairs and, at the time of Hashim's passing, the MILF's spokesperson (Abuza 2005, 458; Cragin et al. 2007, 29). According to Cragin et al. (2007, 29), Murad at the time was likely "willing to drop the demand for independence if a genuine level of autonomy [was to be] granted to Mindanao."

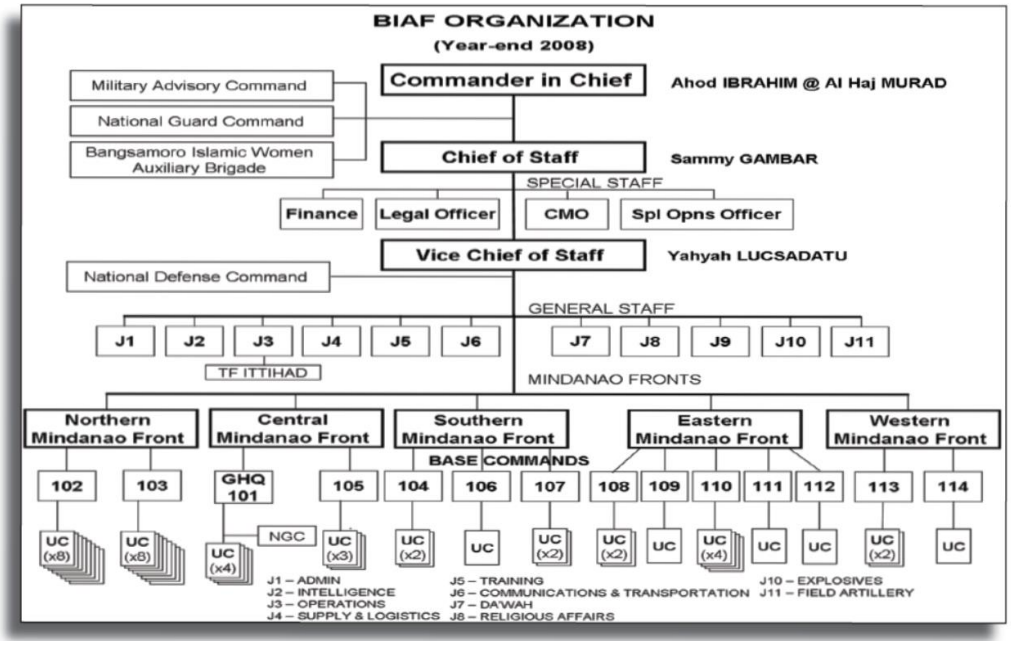


Figure 8: Organizational structure of the MILF military, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 5)

All-Out War was in 2001 replaced by the "All-Out Peace" policy of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who succeeded Estrada as GRP president after the latter was pushed out of office[60] by a

[60] Civilian demonstrators, after Estrada's defeat of impeachment under dubious circumstances (the prosecutors "walked out [the Senate trial] after charging that pro-Estrada senators were manipulating the trial"), took to the streets of Manila in protest. The second "people power," inspired by the first that had overthrown Marcos and backed by the AFP, forced Estrada to flee the Malacañang (GRP equivalent of the White House) by river barge. Arroyo, his vice president who had moved against him, became GRP president in his place (Labrador 2002, 142).

second “people power” mass protest in Manila (Rivera 2008, 46; Labrador 2002, 142). In contrast to her predecessor, Arroyo seemed to be more interested in the peaceful development of the country rather than a military solution to the Moro conflict, at least at the beginning of her presidency. Her first State of the Nation address focused on “poverty eradication” – via “free enterprise, a modern agricultural sector, a social bias toward the disadvantaged, and high moral standards for government and society” – thus pivoting away from an antagonistic stance toward the MILF adopted by Estrada and by Ramos towards the end of his presidency (Labrador 2002, 144). Indeed, as a gesture toward the GRP’s commitment to peace negotiations, the Arroyo administration lobbied the U.S. to exclude the MILF from its list of foreign terrorist organizations (Montesano 2003, 166).

Arroyo’s All-Out Peace, coupled with the moderate Murad’s succession of Hashim as MILF’s leader, marked the beginning of the peace process that is currently leading the MILF to enter institutional politics (*GMANetwork.com* 2015a). On March 7, 2015, MILF “officials, members, and supporters” participated in a symbolic voters’ registration in the spiritual successor to Camp Abubakar and current MILF headquarters, Camp Darapanan (*GMANetwork.com* 2015a). In addition, the MILF has formed and registered the “United Bangsamoro Justice Party”; current MILF spokesman Von Al-Haq, at the March 7 ceremony at Darapanan, registered to vote presumably as a member of this party (*GMANetwork.com* 2015a). MILF vice chairman Ghadzali Jaafar, however, had said that he will register to vote after the enactment of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), a proposed law that will create a new Moro autonomous region that was scheduled to be voted on in “March or April 2015” (*GMANetwork.com* 2015a; *CogitAsia.com* 2015b).

The BBL – and a peace between the GRP and the MILF that has endured since an Oct. 2012 ceasefire – is now threatened by a Jan. 25, 2015 Philippine National Police operation that ended with "at least five" MILF and MILF splinter group militants killed (*CogitAsia.com* 2015b). Originally a raid on a Jemaah Islamiyah[61] operative, the "wanted terrorist" known as Marwan, the Jan. 25 Mamasapano operation became the "first major violation" of the Oct. 2012 GRP-MILF ceasefire after the police Special Action Force (SAF) commandos pursuing Marwan clashed with MILF and MILF-affiliated forces in the area, resulting in 44 police killed and 16 wounded (*CogitAsia.com* 2015b). The Mamasapano incident has since become a political "firestorm" in the Philippines – with calls for the impeachment of current president Benigno Aquino III[62] by opposition politicians – because of both the GRP's negotiations with a group associated with 60 police casualties and the role of the U.S. in supporting[63] the SAF in the Marwan operation (*CSIS.org* 2015). The MILF, for its part, claims that the deadly skirmish resulted from the SAF's "refusal to employ existing ceasefire mechanisms" (*CogitAsia.com* 2015a). The U.S. involvement, on the other hand, is just as much of a point of consternation for a Philippine public that is historically averse[64] to American military intervention due to the

[61] The Jemaah Islamiyah is an al-Qaeda inspired and affiliated terrorist organization based in Indonesia which purports to wage *jihad* in the region in pursuit of the formation of a pan-Southeast Asian caliphate (Cragin et. al 2007, 25).

[62] President since June 2010, he is the son of former president Corazon Aquino and former Marcos-era opposition leader Benigno Aquino. Aquino is, as of this writing, serving the fifth year of his six-year term; Philippine presidents are limited to one term of office.

[63] "Lawmakers and the public have expressed concern about the unusual level of access for U.S. personnel during an operation about which even the interior secretary and the acting chief of police knew nothing," writes Gregory Poling for the Center for Strategic and International Studies (*CSIS.org* 2015).

[64] The current constitution of the Philippines contains provisions that were designed to limit the ability of the GRP to accept U.S. military intervention. "To resolve the controversial issue of United States military bases, the constitution requires that any future agreement must be in the form of a treaty that is ratified by two-thirds of the Senate and, if the Congress requires, ratified by a majority of the votes cast in a national referendum," writes Dolan (1993, 197).

perceived neo-colonial character of U.S. military bases in the Philippines (Dolan 1993, xxix; Dolan 1993, 197).

Though not nearly as involved in the country's affairs as in years past, the U.S. military has been gradually rebuilding its military presence in the Philippines since its 2002 Balikantan joint exercises with the GRP. Balikantan was a post-September 11th initiative designed to boost the AFP's ability to police terrorist elements that both countries' governments accuse the MILF of willfully allowing to exist, if not deliberately sheltering and working with (Montesano 2003, 161; Abuza 2005, 456). The MILF denies this allegation – "I assure you that the MILF will not tolerate terrorism," Murad said to *Time* Magazine in Aug. 2004 – but acknowledges that, due to the priority of clan and family ties even over political allegiances in the southern Philippines, that it is "not impossible that some members of the MILF have a personal relationship" with those engaged in crime or terrorism (Abuza 2005, 467). That the MILF has itself admitted to less than complete control[65] over its various base commands across the region is indicative of the rebels' relative organizational weakness today compared to its heyday of de facto statehood in the late 1990s. It could also explain how the moderate leadership of the MILF has remained amenable to a negotiated solution while more radical MILF elements continue low-scale violence against the GRP.

These so-called "lost commands" – rogue BIAF commanders who have, according to the MILF, broken off from the central leadership – have prior to Mamasapano caused two major breakdowns in negotiations, via resumed violence, between the MILF and the GRP since a June

[65] Though, despite GRP and U.S. assertions that the MILF is a de-centralized, factional organization, Abuza (2005, 458-459) argues that "no leader with his own armed faction that can subvert or ignore the decisions of the Central Committee" and that the central committee has "effective (although it can be slow) command and control."

2001 peace agreement between the two parties (UCDP). The first resulted in the AFP overrunning the MILF's post-Abubakar headquarters at Buliok[66] in the Liguasan Marsh in Feb. 2003, despite a long-standing agreement by the AFP that the "MILF's camps remain off-limits to ongoing military operations taking place in Mindanao" (Cragin et. al 2007, 44). In Operation *Alab Lahi*, which an AFP paper describes as "ostensibly" in pursuit of a kidnap-for-ransom splinter from the MILF (the "Pentagon gang") but "in actuality" a punitive operation to "capture the Buliok Complex," the AFP raised the Filipino flag over the rebel command center after retaking control of the territory, an "inevitable" victory by militarily and numerically superior forces over the MILF (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 18). Indeed, of the Pentagon gang members alleged to be sheltered by MILF at Buliok, "not a single individual was captured," but the GRP nevertheless retained control of the former MILF headquarters (Abuza 2005, 456).

The Buliok operation would impede the resumption of official peace talks between the GRP and the MILF, though hostilities sparked between the parties after the complex was captured "subsided in late spring 2003" (Abuza 2005, 456). Chief among the MILF's demands before re-entering peace talks at the time included an AFP withdrawal from Buliok, which the MILF describes as a "civilian compound for MILF officials and supporters" rather than a "military camp" (Abuza 2005, 456). The AFP's occupation of Buliok, according to the MILF, marked the beginning of an expanded occupation of the entire resource-rich Liguasan marsh, to be "earmarked for more Christian settlers' (Abuza 2005, 456). The GRP, on the other hand, asserted that the Buliok operation was a response to the MILF's inability to police "increasing

[66] The "Buliok Complex" is "understood to be" a territory controlled by the MILF spanning a five-kilometer radius from its then-headquarters at Buliok. According to an AFP paper, "access to the Complex [was] limited" to the Mindanao river and the marshlands, which forced infantry units to either "slosh through waist-deep muddy waters" or use watercraft to cross into MILF territory (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 16).

criminal and other terrorist rebel activities" within its territory (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 18). Though, the agreement signed by the MILF to police kidnapping and terrorism in its territory (the "Joint Interdiction of Unlawful Elements") had not yet been implemented by the time of the Buliok operation and in fact would not be made operational until two years after the complex was captured by the AFP (Abuza 2005, 468; ICG 2008, 1).

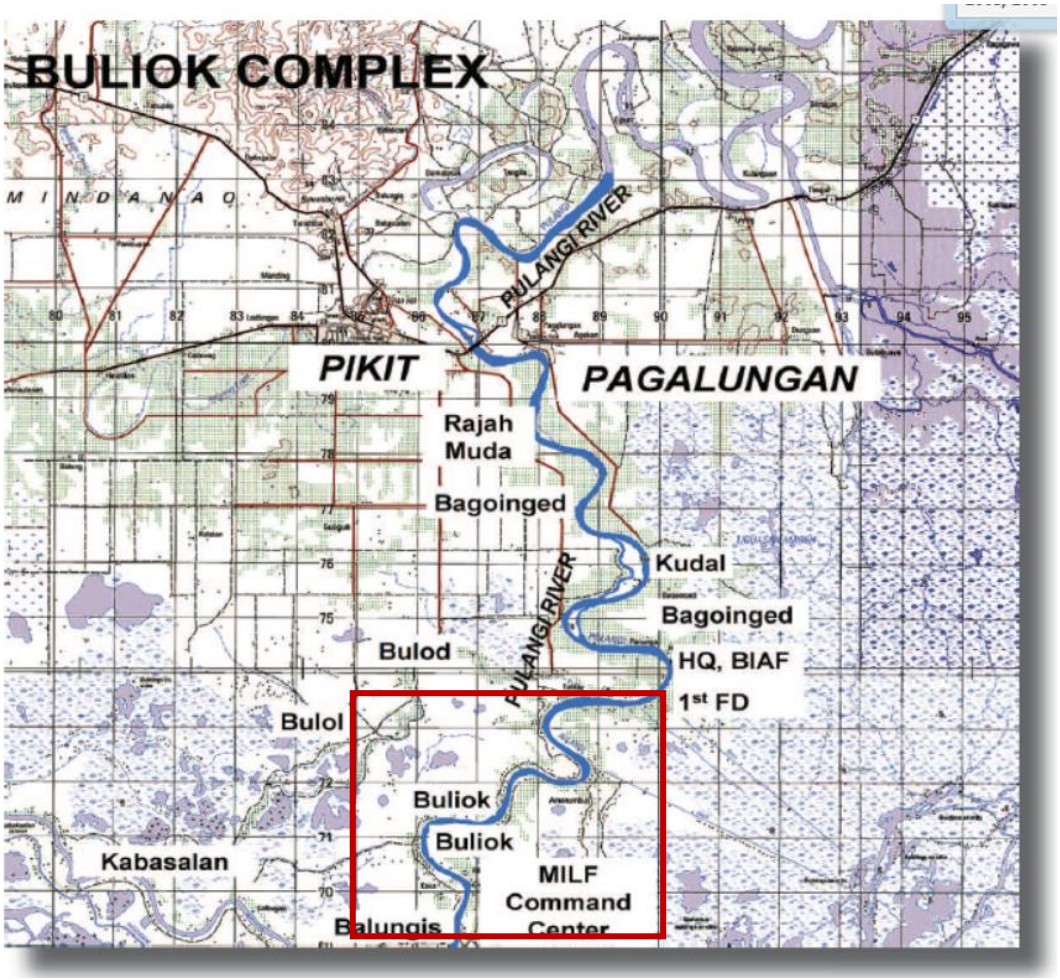


Figure 9: Location of the Buliok Complex, the MILF's headquarters in the Liguasan Marsh of Central Mindanao (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 15).

Despite the sides' inability to come together for official peace talks at the time, the MILF and the GRP were able to agree to a "Mutual Cessation of Hostilities" on July 19, 2003 (ICG

2004, 7). This ceasefire perhaps coincided with the death of Hashim six days earlier (Abuza 2005, 458). Following the July 2003 agreement, the MILF and GRP engaged in a series of talks that moved at a "glacial pace," interrupted briefly in the beginning of 2005 after the "lost command" of rogue MILF commander Ameril Umbra Kato (the MILF 105th, in Liguasan Marsh) violated the ceasefire agreement, by the MILF's own admission[67] (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 73). Then, during a series of negotiations held in Malaysia later in 2005, the sides reached a "breakthrough" through the GRP's offer of a new autonomous region to be called the "Bangsamoro Juridical Entity" (BJE), consisting of 613 "Moro-dominated" villages or *barangays* (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 71). The MILF, after accepting the offer "in principle," called for a "consultative assembly" in an effort to "seek a fresh mandate from the Bangsamoro people" to negotiate on their behalf with the GRP (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 71). More than three million people attended the 2005 MILF General Consultation in the Maguindanaon town of Darapanan, according to an AFP paper, including "diplomats from the OIC, World Bank officials, and Philippine government representatives" (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 74; Rivera 2008, 46). This turnout, comparing favorably to the total Moro population of approximately four million and taken by the MILF as a sign of domestic and international support for its legitimacy, led the rebel leadership to claim to have received the mandate to represent the Moro people in the autonomy negotiations (SSNNAGE 2008, 347).

Subsequent talks between the GRP and the MILF would eventually result in a draft Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) on July 27, 2008, which would

[67] The MILF "deactivated" the 105th base command and suspended two of its ranking commanders in response to the ceasefire violation, though an AFP paper casts doubt on how "realistic" the punishment was, given that the command was "just reportedly 'restructured'" (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 73).

have provided for a "better-than autonomous, less-than-independent" BJE, though "checked-and-balanced" by leaving the scope of the autonomous region to a plebiscite (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 81). The MOA-AD followed years of deadlocked negotiations over how the BJE's territory would be determined, whether it'd be by vote of the region's current residents or by "ancestral domain," a claim to historic ownership of the land by Moros prior to colonization (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 80). By early 2008, Malaysia had announced a withdrawal of its peacekeeping forces – which had been playing a "critical role in enforcing" the ceasefire – to be completed in September of that year "barring concrete developments in the peace process," in an effort to "force the two sides back to the negotiating table" (Hicken 2009, 194). This caused "widespread concern" and increased tensions between the two sides, who mutually accused each other of impeding the negotiations. The GRP responded by deploying additional soldiers to Mindanao; the MILF-affiliated forces "staged some 40 attacks against government troops," according to the AFP (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 80), perhaps as a form of political pressure to reach an autonomy agreement in writing. The MILF, acknowledging the attacks, blamed them on rogue "hotheads," whom the rebels had "pacified" after the fact (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 80). The AFP, on the other hand, suspects that the MILF was simply "disown[ing] responsibility" on politically damaging yet politically useful side activities to the negotiations (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 80).

The threat of an escalation in violence was apparently enough to induce Arroyo into conceding the MOA-AD to the MILF, called a "de facto surrender by the government" by the agreement's critics (Hicken 2009, 194). The BJE to be created by the MOA-AD was to be given "considerable autonomy": it would have had "full authority over the disposition of natural resources within the territory"; it would establish and run its own political and financial

institutions; and it would control its own police and internal security forces (Hicken 2009, 194). The territory of this autonomous region was to include the entire existing ARMM as well as 712 additional *barangays* in various Mindanaon provinces, though the latter's inclusion would have been subject to a plebiscite six months after the creation of the BJE (Hicken 2009, 194).

The MOA-AD was never signed, though it was scheduled to be on Aug. 5, 2008 (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 89). A leaked copy of the agreement, which had been embargoed from public scrutiny, had prior to the agreement's signing led a number of Mindanaon politicians to protest the territory of the proposed BJE, which spanned areas "whose residents had not been consulted" about the MOA-AD, according to the politicians (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 102). They then petitioned the Supreme Court of the Philippines to issue a stay on the signing of the agreement, which was granted on Aug. 4; GRP representatives traveling to Malaysia to sign the MOA-AD learned that they were not to proceed as soon as they landed in Kuala Lumpur International Airport (Pobre and Quilip 2008, 102; Hicken 2009, 195). By that time, maps of the proposed BJE had already been published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, and, in tandem with temporary restraining order it issued on the MOA-AD, the Supreme Court ordered the agreement to be made public by Aug. 15, 2008 (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 101; Hicken 2009, 195). On Oct. 14, 2008, the Court ruled the MOA-AD unconstitutional in an 8-7 decision, censuring the presidential adviser on the peace process for "failing to consult sufficiently in the development of the [MOA-AD]" and that Arroyo "could not unilaterally" have entered an agreement that would have provided for the BJE, given that its creation would "require changes to the Constitution" (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 106; Hicken 2009, 195). It argued that the agreement would have "virtually guarantee[d] that the requisite amendments to the Constitution and the laws would

later on be put in place," and the president (Arroyo) was not constitutionally authorized to make this guarantee (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 107). That some justices dissented was due to the irrelevance of the ruling by October, since Arroyo had already aborted the MOA-AD and announced that "no MOA-AD would be signed in whatever form" (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 106).

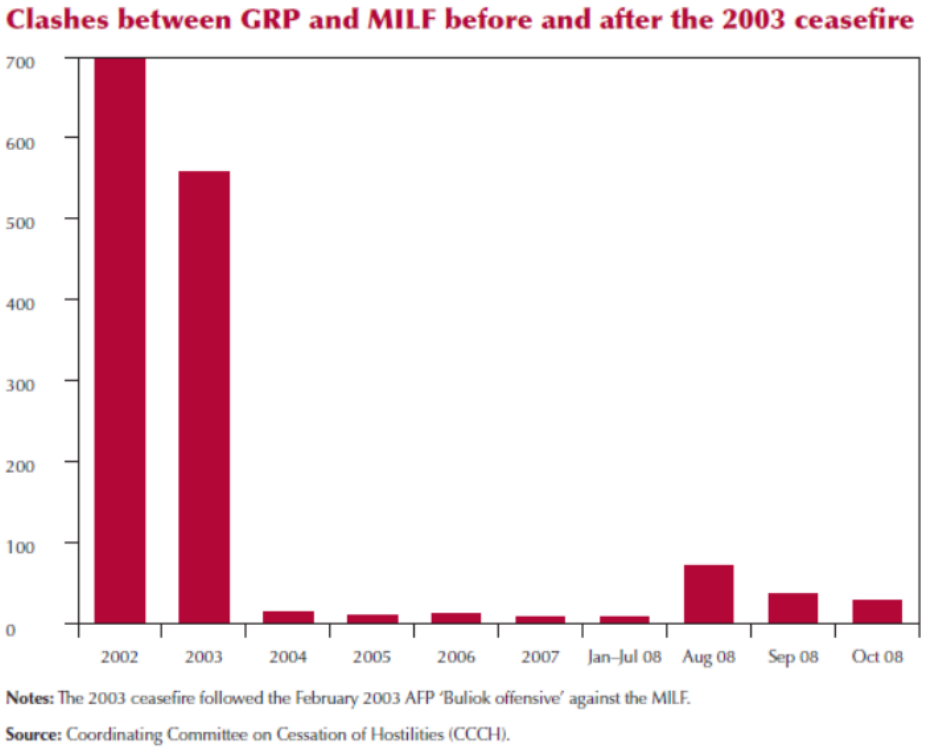


Figure 10: Clashes between the GRP and the MILF, 2002-2008 (Santos Jr. 2008b, 80)

GRP-MILF violence had already resumed in Aug. 2008[68] after the signing of the MOA-AD was aborted, primary through the actions of three hardliner, high-level MILF leaders, who began to distance themselves from the central control of the Murad-led MILF after the then-failure of a negotiated peace (Podder 2012, 504). They are Commander Abdullah Macapaar (known as Commander Bravo), of the Lanao del Norte 102nd base command; Aleem Solaiman

[68] Rogue MILF Commanders Bravo and Kato attacked Christian villages after MOA-AD was blocked in Aug. 2008, provoking a "strong military response" that lasted a year until Aug. 2009, when the GRP unilaterally called off attacks, which the MILF reciprocated" (Podder 2012, 501).

Pangalian, the commander in Lanao del Sur (103rd); and Ameril Umbra Kato, leader of the 105th base command in Maguindanao that had violated the ceasefire in 2005 (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 119; Pobre and Quilop 2009, 73). All three reject autonomy as an alternative to independence, and Kato had been described by "observers" as having "consistently caused the greatest problems within the MILF in relation to Murad's leadership" (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 12). By 2011, Kato, Wahid Tundok (Kato's operation's officer), Bravo and Hashim's younger brother (Salamat Samir) had formed the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)[69], a more radical secessionist organization that subsumed the 105th base command, thus taking with them a substantial share of the BIAF's strength[70] (Abuza 2012, 5). Up until that point, the MILF had yet to strip the mercurial Kato of his status as one of its leaders, but after the formation of the BIFF, the Murad-led MILF declared Kato's faction a "lost command" (ICG 2012, 16; *Inquirer.net* 2015).

This factionalism at first seems to be explained by differences in ethnicity and ideology. Murad, an Iranon and thus an outsider to the MILF, comes from a "secular background" (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 124). The renegade commanders Bravo and Kato, on the other hand, hail from MILF-majority ethnic groups and "identify themselves" with Hashim; like the founder of the MILF, they are religious teachers (*ulama*) who had studied Islam in the Middle East (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 120-124). However, Pobre and Quilop (2009, 126) argue that their disagreements with the Murad-led MILF stem from its leader's dedication to a "democratic process of

[69] Also referred to as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM).

[70] Kato claimed to have secured 5,000 followers from the MILF ranks; the GRP stated that he had "only 300 armed followers," a number that the ICG (2012, 16) also advances (*Inquirer.com* 2015).

negotiation," which they and Murad's opponents perceive to be "reflective of his secular orientation." Other differences, they say, are ancillary concerns (2009, 126).

Though other hardliners did not join Bravo and Kato, and much of the MILF leadership shares the ethnic and educational backgrounds of the rogue commanders, their split from the larger organization nevertheless represent a schism between the moderate and radical elements in MILF (Abuza 2012, 5). This fractionalization characterizes the current state of affairs of the Moro self-determination movement vis-à-vis the GRP, when compared to when its high level of cohesion under Hashim's MILF in the late 1990s. That the Mamasapano incident involved both an MILF that seems committed to autonomy through institutional politics and a still-relevant BIFF could portend a delay in the final peace agreement past May or June of 2015, when the BBL is anticipated to pass in Congress as of this writing (*PhilStar.com* 2015). At the very least, an agreement with the Murad-led MILF may not end all hostilities against the GRP due to the existence of radical elements of the MILF such as the BIFF; according to one estimate, as many as 3,000 of the 12,000 to 15,000 BIAF soldiers could "go rogue" and join the "lost commands" (Podder 2012, 504).

In any case, today's MILF has been "progressively cornered by the government's military machine," according to Podder (2012, 512). While support for the rebels persists, its expression has become more limited in recent years due to the costs of openly supporting the MILF – usually "loss of property, interrupted education, and lack of sustainable livelihoods" during unpredictable flare-ups of violence between the rebels and the AFP (Podder 2012, 508). Increased AFP presence in the region facilitates civilians' fear of these flare-ups and the collateral damage they cause. Active participation in MILF activities bears an opportunity cost,

too; whereas in the past, poor parents would send their children to MILF camps to learn "the Islamic way of life," they now have educational options closer to home through the "proliferation" of the *Madrassah* school system in their communities (Podder 2012, 509). The prospect of having children work "for free" in MILF camps instead of being productive at home, coupled with the cost of travel to the remote camps, explains the wane in this form of participation. Even among villages visited by Podder (2012, 507) that were "still reliant on the MILF for security and protection" and that still "willingly gave MILF donations," residents hesitated to "admit to open support due to a fear of the government." Though, villages closer to MILF territory – the rebels' settlements – "demonstrated more openness in their support," farming for the MILF militants in the area, who, in times of peace, returned to the villages to live with their families as civilians (Podder 2012, 507).

This less-than-open support for the MILF reflects a greater penetration of the central Mindanao region by the GRP and the AFP. The army, for one, had increased deployment to areas where Bravo's BIFF and the forces of the rogue commander Pangalian operate (Podder 2012, 502). Additionally, the GRP has supplemented its control of the region with the help of village-based civilian militias called Citizen Armed Force Geographic Units (CAFGUs) and "village watch" and intelligence gathering units called "civilian voluntary organizations" (CVOs). The former's function is to prevent MILF re-infiltration of Moro villages cleared of rebel influence (Podder 2012, 503). CAFGU members are often selected because of their influence in their communities[71]; paid "relatively well," at a "subsistence" rate in a "region of extreme poverty"; are trained by and assigned to an AFP commander (Podder 2012, 503). Podder

[71] One CAFGU member that Podder (2012, 508) spoke to was a former MNLF member.

(2012, 511) credits the CAFGU system and its attractiveness (via pay) and civilian fear of the increasingly present AFP in the region, for a higher degree of "cooperation between civilians and the agents of the state" at the MILF's expense.

On Oct. 15, 2012, the MILF and GRP signed the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, which "map[ped] out through 2016" a plan to implement an autonomous Moro region (ICG 2012, 18). Prior to the Agreement's signing, the MILF had dropped its 2011 demand of President Aquino that the GRP implement the MOA-AD, which the ICG (2012, 18) takes to be a signal of the rebels' "commitment to a negotiated peace" and their recognition of Aquino's willingness to accommodate them. Conceding the MOA-AD was a calculated risk by the MILF, according to the ICG (2012, 18): its leaders risked their credibility as the Moro people's purported representative if the Agreement's "risky territorial formula" were to result in a lesser Bangsamoro than promised by years of conflict between the rebels and the government. All provinces' inclusion in the proposed autonomous region will be subject to plebiscite (ICG 2012, 7). Thus, there is a real risk that parts of ARMM would not choose autonomy, since the MNLF-led first attempt at a Moro autonomous region "has been an unmitigated disaster" (ICG 2012, 7). Those that have soured on the idea of autonomy could reject joining the Bangsamoro under the Agreement's two-part "opt in first, then vote to join" system of determining the autonomous region's makeup (ICG 2012, 8). The possibility that the MILF could end up with "a smaller area" than even the ARMM, let alone the proposed BJE under the MOA-AD, would be "unconscionable" (ICG 2012, 7-8).

The passage of the BBL would be the endgame for the plan set in motion by the Framework Agreement, but as early as 2012 members of the GRP had expressed doubts of its

ability, if it even passes, to end the four-decade Moro conflict. Their concerns are rooted in the perceived current weakness of the MILF – that it has lost the "legitimacy to negotiate on behalf of the Bangsamoro" (ICG 2012, 18). Kato's BIFF represents one element of the Moro self-determination movement no longer under MILF control, though its disruptive impact has been limited by joint policing from the AFP and the MILF (ICG 2012, 16). More threatening to the peace, perhaps, is the residual threat of the MNLF, which "largely" controls the ARMM that would be dissolved by the BBL (Abuza 2012, 6). The Tausug-dominated rivals of the primarily Maguindanaon and Maranaon MILF are strong where Murad's organization is weak, in their homeland of the Sulu archipelago southwest of Mindanao Island, and are said to have "refused to accede to any agreement that would supersede" theirs, which had created the ARMM (Abuza 2012, 6).

The Sulu archipelago, along with the other areas of the southern Philippines outside of MILF influence, likely represent the next frontier that the GRP must conquer to end the insurgency. The government suffered a military reminder of this when the long-deposed Misauri declared a "Bangsamoro Republic" from Sulu before "disappearing from public view" on Aug. 12, 2013, which was then followed by an armed MNLF attempt to "raise the 'Bangsamoro Republic'" flag in the city hall of Zamboanga City on Sept. 9, 2013 (Sidel 2014, 69). The AFP response was a rout of the MNLF, perhaps reflecting the relatively small armed threat posed by MNLF malcontents, but Sidel (2014, 69) writes that the Zamboanga City incident was indicative more of the MNLF's political threat. The attack on Zamboanga City, in other words, was a symptom of Manila's narrow focus on the MILF aspect of the peace process and a "failure to recognize and reward powerful local intermediaries in the Sulu Archipelago" (Sidel 2014, 69).

That's not to say that MNLF resistance to the BBL was unexpected. Rather, it was anticipated as early as the signing of the Framework Agreement in 2012. In rallying support for the planned BBL, the MILF had then begun testing the political waters in areas where it is weaker – the island provinces of Basilan and Tawi-Tawi, for one (ICG 2012, 15). Sulu, however, was always expected to be a political battleground for support of a new Bangsamoro autonomous region; politicians there, historically antagonistic toward the MILF, are thought to be planning to "beat the MILF at its own game" during the 2016 elections, if the BBL is passed by then and the plebiscite on the composition of the autonomous region will be held (ICG 2012, 16).

Sulu and Basilan also happen to be the home base of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), a "thuggish" and Islamic fundamentalist (*Salafi*) former offshoot of the MNLF infamous for its kidnap-for-ransom and terrorism activities (Watts et. al 2014, 67). Both are purported by the ASG to be committed in pursuit of the creation of an Islamic state in the southern Philippines; the latter has earned the group a long-held reputation, sometimes substantiated, of being an affiliate of both al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (Watts et. al 2014, 67). The ASG is said to have "enjoyed shelter and support" in Sulu and Basilan from local politicians during its two-decade existence (Sidel 2015, 223).

Through its high-profile attacks and kidnappings, the ASG has at times drawn greater press and international attention than has the MILF (McKenna 2007, 6; Tuazon 2008, 81). In 2003, the U.S. military spent six months in the then-"key lair" of the ASG, Basilan Island, during which up 1,000 U.S. Special Forces assisted the AFP in policing the terrorist and criminal threat projected by the group (Montesano 2003, 161). The ASG threat is credited with turning the Philippines into an "important front in the U.S. Global War on Terrorism" – in 2003, the U.S.

designated the country a “Major Non-NATO Ally” (Watts et. al 2014, 76). And from January 2002 to Sept. 2014, the U.S. operated an “anti-terror contingent” of “about 500 U.S. forces” at Camp Navorro in Zamboanga City – the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) – which provided “real-time intelligence” to the AFP in its operations against the ASG (Tuazon 2008, 86-87; *PhilStar.com* via The Associated Press 2014).

Moro terrorism or apolitical crime? The case of the Abu Sayyaf Group

In the Sulu archipelago, the question, "Who governs?" is significantly more difficult to answer than it is in Central Mindanao. "No one knows who really wields power in this once prosperous area," writes Gutierrez (2000b), referencing the persistent state of anarchy in what used to be the seat of the Sulu sultanate prior to Spanish colonization. Amid poverty that ranks among "the poorest" of the poorest provinces in the Philippines, the AFP, MNLF, and an "assortment of warlords and political clans" all vie for control of the Sulu archipelago's 157 islands and islets, yet none can be said to be dominant (Gutierrez 2000b, 44). In practice, the province has a "de facto political subdivision not found in any map or government documents"; these "invisible boundaries" are instead set through projection of power from the various pockets of territory held by the AFP, MNLF, and politically influential and militarily equipped Suluanon families (Gutierrez 2000b, 46).

Violence is the instrument through which influence is exerted in Sulu. Its prevalence is such that some Suluanos' "most vivid recollections of violence" are from the "numerous pocket wars" between the private armies of "feuding families," rather than the AFP's razing of Suluanon capital of Jolo during the GRP-MNLF civil war of the 1970s (Gutierrez 2000b, 46). According to Gutierrez (2000c, 358-359), a Suluanon warlord's power is determined by his *galang*, the respect he earns through a "reputation and capacity for violence." *Galang* provides "security" in the "highly unstable and volatile" political climate in Sulu, per Gutierrez (2000c, 358). The Hobbesian free-for-all in Sulu is illustrated by Gutierrez's (2000b, 78) interview with a Suluanon farmer: "If I have five heads of cattle and I brought them out to graze without a long

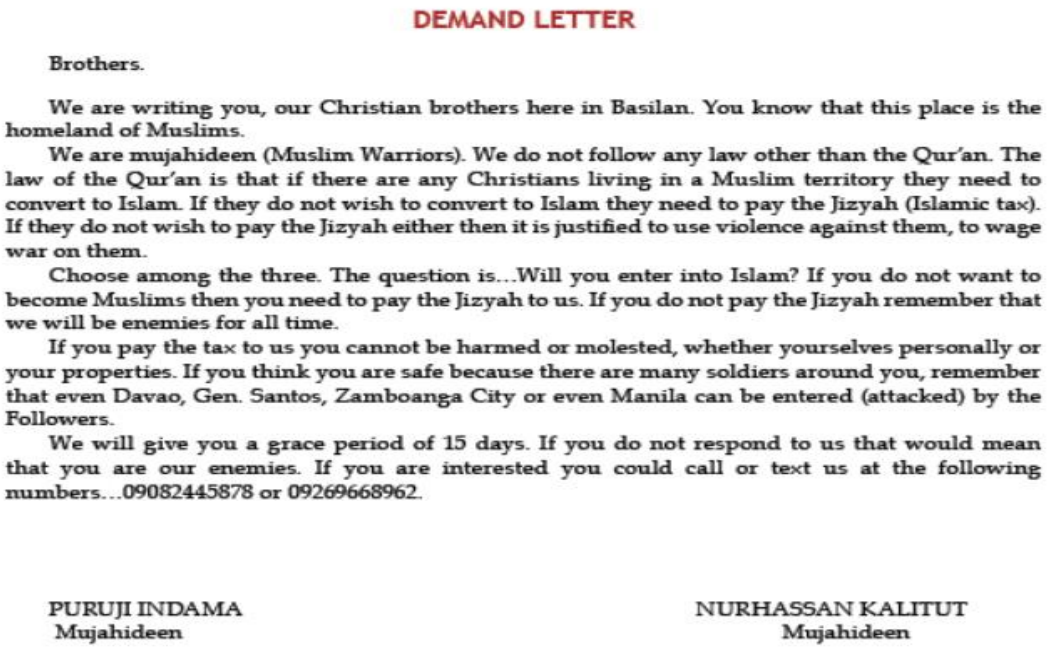
firearm, those with arms will seize my cattle," he said. "If that happens, to whom do I turn to complain?"

It is in this environment of violence that the ASG has carved out a niche for itself in the Moro secessionist conflict as an extremist and terrorist group. The ASG claims to wage jihad in the southern Philippines toward "creation of an independent Islamic state encompassing parts of Southern Thailand, the island of Borneo, the Sulu Archipelago, and Mindanao" (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2015; henceforth START). Despite its capacity for destruction and disruption, however, the ASG has never advanced a concrete political agenda even in its early days (McKenna 2007, 7) and is described by Abuza (2012, 7) as sometimes "a movement with ideological pretensions and sometimes nothing more than a criminal enterprise." The protean nature[72] of the ASG has made the terrorism and kidnapping outfit somewhat of an enigma in the context of the MNLF- and MILF-led self-determination movement.

Even the details of the organization's origin are cloudy. Many claim that the extremist group's founder, Abdurajak Janjalani, formed the ASG sometime between 1989 and 1991 after having returned to Mindanao from Afghanistan, where he purportedly fought alongside the *Mujahideen* in the Afghan-Soviet war (Aquino 2009, 60; Cragin et. al 2007, 31). The Abu Sayyaf Group, now officially named Al-Harakutul Islamiyya, is said to have been originally named in honor of founder of an Afghan military academy, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf (Rivera 2008,

[72] The ASG is said to have "degenerated into a loose collection of bandits and warlords" after its founder, Abdurajak Janjalani, was killed in 1998. It is also said to have attempted to legitimize around "mid-2004," under the leadership of Janjalani's younger brother, Khaddafy. Khaddafy would rename the ASG "Al-Harakatul Islamiyya," a move that "several commentators in Southeast Asia" called a shift "toward a more explicit jihadist focus" (Cragin et. al 2007, 31-32). But after Khaddafy's death, the ASG was again described as "not know[ing] what it wants" and was said to exhibit a "lack of clear objectives" (Ugarte and Turner 2011, 408).

41). Others, however, refute the Afghan origins of the group; the ASG's founder had never been to Afghanistan, according to Julkipli Wadi of the University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies, who cites Janjalani's father as a source (Taylor 2010, 41-42). Santos Jr. and Dinampo (2008, 117) agree that Janjalani had never been to Afghanistan, and instead trace the ASG's origins to Libya. Janjalani, in 1986, openly challenged Misauri's leadership amidst "unproductive peace negotiations" between the MNLF and the GRP; Misauri, in response, is said to have sent the to-be extremist group founder to "cool off" in Tripoli. There, Janjalani spent four years at an Islamic missionary work (*dakwah*) university, where he did not "cool off"; on the contrary, he convinced "three fellow Moros" to join him in creating a new secessionist group that, to him, was better informed by the "Islamic concept of *Jihad*" than the largely secular MNLF (Santos Jr. and Dinampo 2008, 117).



DEMAND LETTER

Brothers.

We are writing you, our Christian brothers here in Basilan. You know that this place is the homeland of Muslims.

We are mujahideen (Muslim Warriors). We do not follow any law other than the Qur'an. The law of the Qur'an is that if there are any Christians living in a Muslim territory they need to convert to Islam. If they do not wish to convert to Islam they need to pay the Jizyah (Islamic tax). If they do not wish to pay the Jizyah either then it is justified to use violence against them, to wage war on them.

Choose among the three. The question is...Will you enter into Islam? If you do not want to become Muslims then you need to pay the Jizyah to us. If you do not pay the Jizyah remember that we will be enemies for all time.

If you pay the tax to us you cannot be harmed or molested, whether yourselves personally or your properties. If you think you are safe because there are many soldiers around you, remember that even Davao, Gen. Santos, Zamboanga City or even Manila can be entered (attacked) by the Followers.

We will give you a grace period of 15 days. If you do not respond to us that would mean that you are our enemies. If you are interested you could call or text us at the following numbers...09082445878 or 09269668962.

PURUJI INDAMA
Mujahideen

NURHASSAN KALITUT
Mujahideen

Figure 11: A translated ASG letter extorting Christians to pay the Jizyah, *a tax on non-Muslims residing in Muslim lands (Taylor 2010, 43)*

What's also unclear is the degree to which the group operates independently of the other power players in the southern Philippines conflict. Both the MNLF and the MILF had in the 1990s claimed that the ASG had been infiltrated by the AFP; according to one MNLF source, the rebels had spotted Janjalani alongside an undercover former officer of the Philippine Air Force in Nov. 1994 (Gutierrez 2000b, 62). For instance, the MILF accused the AFP of engineering an ASG kidnapping in Liguasan Marsh as a pretense to clear the area, which at the time had been an MILF stronghold, for use by Christian settlers and foreign investors (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 267). The former President of the Senate of the Philippines, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., also claimed AFP involvement with the ASG, accusing former AFP General Alexander Aguirre, also former national security adviser under Estrada during his presidency, had been the "handler" of the extremist group since 1991 (Bauzon 2008, 130). Pimentel Jr. also claimed that the ASG had "turned into Frankenstein's monster" and escaped government control after 1995 (Bauzon 2008, 130).

Likewise, Rogers (2004, 17) argues that the ASG's "most important outside connections" are not transnational terrorism networks[73] but the police, military and government officials in the Philippines, who "sell firepower and immunity to the brigands for a share of the spoils." Eduardo Ugarte, of the Global Terrorism Research Centre at Monash University, also casts doubt on the ASG's ability to operate without the "financial sponsorship and protection" of Philippine politicians, businessmen, police, and the military; further, he asserts that these parties "frequently

[73] Granted, following Rogers' writing, the ASG is thought to have received both technology and training from Jemaah Islamiyah. A change in the "nature and sophistication" of the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) employed by the ASG in the mid-2000s led "regional commentators [to] concur" that the Moro extremist group was indeed collaborating with JI (Cragin et al. 2007, 37-39).

use the ASG as convenient scapegoats for their own crimes (Santos Jr. and Dinampo 2008, 127-128). If Rogers' (2004) and Ugarte's assessments of the ASG are taken to be true, they would imply that the extremist group is less of a manifestation of the Moro secessionist movement than a reflection of the endemic role of crime[74] in Sulu, where the ASG happens to be based. There, both petty and syndicated violence are the norm; the latter, as previously mentioned, serves as the vehicle of local politicians for the projection of their power in the region, in absence of state institutions (Gutierrez 2000c, 356). In fact, Commander Robot and Nandi Uddih, two members of the ASG to whom the group's "bandit" reputation is sometimes attributed, had previously served in enforcer roles for Suluanon "politician warlords" (Santos Jr. and Dinampo 2008, 127).

The AFP, on the other hand, calls the ASG a "dirty tricks department" for the rebels – in other words, a vehicle for the MILF to inflict damage on the GRP as a form of political pressure while maintaining plausible deniability (Gutierrez 2000b, 62). Anecdotal evidence seems to point away from direct collaboration between the MILF and ASG, though. Officially, the MILF condemns the ASG as "completely un-Islamic," although the two groups are said to have considered a formal alliance in the past; a formal agreement between them never materialized (Abuza 2005, 470). Abuza (2005, 471-472) does note that "the MILF clearly enjoys having the Abu Sayyaf around," if only to "keep government forces spread thin."

Because of the indeterminate nature of the ASG's allegiances and political goals, I will not attempt to explain the political logic behind the various terrorist attacks and kidnappings conducted by the extremist group, at least not from its perspective only. Instead, any following

[74] "The outlaw identity has a long history in [the] Muslim Philippines," write Santos Jr. and Dinampo (2008, 124). "Among Philippine Muslims, the career of famous outlaws of history are enshrined, like that of Jesse James, in story and song."

assessment of terrorism during the southern Philippines conflict will focus on its effect on the mainstream MNLF- or MILF-led self-determination movement. That is to say, when a terrorist attack or kidnapping is attributed by one side in the conflict to another, I will attempt to explain, hypothetically, the political logic (if any) facing the accused of perpetrating or facilitating the attack or kidnapping.

III. Explaining non-state actor-government relations in the Southern Philippines

To recap, the current Moro conflict in the southern Philippines began in part with a non-violent protest movement at the University of the Philippines, which was sparked by a growing perception of social and policy discrimination against Muslims in the country. Objections to this discrimination was then articulated by a growing class of Moro intellectuals from average economic backgrounds, like Misauri and Hashim, who were therefore unattached to the traditional Muslim elite in the southern Philippines that had historically acceded to Manila. This localized social movement was then catalyzed into Moro outrage after the Jabidah incident, which also angered the then-governor of the Malaysian province of Sabah, Tun Mustapha, who shared ethnic ties with the Tausug recruits summarily executed by the AFP. Meanwhile, an aggressive Marcos began targeting the congressional seats in the southern Philippines held by members of the opposing political party. These congressmen, traditional Muslim politicians all, thus began seeking an alternative source of political leverage against the Marcos regime.

With the aid of Mustapha and the traditional Muslim politicians that had governed Mindanao for years, Misauri and his fellow Moro intellectuals formed an underground self-determination movement, trained in Sabah and backed by Libya. Its goal was the creation of an independent state that could protect the interests of Muslims in the southern Philippines; it was to be called the Bangsamoro, the "Moro nation," a manufactured ethnicity that would unite the various Muslim tribal groups in the region against oppression from Manila.

The resulting MNLF, a loosely bound coalition of Muslim leaders across the region, was provoked into a civil war with the government by Marcos' declaration of martial law, which began with preemptive weapons seizures in the Mindanao region. Perhaps foreshadowing the

disunity to come in the movement, the forces of one Moro ethnic group started the fighting before the MNLF gave the go-ahead. Much of the rest of the war would be fought by this ad hoc army, perhaps united only by their shared enemy in Marcos. Of the few Muslim elites that allied themselves and their private armies with the MNLF, most would later join the government as collaborators. The rank and file, on the other hand, cited a responsibility to defend themselves, their families, and the Islamic faith as their motivations for joining the MNLF, rather than a belief in Misauri's proposed Bangsamoro (McKenna 1998, 183).

The Marcos administration was pressured into negotiations by the OIC, which threatened OPEC sanctions if the GRP were to have refused. However, at the negotiating table, Marcos was able to take advantage of the many inherent divisions within the MNLF. He first targeted the elites who were the least dedicated to the cause; with their defection to the government came a weakening in both the MNLF's military strength and political reputation. He then targeted the ideological disunity of the movement with a nominal offer of autonomy, knowing that the hardliners would balk at conceding while the pragmatists would want to accept the offer. Schisms began forming following the non-implementation of the autonomy agreement, with several parties challenging Misauri's leadership of the MNLF. Misauri expelled the primary dissidents from the organization – the traditional elites, who would join the Marcos regime; the Maranaon faction of the MNLF, which would also join the government; and the more religiously conservative and primarily Maguindanaon faction of Hashim, who would thereafter begin building the MILF.

By the time Marcos was deposed by popular uprising, the MILF had already built a rudimentary system of Islamic governmental institutions where the GRP equivalents were non-

existent, with a "nerve center" at its Camp Abubakar. Misauri, on the other hand, was politically dead, but from the international community's perspective, still the face of the Moro secessionist movement. President Corazon Aquino also recognized Misauri's claim to represent the Moro people, designating his MNLF as the secessionists' side of the negotiating table. Hashim's MILF was thus relegated to the background as the GRP and MNLF argued back and forth for nearly a decade over what became the 1996 agreement that was to begin implementation of the ARMM and was supposed to integrate MNLF cadres into the AFP.

ARMM was and continues to be a failure, causing its first governor, Misauri, to lose legitimacy as the purported leader of the Moro self-determination movement. By the late 1990s, the torch was passed to Hashim's MILF, which by that time had built a Moro de facto state in central Mindanao. The MILF had opened Camp Abubakar to guests in an effort to demonstrate its ability to govern an independent Bangsamoro state; by that time, it had achieved de facto governance over the parts of Mindanao Island outside of GRP control, running a system of Islamic law institutions from Abubakar through its various camps scattered across the region. In addition, the MILF had built guerrilla outposts in areas where the government or the MNLF were strong in an effort to expand its influence.

That the MILF was able to establish this de facto state was a testament to the social and political influence of Hashim's organization at the time. But the Ramos government's concessions to the MILF cannot be discounted; it is likely that the GRP, constrained by both domestic and international politics, was unwilling to start another war with the Moros after having just agreed to peace with the previous leaders of the Moro movement.

By the time of the Estrada presidency, these constraints had evidently dissipated to the point where the GRP was able to declare "All-Out War" against the MILF. The rebels, choosing to engage the government in conventional warfare, were inevitably overwhelmed by the AFP's comparative advantage in battles between armies over fixed locations. The AFP quickly overran Abubakar and the other major MILF camps, forcing the rebels to revert to a guerrilla strategy from mobile base commands. All-Out War marked the death of the Moro de facto state and the beginning of the MILF's decline from its peak.

Two events changed the landscape of GRP-MILF relations shortly after. The first was Estrada's forced exit from office by popular uprising and his succession by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who replaced All-Out War with "All-Out Peace." The second was September 11th, which reinvigorated both U.S. and GRP interest in a renewed military partnership, which would have otherwise been a political impossibility given the Philippine public's disdain for the U.S. military and its perceived neocolonial influence on the Philippines following decolonization. That two Islamist terrorist groups (the ASG and JI) operated in the Philippines was enough justification for the U.S. to bring its War on Terror to Mindanao. From this point forward, a self-determination movement by a threatened minority was recast from a U.S. strategic perspective as a potential vector for transnational terrorism.

The Arroyo administration accorded the MILF political status as a self-determination movement rather than as a terrorist group. However, AFP operations against terrorist elements in Mindanao inextricably crossed paths with the MILF; whether this was by design or unavoidable is unclear and up for debate. Regardless, the government's anti-terrorism initiatives became entangled with its efforts to resolve the Moro conflict, a further complication to negotiations that

endures to the present day. Significant in these entanglements was the AFP's move on the Buliok complex, headquarters of the MILF after the fall of Abubakar, which the government justified as retaliation for what it alleges to be either active or passive support by the rebels of the Pentagon gang, a terrorist offshoot of the MILF.

Shortly after the AFP captured Buliok, long-time MILF leader Hashim died of natural causes. His successor, Haji Murad, negotiated a ceasefire with the government shortly after. Murad has come to be known as a pragmatist, in contrast to his hardliner predecessor; he is credited with the MILF's shift away from demanding independence to its amenability to an autonomy agreement. His willingness to compromise led to half a decade of talks, mediated by Malaysia, which resulted in the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) and its proposed Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). The BJE would have been given an unprecedented level of autonomy in both governance and in control over natural resources. However, the process of determining which provinces would be included in the BJE became a national controversy, which sank the MOA-AD's attempt to end the Moro conflict.

In October of 2008, the Supreme Court of the Philippines ruled unconstitutional both the MOA-AD and the Arroyo administration's attempt to enact an autonomy agreement that necessarily required an amendment to the constitution. This failure of an attempt at a negotiated solution began fractionalization within the MILF – hardliner elements such as Kato, who disagreed with negotiating with the GRP, resumed hostilities following the MOA-AD's defeat. Kato and his followers were eventually denounced by the MILF as a "lost command"; they had already reorganized as a radical secessionist group called the BIFF, also known as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM). The MILF was also weakened by the

increased strength of the AFP in areas where traditional supporters of the MILF live; the expanded presence of the military, aided by the CAFGU and CVO systems, has discouraged both explicit and covert support of the rebels by civilians.

Meanwhile, the Murad-led MILF and the GRP continued negotiations that produced the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2012, then a four-year plan to implement a new Moro autonomous region. On March 27, 2014, the GRP and the MILF signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, which officially "marked the end of the armed conflict between the government of the Philippines and MILF" (UCDP). On Sept. 10, 2014, President Aquino personally submitted the draft law that would create this autonomous region (the BBL) to the Philippine Congress in a "rare show of support for a piece of legislation" (*GMANetwork* 2014). The BBL was "expected" to be voted on in "March or April 2015"; following the Mamasapano incident, the vote was pushed back to June (*CogitAsia.com* 2015b; *PhilStar.com* 2015).

If the BBL passes, the next concern for both the GRP and the MILF will be whether or not the areas of MNLF and Tausug influence, the ARMM and the Sulu archipelago, respectively, will agree to the autonomy agreement as advanced by the MILF, their rival. Another concern is the residual threat of terrorism and lost commands in the region, given that the Mamasapano incident – which may threaten the BBL – was caused by the pursuit of a JI operative in BIFF and MILF territory.

The following sections will assess the factors influencing the Moro movement's political behavior – non-violent institutional politics, guerrilla warfare, conventional civil war, and perhaps sponsorship of terrorism – over the course of its pursuit of self-determination.

(1) The choice to rebel: non-violence vs. violent opposition

Before analyzing the political strategic choices of the MNLF and the MILF, it is important to consider the decision by the groups to even begin, let alone continue, their pursuits of self-determination through civil war. That is to say, why did they choose to fight rather than to attempt to find a solution to their grievances within the political system?

Grievance and opportunity

Gurr (1970) argues that "relative deprivation" – in the case of a minority, its perception that it is being denied its fair share relative to the majority – explains why a group like the Moros might rebel against the cause of this deprivation, usually the government. Collier and Hoeffler (2004), on the other hand, find little support for the relative deprivation theory; in a large-N empirical analysis of the onset of civil wars, they find that variables proxying for the "viability" of a challenge to the government better explain why non-state actors rebel. In other words, Gurr (1970) argues that grievances against the government cause rebellions; on the contrary, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argue that the opportunity to successfully challenge the government causes rebellions.

Cunningham (2013) argues that both grievances and opportunity matter, and adds that lack of opportunity – to seek institutional redress of grievances – can also explain the occurrence of rebellion. Indeed, both grievance and opportunity seem relevant to make sense in the context of the Moro conflict. Regarding the former, Misauri and his activist colleagues had protested systematic discrimination against Muslims in the Philippines even before the to-be secessionists began their calls for self-determination (de los Santos Jr. 1978, 211; McKenna 1998, 140-141). Their early appeals for Moro unity, too, drew upon a centuries-long grievance against the GRP,

which to them represented a continuation of Spanish and U.S. colonization of the southern Philippines (McKenna 1998, 143). And both opportunity to successfully rebel and lack of opportunity to pursue alternatives to rebellion seemed to have steered the Moros toward civil war. At the onset of the conflict, Misauri's MNLF was bolstered by domestic support via Lucman (McKenna 1998, 147) and international support from Mustapha and Ghadaffi (McKenna 1998, 148). As for a conventional politics solution, Misauri might have seen the barriers to entry in the GRP's elite-dominated politics or Marcos' declaration of martial law as irreconcilable obstacles to an in-system solution to anti-Muslim discrimination.

More on opportunity: poverty, terrain, population, and political instability

Fearon and Laitin (2003), like Collier and Hoeffler (2004), argue that opportunity to rebel explains civil war onset. The former examine opportunity from the government perspective, though; rather than focusing on rebel strength, Fearon and Laitin (2003) look factors that limit state capacity and thus increase opportunities for successful rebellions. Specifically, they emphasize poverty, rough terrain, large country populations, and political instability as indicators of state weakness that explain the onset of civil war.

Poverty seems to have an indeterminate effect on conflict onset in the southern Philippines. As a predictor of onset, higher poverty seems to decrease the probability of civil war due to its dampening effect on rebel capabilities. The onset and the termination of the MNLF-GRP civil war in the 1970s correspond with the joining and exiting of the movement by Muslim elites; having perhaps raised the aggregate economic power of the MNLF, the elites made the civil war possible just as they contributed to its end in the GRP's favor (McKenna 1998, 168).

On the other hand, relative poverty rates in the country do seem to explain the geographic distribution of armed conflict, in that areas that are poorer tend to have higher rates of rebellion. The data presented in Figure 12 below, showing the percentages of adults with fewer than six years of schooling by region, support Fearon and Laitin's (2003) theory that armed conflict occurs in areas with a lower degree of state penetration as proxied for by poverty rates[75]. The Moros and another insurgency in the Philippines, the communist New People's Army, are active in the dark-yellow areas of the southern and central islands of the country, respectively.

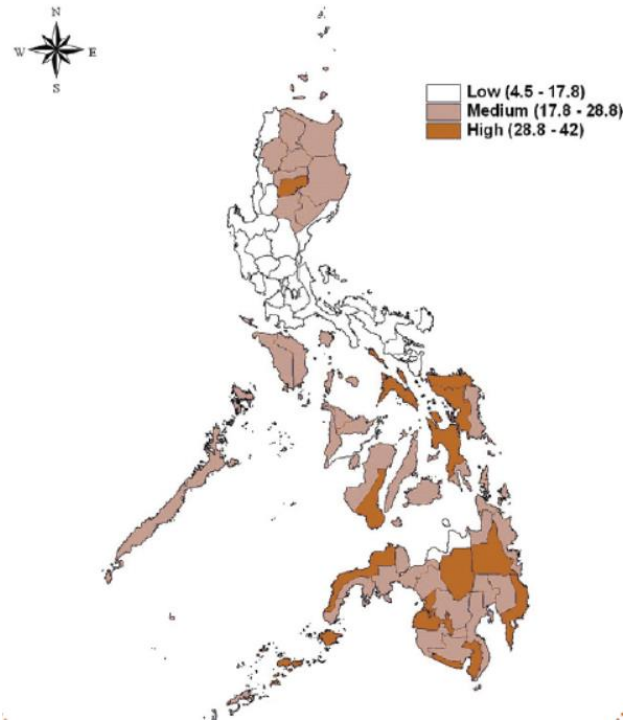


Figure 12: Percentage of adults with fewer than six years of schooling in the Philippines (HDN 2005a, 61).

Fearon and Laitin's (2003) theory on rough terrain has a similar effect on civil war in the southern Philippines, in that it doesn't explain onset (as a static effect) but does explain where it

[75] Using years of schooling would proxy for state capability – in that state penetration would likely correlate with government provision of primary education – without capturing the military capability-dampening effect of low income. In addition, lack of schooling opportunities would also capture the incentives facing potential recruits to join the rebellion: becoming a rebel would offer higher relative payoff than pursuing other occupations.

emerges. Under Marcos, there was a marked divergence in infrastructure development, which his regime was "well known for," in Muslim areas of Mindanao relative to Christian areas (Gonzales 2000, 108). There were "only 20.4 kilometers of road for every 100,000 Muslims, compared with 397 kilometers for every 100,000 non-Muslims" during the Marcos era; access to safe water and electricity were similarly asymmetrically distributed between Muslim and non-Muslim areas (Gonzales 2000, 108). However, in the case of the Moros, it is unclear whether this asymmetry is associated with incidence of armed conflict because it measures state capacity or if it measures grievances, though Fearon and Laiton (2003) only found the former to be significant.

In addition to offering insight into the regional location of the conflict, terrain also explains where specifically in the region armed violence occurs. All of the actors in the Moro conflict chose to base themselves out of relatively inaccessible areas. The MILF built its first camps in the mountains of Mindanao Island and, even at its strongest, its encampments were located in "marshlands and swamps" that the military did not have "the mobility" to access (McKenna 1998, 212; Guteirrez and Guialal 2000, 288). "The rebels are the masters of the Rio Grande [in Mindanao] and its tributaries," said Noel Detoyato of the AFP's 6th Infantry Division to Gutierrez and Guialal (2000, 288). Such areas, like the Liguasan marsh, have been "natural refuge and sanctuary" for both the MILF and for groups like the ASG and JI, called "the kidnap gangs that threaten to turn Central Mindanao into bandit country" by Gutierrez and Guialal (2000, 288). Likewise, geography in the Sulu archipelago has long facilitated the non-state violence of the MNLF, the ASG, and local warlords. Sulu and its fellow islands to the southwest of Mindanao, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi, are among the provinces with the most "rampant" smuggling of firearms (Quilop 2010, 241). This makes sense due to their proximity to Sabah,

Malaysia, from which arms bound for the Mindanao region are typically smuggled (Quilop 2010, 241).

Finally, large country populations and political instability, as country-level measures for a one-country case study, are thus not as relevant in explaining the emergence of the Moro conflict. However, the former makes a lot of sense when it comes to explaining why the Philippines might be more prone to rebellion than countries with smaller populations. A large population "makes it necessary for the center to multiply layers of agents to keep tabs on who is doing what at the local level," write Fearon and Laitin (2003, 81), and the necessity for greater dependency on agents almost perfectly describes the dynamic between Manila and local elites in the Mindanao region. The Marcos regime lost government control of the southern Philippines when Muslim elites joined the MNLF but restored that control when it brought such elites, like the Magic Eight in Sulu, back into the GRP fold as collaborators (Gutierrez 2000b, 328). The Arroyo regime was criticized for its reliance on the Ampatuans, deadly enemies of the MILF but warlords in their own right[76], to govern their part of Maguindanao in the GRP's stead (Kraft 2010, 253-254).

Political instability, on the other hand, doesn't do a great job of explaining trends in political violence over the course of the Moro conflict. True, the MNLF-GRP war was precipitated by Marcos' declaration of martial law, the beginnings of a transition into autocracy from democracy (McKenna 1998, 156). But the transition back to democracy under Corazon

[76] Multiple members of the Ampatuan clan were charged and arrested in connection after the 2009 "Ampatuan massacre," which killed 58 – including 32 journalists – in a convoy "supposed to register" for the Ampatuan's rivals in the Maguindanao gubernatorial race. It was called the "worst single-day election violence in Philippine history." However, seven "prominent Ampatuan clan members" remained at large as of 2013, perhaps indicating the government's relative weakness in the region. Judicial proceedings on the Ampatuan massacre are still ongoing as of this writing (*GMA Network* 2013*; GMA Network* 2015b).

Aquino, despite being a time of regime instability due to the latent threat of a military coup (Dolan 1993, 228), was not associated at all with an increase in armed violence. Rather, the transition from Marcos to Aquino sparked the resumption of peace negotiations with the Moros (Dolan 1993, 292). Granted, neither the "politically dead" MNLF nor the then-underground MILF were in an ideal political or military state to challenge the government at the time, and there's a chance that Aquino, anticipating a spike in political violence due to the instability of her regime, might have preemptively restarted negotiations. It's equally likely, though, that both Moro parties were genuinely interested in the new political opportunities available to them with a new regime. This possibility is perhaps supported by both the MNLF and MILF's demonstrated interest in opening talks with the Aquino government (McKenna 1998, 244).

Opportunity, or lack thereof: ethnicity and exclusion from power

Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010), like Cunningham (2013), explain civil war onset through lack of opportunity to meaningfully participate in institutional politics. Among their findings, they emphasize exclusion from political power, loss of political power, and a history of previous conflict as significant in explaining the onset of violent political opposition.

Political exclusion seems to be relevant in explaining the Moro conflict's emergence. At the conflict's onset, the average Mindanaon Muslim was excluded from politics in two ways: first, through a feudal-esque system in which a small group of societal elites monopolized political power and second, through a national political system in which Muslim politicians "played subordinate roles" due to their less powerful political bases (Rivera 2008, 39). Loss of political power, too, seems relevant, though more so in the recurrence of conflict rather than its onset; after all, prior to the beginning of the conflict, few Moro politicians were in positions of

power and thus could not have even been demoted. Misauri, one of the first Moro leaders to be a position of power (as governor of the ARMM), resumed hostilities against the government through his splinter faction of the MNLF (the MBG) after being reportedly forced out of office by the machinations of the Arroyo administration (Abreu 2008a, 135).

However, the applicability to the Moro conflict of these two aspects of Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010) must be qualified by the arguable political non-salience of Moro as an ethnicity. Despite the best efforts of both the MNLF and the MILF, average Mindanaon Muslims still identify by first by tribal affiliation (Maguindanaon, Tausug, Maranao, etc.) before identifying across tribal rivalries as Muslims (Abuza 2012, 6). If Moro is not the relevant ethnic identity, then, it may be the exclusion of a tribal representative in politics that matters more in explaining conflict onset, at least at a more granular level of analysis. Further, family ties may take precedence even over tribal identities, given the regional significance of *rido*, the often violent ritual settling of scores undertaken by one family for slights against its honor from another (HDN 2005a, 63). The 2009 "Maguindanao massacre" allegedly perpetrated by the Ampatuan family against its political rivals is thought to be a political manifestation of *rido*, a collision of clan rivalry and local politics (*GMA Network* 2013). Thus, because of the greater significance of these subdivisions of "Moro," the exclusions of Muslims from power may not matter to Mindanaon Muslims as much as the exclusion of their tribe or their kin from political power.

Lastly, the previous conflict aspect of Cederman, Wimmer, and Min's (2010) theory applies rather well to the Moro conflict, given its propensity for resurgence (in other words, recurrent onset of civil war) and the four distinct attempts by the GRP to use a negotiated

settlement (regional autonomy) to end the conflict (UCDP). Toft's (2010) theory on why some civil war terminations endure offers additional insight into the longevity of the conflict in the southern Philippines. Toft (2010) finds that negotiated settlements tend to break down in the long-run and, perhaps counterintuitively, that rebel victories result in the most durable peace. In the context of the Moro self-determination movement, this finding makes some sense – having consistently fought each to a standstill, every lull in fighting in the conflict has resulted in a negotiated settlement. These negotiated settlements, in turn, have all failed to solve the fundamental driver of conflict recurrence in the southern Philippines: the Moro movement's perceived right to self-determination and its view that this right has yet to be granted (Boac 2001, 11).

But hypothetically, if the MILF were to win independence from the GRP through military or political means, it could conceivably address this fundamental issue at the center of the conflict and prevent recurrence of the conflict. This hypothetical doesn't really allow any confirmation or rejection of Toft's (2010) theory, though; such a theoretical exercise is rather meaningless because of the unlikelihood of such a victory – Timor Leste is the only[77] comparable case (Boac 2001, 7) – and an MILF strong enough to defeat the GRP would not have any reason to continue fighting the GRP. Toft (2010, 29) seems to consider such an outcome, conceding that the durability of peace following rebel victory might be driven by the "rebel legitimacy and capacity" necessary to defeat a host government in the first place. In a self-determination conflict such as that of the Moros, this "legitimacy and capacity" would probably contribute to the

[77] "[Timor Leste] showcases […] the first successful struggle for self-determination in this part of the world [Southeast Asia]," writes Boac (2001, 7).

stability of the resulting independent state. Alternatively, a lesser solution to the conflict, regional autonomy, might end the conflict for good via negotiated settlement if it can be achieved[78] and if the incentives facing the GRP to renege on the deal are carefully managed, as Toft (2010) suggests.

[78] The finding by Cunningham (2006) that settlement is less likely if there are more veto players involved in a settlement process, coupled with anecdotal evidence that one veto player (the Suluanons and the MNLF) actually does threaten the current proposed negotiated settlement (the BBL), suggest that a negotiated end to the Moro conflict in its entirely may not come into fruition in the foreseeable future.

(2) The special circumstance of de facto states: interstate war theory and the MILF

Lemke (2008) argues that some non-state actors – specifically, territorial ones (de facto states) – behave in manners similar to official state actors. That is to say, interactions between or among such de facto states and official states (often, civil war, but not necessarily) or between or among other de facto states resemble international relations in an "international system." As a matter of level of analysis, this international system could include de facto states and official states operating within the same region; be comprised exclusively of de facto states operating within a region, which is the specific case studied by Lemke (2008); or simply be the international system, with the de facto state conducting international relations with official states as if it itself were officially recognized. This last case describes that of Somaliland, a breakaway territory from Somalia (often described as a "failed state") that is lobbying for sovereign state status (*BBC.com* 2015). The self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland boasts "a working political system, government institutions, a police force and its own currency," engages in international relations and trade, and, like many countries, relies on remittances from its diaspora population to keep its economy afloat (*BBC.com* 2015).

To be considered analogous to an official state in political behavior, not all de facto states must reach a level of consolidation that Somaliland has achieved. I believe that the MILF de facto state of the 1990s, though not quite to the point of conducting international relations with official states as an autonomous political entity, does resemble an official state in its "international relations" in its "international system" with the GRP. The MILF did not exclusively build military institutions, as was the case with the MNLF, and instead created a hierarchical executive, legislative, and judicial system of institutions that ran from the MILF

Central Committee level to the *barangay* (village) level (Vitug and Gloria 109). In these villages, the MILF operated its equivalent of a civilian police force (the "Internal Security Force"), which performed regular police duties in addition to religious policing, enforcing adherence to the Koran (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 111). These institutions were administrated from a geographically dispersed system of base camps, which, according to the MILF, did not have defensive walls[79] and were designed for "food production" and as "places of prayer" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 277).

The de-facto capital of this system of camps was Camp Abubakar, called a "small province[80]" and one of the MILF's first installations and a "model Islamic state" that the MILF built and opened to visitors as a demonstration of its ability to govern the Moro homeland (Abreu 2008a, 138; Vitug and Gloria 2000, 107-109). MILF "citizens" at Abubakar had access to a public-to-high school Islamic education system and a mosque; a "small commercial complex" with "variety stores, drugstores, hardware, and even a boutique"; and both farms (growing rice, fruit, and vegetables) and "multi-purpose cooperatives" (Abreu 2008a, 138; Vitug and Gloria 2000, 114). By 1997, Abubakar was equipped with a computer lab and was capable of internet access; the MILF operated its own website, from which it communicated with its international supporters (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 279). And, as a headquarters for a rebel organization, Abubakar was military equipped. It hosted a military academy[81] and a "modest" factory that

[79] Though, realistically, these camps were probably designed with the expectation that they would eventually be subjected to attack by the GRP.

[80] Abubakar was said to have an area of 1,198 square kilometers (Quimpo 2000, 119), though other estimates compared the camp to a military base, analogous to the AFP's Camp Aguinaldo (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 107).

[81] The MILF would later be found to have trained Jemaah Islamiyah operatives at Abubakar in 1994; the MILF admits to having hosted the JI, but denies "formal operational linkages with terrorists" and defends itself as having allowed "all kinds of Islamic visitors" access to its headquarters (Abuza 2005, 465; Rivera 2008, 47).

could supply ammunition weapons "a cut above" the armament of a typical non-state actor: "M79 grenade launchers, pistols, improvised M14 automatic rifles copied from the US Garand rifle, mortars (60 mm and 81 mm), and anti-tank weapons" (Abreu 2000a, 137; SSNNAGE 2010, 355).

Abubakar and the MILF's other major camp at the time, Bushra, sat at opposite ends of the national highway (the Narciso Ramos Highway, named after the father of former President Ramos) that spans central Mindanao. The MILF's control of central Mindanao at the time was such that for its 15th general assembly at Bushra, MILF soldiers driving from Abubakar on the Narciso Ramos Highway didn't even bother disguising themselves; advertised the meeting with banners on "nearly every kilomet[er]" of the highway; and had welcomed press coverage of the meeting, which had been reported on weeks before in national newspapers (Tiglao 1998, 26-27). In 1997, the AFP had called off an operation against the MILF after the latter threatened to declare war if government military operations in Moro territory continued (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 268). Then, the GRP signed an agreement with the MILF in which the government recognized seven of its camps as rebel territory (ICG 2004, 30). In addition, the people living under the MILF perceived it to be their army and, no matter how poor they were, would "never forget to set aside a scoop of rice for the rebels" (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 276).

Because the fundamental political differences and abilities of the MILF de facto state relative to when it was non-territorial or to the purely military and poorly consolidated MNLF, I believe that its interactions with the GRP can be considered de facto international relations between a state and a state-like political entity. As such, international relations theories concerning the dyadic relationship of two state actors should be generalizable to the MILF de

facto state-GRP dyad. This approach, I believe, is beneficial for the study of eligible non-state conflicts; adding the civil war and interstate war literatures together presents a dramatically larger pool of theories to consider when seeking to understand territorial non-state actor behavior. And if the separation between the studies of interstate and territorial civil wars is indeed arbitrary, combined analyses of both types of conflict may present "empirical realities" currently masked by their siloed study (Cunningham and Lemke 2013, 625).

The existence of a MILF de facto states presents two research questions. First, why was the MILF able to form a de facto state and the MNLF unable to? Because it seems advantageous for a self-determination movement to demonstrate an ability to govern its desired territory, I find this question worth answering. A follow-up to this question would be to explain why the de facto state emerged when it did and why it was able to endure for several years. In the southern Philippines conflict, a de facto state has existed for 10 years[82] between the lifetimes of two Moro groups, which have collectively existed as political organizations for 85 years. Why was this the case?

The second question would concern the theoretical implications of the MILF de facto state's existence – that models of dyadic behavior between official states can offer insight into the MILF's political behavior vis-à-vis the GRP. I attempt to answer both of these questions in the following sections.

[82] Abubakar was "born" at least by 1981 and the MILF de facto state "died" in 2000. Because the literature I consulted is not sufficient for me to determine when the de facto state was "born," I assume that the de facto state existed for half of the difference between the reported emergence of Abubakar and the de facto state's death – approximately 10 years. The MILF, created in 1977, has existed as a political organization for 38 years, as of this writing. The MNLF, created in 1968 as the MIM, its processor, has existed 47 years.

Building a de facto state: power by way of ethnic identity and rebel coalitions

"Moro" is a manufactured identity which belies the divisive power of tribal rivalries among the various Muslim ethnic groups of the southern Philippines (McKenna 1998, 164). The tenuous pan-ethnic Muslim alliance that was the 1970s MNLF collapsed after the 1976 autonomy agreement, after which the constituent groups of the organization lost the unifying effect of a common enemy (Gonzales 2000, 116). Even today, provincialism threatens the peace prospects in Mindanao; the entrenched differences between the Tausugs of the MNLF and the Sulu archipelago and the Maguindanaons, who comprise the majority of the MILF, have been a concern of a GRP that would prefer to achieve peace with both groups, not one or the other (Abuza 2012, 6).

Thus, in the case of the Moros, ethnic identity, in addition to offering insight into why the conflict started, also explains how the movement's political cohesion has varied over time. Factionalism reduced both the MNLF and the MILF to shells of their former selves (Gonzales 2000, 116; Abuza 2012, 5). On the other side of the coin, successful management by both organizations of their inherent fault lines explains their strength at their heydays. For instance, if the MNLF had consisted of only Misauri and the Tausugs, its Bangsamoro Army (BMA) probably would have been a guerrilla unit rather than a standing army[83] that, for a time, had engaged in conventional warfare (Ahmad 2000b, 30). In addition, Misauri probably would not have been able to claim representation of the Moro people had it not been for alliances between his fellow Tausugs and the central Mindanaon peoples, the Maguindanaons and the Maranaos.

[83] Though the MNLF was never unified to the point where ethnicity became irrelevant in battle. "Even at the height of the war, a pan-Moro MNLF unit never gained prominence," writes Gutierrez (2000e, 325).

But though Misauri's MNLF was able to muster an army, it was never centrally organized to the degree that it could have built the underpinnings of a de facto state.

The emergence of a MILF de facto state when a MNLF state never materialized can be partially explained by the former's high degree of political cohesiveness during the 1990s. The MILF accomplished this through an emphasis on Islamic law and living, in contrast to the secular orientation of the MNLF. Misauri had attempted to build a Bangsamoro using secular nationalism as its social glue, a failed tactic given that the rank and file of the MNLF were not drawn to the organization for its ideological goals; they had joined to defend their homes and families (McKenna 1998, 183). Hashim's MILF recognized that Islamic identity was a more natural common thread between the competing Muslim tribes of the southern Philippines. Since Islam was introduced to the region in the 14th century, religion has "imparted structure and unity among the diverse ethno-linguistic groups" in Mindanao and Sulu, according to some scholars of the region's conflict history (Podder 2012, 499). Taya (2007, 66) also credits the MILF's "mass support" to its focus on "Islamic symbols"; during the MILF's prime, it was common for families to send their children to MILF camps for education in the "Islamic way of life" (Podder 2012, 509).

Another potential unifying factor is social class, which never materialized in the Moro conflict. That there was never an uprising of the economically aggrieved of Mindanao – Muslims, Christians, and indigenous peoples alike – is perhaps a function of opportunity, in that the poor might not have had the resources to successfully challenge the government. Religion, too, helps explain the lack of a class-based rebellion; the concept of social class conflicts with

Quranic principles that prohibit private land ownership, the determinant of class status in an agrarian society like that of Mindanao (Ahmad 2000a, 9).

The traditional elite and counter elite leaderships that emerged instead in the Moro conflict limited the potential cohesiveness and durability of a Moro de facto state through conflict of interest. While the MNLF and MILF have both presented themselves as champions of socioeconomic justice, neither advanced any specific economic policies to redress economic inequality (Gutierrez 2000e, 326). This deficiency is problematic if, for the average Mindanaon, "relative deprivation" in the southern Philippines is viewed not on a Muslim and non-Muslim dimension but instead on a general have and have-not dimension. The latter seems to be the case in the southern Philippines; McKenna (1998, 229) found "some vocal disregard" for the *datu* (traditional nobility) system in central Mindanao. Citizens that he spoke with "hastened to point out" that the words *da* (absence) and *tu* (to grow) together "amounted to 'no growth'" (McKenna 1998, 229). That public support for the rebels is waning – protection, the MILF's most valued service, is perhaps less valuable now – and that the GRP seems to be succeeding in using economic development as a soft-power conflict resolution strategy could well indicate that the Moro movement is now suffering the costs of its failure (or inability) to address inequality (Podder 2012, 507).

Geography and de facto state formation

The "main determinant" of territorial control among violent non-state actors, according to de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2012), is state capacity. That is to say, territorial non-state actors – de facto states – are more likely to emerge in areas where government influence is weak or non-existent. de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2012) also find that geography ("rough

terrain") does not explain the incidence of territorial control by non-state actors; instead, it increases the likelihood of all non-state political violence.

The state capacity hypothesis explains the partial territoriality of the GRP-MNLF civil war in the early-to-mid 1970s, when the rebels utilized a "traditional but questionable strategy of creating fixed bases and attempting to hold them with relatively large contingents of fighters" (McKenna 1998, 158). Historically, GRP influence has been exerted in the Mindanao region through local elites; however, due to Marcos' aggression both in electoral politics and in his declaration of martial law, a select few of those elites, like Lucman, had swung their support toward the rebels early in the conflict (McKenna 1998, 162). State capacity in the region could be perceived to have diminished if, during this time, the instruments of the government's control over Mindanao had temporarily defected over to the MNLF. Similarly, the return of these elites to the GRP side, which also coincided with a decline in the MNLF, could be perceived as a restoration of government influence over the region. Indeed, the civil war of the 1970s barely changed the long-run political status quo – McKenna (1998, 168) writes that "the structure of Muslim politics in 1980 looked remarkably similar to that in 1968: formal political power […] remained in the hands of those most closely tied to the powers that controlled the central state."

The decline of the MILF de facto state seemed to respond to changes in state capacity in the same way as the rise and fall of the MNLF in the 1970s. At its strongest, the MILF replaced "practically inoperative" government structures in central Mindanao with its own Islamic law institutions (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 280). In one instance, when MILF territory reclaimed by the AFP was handed over to the civilian government, it was the "first time in 20 years" that a civilian police chief had set foot in the area (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 280). But the death of

the de facto state came as soon as the GRP decided to reclaim control of the region. Under the All-Out War policy of Estrada, who was determined to show the MILF that "that there is only one government and one armed forces in the Philippines," the AFP quickly wiped out the governmental structures that the MILF had built with a systematic dismantling of the rebels' base camp system (Labrador 2001, 225). State capacity in Mindanao was further bolstered under the Arroyo administration through the CAFGU and CVO systems; Arroyo also allied with local politicians and their private armies, continuing a long-standing tradition of collaboration between Manila and the traditional leadership of the southern Philippines (Kraft 2010, 253-254).

Geography, however, fails to explain why the MILF was able to create a de facto state but the MNLF was not. During both organizations' primes, they roughly operated in the same areas of the Mindanao region, though the latter was of course stronger in central Mindanao while the former was more prevalent in Sulu. State capacity doesn't tell the full story, either. For one, Sulu is sometimes described by Manila as "ungovernable" (Gutierrez 2000b, 46), "without law and order to speak of" (Gutierrez 2000b, 78). State penetration is virtually non-existent in the anarchic Sulu archipelago; at first glance, it is almost puzzling why the MNLF never established a de facto state there.

A closer look at Suluanon affairs reveals that Sulu's "ungovernable" reputation applies to all governance, not just state governance. Mindanao scholar Jeremy Beckett notes that, even under the sultanates, Sulu and Mindanao had been ruled as "segmentary states," with considerable power devolved from the sultans to the local datus (Gutierrez 2000b, 79). It is thus unsurprising that control of Sulu is split many ways among "different MNLF commanders" and the various strongholds of Suluanon families (Gutierrez 2000b, 46). That the Sulu province has

never been considered as a "single political unit to govern" explains why the MNLF, even where it is strongest, has not managed to become a territorial non-state actor.

Two other factors might explain why only the MILF was able to create a de facto state. The first is degree of political cohesiveness; Hashim's MILF was able to unify its mass base through its Islamist political appeals, as previously mentioned, while Misauri's MNLF probably would not have been able to draw in the average Mindanaon with its nationalist appeal, at least not in times of peace. ""The MNLF was always primarily a military – not a political – organization," writes Ahmad (2000b, 32). The other factor is power parity, but not in the traditional sense of power. In the late 1990s, the stalemate that the MILF was able to match force with the GRP was not only a function of the rebel organization's military and political strength, but also its power to threaten the peace then being negotiated with the MNLF. Because of this, the Ramos administration was unable to credibly threaten the MILF with a full military response to its challenge to GRP sovereignty; such a retaliation would have cost Ramos dearly in domestic and international reputation. The MILF, then, was able to consolidate its control over its territory due to these constraints on the government's ability to intervene.

Power parity, de facto states, and civil war

Two studies influence my qualitative assessment of power parity's explanatory power in the Moro conflict. One is written by Benson and Kugler (1998), who do not draw a distinction between territorial and non-territorial non-state actors. Benson and Kugler (1998), applying Power-Transition Theory to 26 countries over four years, find support for that particular interstate war model's ability to explain levels of violence, or conflict severity, in civil wars. Their study is one of a few that attempt to generalize neorealist power politics theories (Power-

Transition Theory is one) to the study of non-state conflicts. Another that attempts to do so, written by Lemke (2008), is the other study that I consider. Lemke (2008) finds strong support for Power-Transition Theory's explanatory power in the onset of war between de facto states, taken from an "international system" entirely composed of de facto states.

Power-Transition Theory, as originally posited by A.F.K Organski in the 1958 book World Politics, then built upon by subsequent research, models interstate war onset as a function of relative power parity between the dominant state in the international system (or, in later research, a subset of the international system) and a challenger state, interacted with a "status quo (dis)satisfaction" dummy variable. In essence, the model predicts that as two actors approach relative power parity with each other, their relative probabilities of defeating one another increases. And if one or both actors are interested in changing the political status quo, a dyad of such actors is likely to start a war, due to the higher expected probability of a victory facing both actors (de Soysa, Oneal, and Park 1997).

One-to-one power parity between a Moro actor and the GRP, by any standard measure, is a near impossibility in the southern Philippines conflict. During the Marcos era, the AFP is said to have deployed 187,500 troops to the region to fight an MNLF army that at best numbered 30,000 (McKenna 1998, 157; Ahmad 2000b, 25; 32). Relative power as measured by population also heavily favors the GRP; Moros account for "just 5 percent of all Filipinos" (Beary 2011, 53). Yet, the Moro forces have consistently fought the GRP to stalemates, having signed four separate autonomy agreements (three failed, arguably; one ongoing) with the government over 47 and counting years of conflict. This repeated phenomenon suggests that power parity as measured in so-called "hard power" measures – military strength and population – may not fully

capture the inability of either actor to defeat the other and the calculations of both to have attempted negotiated settlements during most of conflict's 47 years.

The missing factor is probably a measure of soft power, which the AFP has consciously attempted to deploy in the Moro conflict in recent decades (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 285). This AFP strategy explains no small part of why the MILF was able to consolidate its de facto state – a Ramos regime, constrained by soft power considerations as a democratic member of the international system, could not fully deploy its hard power capabilities against the Moro rebels. This might explain why, after Rajah Muda in 1997, the AFP chose to unilaterally end hostilities rather than to respond in kind to the MILF's threat of a declaration of war (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 268). Rather than fearing a military defeat at the hands of the rebels, what the GRP likely worried about was the international political backlash it would have faced if it were to have cracked down on the Moros a year after settling with the MNLF. Indeed, instead of pursuing a military solution to the Moro problem, the AFP under Ramos opted for a carrot-and-stick approach, offering the carrot of development to drain the MILF of its less radical supporters while maintaining the threat of the stick (or "mailed fist," according to the AFP) via a passive but increased military presence "within 500 meters" of MILF encampments (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 285).

International projection of soft power (through international institutions and conflict resolution mediation) could have also contributed to the effective political parity between the GRP and the Moro movement. During the Marcos era, the OIC both mediated GRP and MNLF talks and pressured both sides to come to a negotiated settlement, threatening the government

with OPEC sanctions to give it a little push (Santos Jr. 2010b, 68). Similarly, the MILF and the GRP were pressured to settle the conflict via mediation by Malaysia (Rivera 2008, 46).

A composite indicator of both hard and soft power, like the "smart power" concept proposed by a commission[84] chaired by Richard Armitage of Armitage International and Joseph Nye of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, would probably be the ideal measure to use in a parity-related model of conflict onset. Absent such an indicator, a model using a hard-power parity measure in tandem with variables accounting for soft power effects could probably accomplish the same goal.

Domestic politics: "Rally 'round the flag" and other benefits of military action

This section concerns official state behavior in a conflict with a non-state actor. Some theories, like Mueller's (1970) "rally 'round the flag," posit a relationship between an official state's domestic politics and its international politics. Specifically, "rally 'round the flag" suggests that a government may engage in an interstate war as "diversionary foreign policy," in an effort to distract a democratic public from politically unpopular issues at home.

Given that other theories of international relations have been applied successfully to "international relations" involving non-state actors, could there be a non-state equivalent to Mueller's (1970) hypothesized "rally 'round the flag"? In other words, could a head of state (say, the president of the Philippines) influence his or her approval ratings by engaging in a war with a domestic opponent as a form of diversionary quasi-foreign policy? If so, the existence of a non-state "rally 'round the flag" effect could help explain the timing of GRP responses to challenges from non-state actors.

[84] The Center for Strategic and International Studies' Commission on Smart Power in 2007.

Estrada's All-Out War seems to fit the mold of a diversionary tactic. From the start of his presidency in 1998, Estrada "had been fighting an uphill battle" against the polls; allegations of corruption within his administration, coupled with a growing reputation for "ineffective leadership," sparked "frequent coup rumors" amongst a public that was "on edge" (Labrador 2001, 222-223). By mid-2000, he was facing an impeachment trial for corruption (Labrador 2001, 225). Around this time, Estrada began featuring a "get tough" stance toward the MILF as a key part of his presidency, devoting "over half" of his July 2000 State of the Nation address to his administration's move against the rebels (Labrador 2001, 225). In that same month, AFP forces had captured Abubakar; an "elated" Estrada flew to the site of the former MILF headquarters to pose for photos (*Mindanews.com* 2010). His administration's "decisive action against the […] MILF" earned him a boost in his then-"sagging" approval numbers (Labrador 2001, 225). Granted, this case is not quite analogous with "rally 'round the flag" effects some leaders receive in the polls when engaging in interstate war; the Moro conflict is inexorably linked to affairs at home and, as such, Estrada's All-Out War may have simply boosted his approval ratings as a successful domestic policy rather than a diversionary quasi-foreign policy.

In other domestic politics considerations, Ramos and Arroyo have been accused of exploiting the conflict to extend their presidencies beyond the constitutional limit of one six-year term. This limit was put in place in the 1987 constitution, which attempted to limit the power of the executive following Marcos' abuse of the prior constitution's system to indefinitely extend his presidency (Dolan 1993, 195). Thus, any attempt to change this constitutional provision often meets immense public resistance. It is conceivable, then, that a GRP president with an interest in amending this provision would want to engage in diversionary quasi-foreign policy before

attempting to extend his or her term. This sort of move is not without precedent; Marcos' 1971 suspension of habeas corpus was justified by a series of bombings, including one at an opposition *Liberalista* rally that killed nine and wounded 100 (including eight candidates), that the government blamed on communist terrorists. The bombings, however, were likely planted by the Marcos regime itself (Dolan 1993, 51). Similarly, one of Marcos' justification for his 1972 declaration of martial law was a purported attempted assassination of Minister of National Defense Juan Ponce Enrile, but Enrile later admitted that "his unoccupied car had been riddled by machine-gun bullets fired by his own people" (Dolan 1993, xxvii).

Along these lines, Ramos was accused by a Moro splinter group to have ordered violent attacks, to be attributed by the GRP to the ASG or the MILF, in an effort to create "an atmosphere of instability" in which Ramos could extend his presidential term (Bauzon 2008, 130). While the accusation itself is likely unsubstantiated, it is true that Ramos supporters had been clamoring for his re-election, pushing for a constitutional amendment as early as 1995 (Montinola 1999, 65). Arroyo, likewise, was accused by the MILF of using the MOA-AD to force constitutional change (Abreu 2008b, 65). As it was written, the MOA-AD "virtually guaranteed that the necessary constitutional amendments would eventually be put in place," and given that "amending the Constitution is not that easy," this guarantee represented a usurpation of the checks against the executive branch (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 107).

Passive state sponsorship of terrorism by a de facto state

Byman (2005) defines passive state-sponsored terrorism as an official state's intentionally allowing other actors in the country to aid a terror group or its choosing not to develop counterterrorism capabilities despite having a capacity to do so. Actions that fall outside

of this definition include direct and intentional state support of a terror group ("active state-sponsored terrorism") and genuine attempts to police terror groups that nevertheless fail.

Active state sponsorship of terrorism is "blessedly rare," according to Byman (2005, 117), due to the obvious international political costs of doing so, which far outweigh the benefits of openly supporting of a terror group. The MILF, as the de facto political authority in much of central Mindanao even after the collapse of its de facto state, officially renounces terrorism, calling terror tactics and the groups that engage in them – the ASG and the JI – "un-Islamic" (Abuza 2005, 456). And the MILF itself, likely for of being labeled a terrorist organization by a U.S. that shells out War on Terror counterterrorism aid packages, "rarely if ever" uses terror tactics, according to McKenna (2007, 7). However, active sponsorship of terrorism by the MILF in the 1990s is "well documented" – beginning in 1994, Camp Abubakar hosted a JI training facility called "Camp Hubaidaiyah," where to-be JI operatives were trained by al-Qaeda personnel (Abuza 2005, 465). The MILF acknowledges this, but denies any "formal operational linkages with terrorists" and defends itself as having allowed "all kinds of Islamic visitors" access to its headquarters (Rivera 2008, 47). MILF cadres interviewed by Abuza (2005, 467) offered insight beyond the leadership's official statement into the organization's relationship with terror groups. Most, according to Abuza (2005, 467), admitted that JI was at least in some way linked to the Moro rebels, if only unofficially through individual commanders. Such sentiments were quickly qualified by the leadership. "This contact does not mean that it is officially sanctioned by the revolutionary organization," said Jaafar to Abuza (2005, 467).

Regardless of what the MILF purports to be less-than active sponsorship of terrorism in its hosting of a JI training camp, today's MILF would – almost assuredly – never support terror

groups in such an open manner. U.S. aid to the GRP today follows the same logic as its support of the Marcos regime during the Cold War (Dolan 1993, 60), except the threat of terrorism replaces the threat of communism as the impetus for the countries' bilateral military relationship. In 2001, the mere mention of Abu Sayyaf was enough to secure Arroyo "$4 billion and counting" in aid from the Bush administration, reportedly (Labrador 2002, 148). Then, from January 2002 to Sept. 2014, the U.S. operated an "anti-terror contingent" of "about 500 U.S. forces" at Camp Navorro in Zamboanga City – the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) – which provided "real-time intelligence" to the AFP in its operations against the ASG (Tuazon 2008, 86-87; *PhilStar.com* via The Associated Press 2014). A MILF deemed by the U.S. to have actively supported terrorism would suffer the full brunt of War on Terror resources, just as the ASG and JI have thus far.

Passive sponsorship would be the only type of relationship with terror groups that the MILF could afford to keep. Because the MILF retains political influence over a substantial amount of territory (Abuza 2011, 98), AFP has in the past accused the MILF of "sheltering" the ASG (at Rajah Muda), JI (at Abubakar), and terrorist splinter factions of the MILF (at Buliok); this would qualify as active sponsorship, and the magnitude of AFP responses in these three cases seem to indicate that the GRP agreed. More recent accusations take on rhetoric that suggests that alleged MILF aid to such groups takes the form of passive sponsorship – the U.S., for instance, complained that the MILF was "allowing [the ASG] to use [its] territory for safe haven," calling it "passive support" (Abuza 2005, 471). The MILF might argue that it does not

have the capability to develop its counterterror capacity. Jointly responsible[85] with the GRP for policing Moro territory for terrorism, the MILF in the past complained that the AFP "never gave [the MILF] a list of the so-called high value targets," leading to skirmishes between the parties over perceived non-compliance with the joint policing agreement (Santos Jr. 2008, 80). But from the perspective of the AFP, the MILF refuses to end its passive sponsorship of its "dirty tricks department"; Abuza (2005, 471) writes that the MILF "clearly enjoys having the Abu Sayyaf around" as a tool to inflict costs on the GRP if it prolongs the conflict (Pobre and Quilop 2009, 13). Meanwhile, the MILF can maintain some degree of plausible deniability in sponsoring these terror groups by asserting that it is simply incapable of policing them.

From this perspective, association with terror groups could be useful to the MILF as leverage – the rebels could help make groups like the ASG and JI "go away" in exchange for a solution to the Moro conflict (Abuza 2005, 469). This wouldn't be terrorism used as a "weapon of the weak," per se, but as a supplementary political tool. From the other perspective, collaboration with terror groups is needlessly risky, since the AFP doesn't always seem to grant the MILF plausible deniability, and when it doesn't, its punitive operations have been devastating to the rebels. The captures of both rebel headquarters in the early 2000s, Abubakar and Buliok, were justified by the government as punitive operations against the MILF for having supported terrorist groups (Gutierrez and Guialal 2000, 267; Pobre and Quilop 2009, 18).

In any case, Byman's (2005) framework for understanding official state sponsorship of terrorism generalizes to the MILF de facto state case quite neatly.

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[85] In May of 2002, the MILF and GRP signed the Joint Communiqué for the creation of the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG), an organization meant to facilitate MILF-GRP cooperation in counterterrorism operations (Santos Jr. 2008, 79).

IV. Conclusion

Political conflicts like that of the Moros in the southern Philippines deserve to be studied as a whole, not in parts differentiated by distinctions such as "civil war." The major political developments between the MNLF and GRP – notably, 10 years of negotiations leading up to the 1996 peace agreement – occurred half a decade after their conflict, which was coded as a civil war, technically ended (Sarkees and Wayman 2010a, 98). Similarly, in the case of the MILF, almost its entire life as a political organization exists outside of the one year it is present in a notable civil wars dataset (Sarkees and Wayman 2010c, 96-97), which notably excludes all but six months of the time in which the MILF operated its de facto state. De facto state-dom is what, from a political science perspective, differentiates the MILF case from other conflicts, in that it should behave differently from other non-state actors given the unique capabilities and constraints that face a state-like political entity. The MILF both purported to and did in fact govern its de facto state as if it were an Islamic law country in miniature. To exclude this significant type of non-state behavior – both the creation of and operating of a de facto state – from conflict research would be to limit the knowledge that can be gleaned from the study of non-state conflicts. Even including de facto state years in analyses of conflict without distinguishing state-like non-state actors from the others would likely distort the results of such analyses.

The aspects of the Moro conflict that are of interest in civil war research – onset and recurrence, for instance – can only be understood through a holistic perspective, with consideration given not only to its appearances in civil wars datasets but also to when the Moro actors engaged in other forms of political dissidence. This implies that large-N research of

political conflicts might also benefit from such an approach. Including entire conflicts in analyses, while still identifying potentially relevant distinctions between forms of political strategy, could offer insight into why and when actors choose one strategy over another; why and when actors might emerge in a conflict and how their emergences are linked with their strategies; and how and why such strategies might lead to success in their pursuits of their political goals. These to-be-determined findings would enhance our understanding of non-state political conflict, its roots, its manifestations, and its effects.

I have not, through this thesis, contributed to this way of understanding political conflict, at least not with statistically derived findings. A more insightful perspective into the Moro conflict alone would involve collection of data on factors theorized to influence the actors' choice of strategy. In this thesis, I have posited that the primary driver of this choice is an actor's hard and soft power relative to the government's – that, for a self-determination movement, the weakest will use terror tactics, the stronger will fight insurgencies, and the strongest will attempt to form state-like entities to challenge the government in an interstate-like war. A time-series analysis of the Moro conflict might use a composite measure of hard-soft power parity in non-state actor-GRP dyads to explain where a non-state actor's tactics fall on the strategy spectrum. A more granular analysis might even look into the various arenas in which a Moro actor fights, using this same measure of parity to explain why the actor engages in one tactic in one geographic or political arena and a different one in another arena. For instance, the MILF might have used conventional tactics where the de facto state was strongest; practiced guerrilla insurgency strategies in areas outside of its central control; and sponsored terrorism against the GRP in government-controlled Mindanaon cities and other regions of the country, where the

MILF was weakest. This sort of study could help us understand where a particular political strategy might emerge, in addition to the "when" from the time-series analysis. I have no doubt that, with the necessary data and a similar approach to large-N study, we can also understand the when and where of political conflict strategy, broadly.

‘

V. Appendix

Additional figures

U.S. land laws in the Philippines during colonization

Year	Laws
1903	Public Land Act #718, nullification of land grants given through the sultan and datu, or leader of non-Christian indigenous groups without government authority
1903	Public Land Act # 926, all lands unregistered under Act #496 were declared public and open for homestead, sale and leasehold
1905	Mining Law, all public lands were open to exploitation. Occupation and sale even to Americans
1907	Cadastral Act, mandated cadastral survey for land titling purposes
1912	Resettlement Program Christians in Mindanao under General Pershing allegedly to solve landlessness in Luzon and the Visayas and increase rice production in Mindanao
1913	Philippine Commission Act #2254 and #2280, creation of agricultural colonies in Mindanao and Sulu 16 hectares to Christians and 8 hectares to Moros
1919	Public Land Act # 2874, granted 24 hectares to Christians often already titled in Manila, while 10 hectares to Moros who had to have them titled by themselves
1935	Legislative Act #4177, land settlement program with full government support
1936	Commonwealth Act #141, all ancestral lands were declared public domain
1939	Creation of National Land Settlement Administration(NLSA) which granted lands in Mindanao, especially among those who finished military trainings

Source: Annual Report of the Governor, Moro Province, 1905 – 1914; Guingona, 1943.

Figure 13: Colonial roots of discrimination against Muslims in the Philippines (Abreu 2008c, 23)

Abbreviations

AFP: Armed Forces of the Philippines

ASG: Abu Sayyaf Group

BMA: Bangsamoro Army

BBL: Bangsamoro Basic Law

BIAF: Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces

BIFF or BIFM: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters or Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement

CAFGU: Citizen Armed Force Geographic Unit

CVO: Civilian voluntary organization

JI: Jemaah Islamiyah

JSOTF-P: Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines

GRP: Government of the Philippines

MBG: Misauri Breakaway Group

MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MNLF: Moro National Liberation Front

MOA-AD: Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain

OIC: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

PNOC: Philippine National Oil Company

SAF: Special Action Force

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EDUCATION

Penn State University, University Park (Schreyer Honors College) *May 2015, expected*
B.A. International Politics, B.S. Economics

- Thesis: "Civil War, Guerrilla Warfare, and Terrorism: Understanding Non-State Political Violence Through the Philippines' Moro Conflict"
- Honors: International Politics Student Marshal; Phi Beta Kappa; Thomas R. Dye and Kim Anderson Memorial Scholarship (Political Science); Jarrell Scholarship (Liberal Arts)
- Activities: John Curley Center for Sports Journalism; National Press Photographers Association (NPPA)

EXPERIENCE (SUMMER INTERNSHIPS)

Bates White Economic Consulting (Washington, D.C.)
Summer Consultant, Antitrust and Competition, Cartels *June 2014-Aug. 2014*

- Assessed the validity of and processed raw economic data provided to the client during discovery for pending litigation involving an alleged price-fixing conspiracy
- Analyzed trends in processed economic data for evidence or lack thereof of artificially inflated prices; produced dynamic graphics illustrating data trends
- Composed memos on data findings and qualitative analysis of discovery documents
- In a market manipulation case study, co-presented an expert report and economic model (produced with three other Summer Consultants) to a mock mediation panel on behalf of the defendant

Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.)
Intern, External Relations, Web and Multimedia *June 2013-Aug. 2013*

- Edited, formatted, and published digital media content on CSIS.org in coordination with all CSIS policy programs
- Shot photos of CSIS speaker events that were published on CSIS.org

Arkema, Inc. (King of Prussia, Pa.)
Intern, Research and Development, Information Resources *June 2012-Aug. 2012*

- Digitized and provided searchable electronic content access to over 100,000 pages of Research and Development documents
- Compiled technical, economic, and policy background research in support of the chartering of a materials science Research and Development project

EXPERIENCE (JOURNALISM)

Freelance Photojournalist *Aug. 2014-present*

- Producing freelance photo coverage of Penn State athletics and news for The Patriot-News and PennLive.com (Harrisburg, Pa.) and the Penn State College of Communications (ComRadio)
- Produced photo coverage of Penn State football's 2014 season opener in Dublin, Ireland ("Croke Park Classic") – including the first-place winner for best sports photo in the 2015 Student Keystone Press Awards – for the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association (PNA)
- Through PNA, published Croke Park Classic photos in The Patriot-News, The Morning Call (Allentown, Pa.), and Intelligencer Journal/Lancaster New Era/Sunday News (Lancaster, Pa.), among other newspapers
- Produced photo content for a feature story in The Philadelphia Inquirer, "A scandal's long shadow," about Penn State and its community's relationship with the NCAA

Onward State (State College, Pa.)
Senior Photographer, Athletics *April 2014-Nov. 2014*

- Produced and led photojournalism coverage of Penn State football's 2014 season for the country's largest student-run news media organization by social following

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Editor, University News *June 2013-April 2014*

- Recruited, trained, and managed a team of staff reporters, photographers, and freelancers
- Curated story ideas relating to university affairs, research, and athletics and assigned them to writers; edited stories for content and grammar; and published stories
- Reported on and maintained close source relationships with the Lunar Lion, Penn State's effort to land a privately funded rover on the moon, in competition with several major national news media outlets
- Produced photojournalism coverage of Penn State football, including the viral photo of Allen Robinson's SportsCenter Top Play catch in the Nittany Lions' upset victory over the Michigan Wolverines

Staff Reporter, Athletics and University News *Jan. 2012-June 2013*

- Reported on the Lunar Lion, Penn State basketball, and assorted university-related news

EXPERIENCE (ACADEMIC)

Penn State Department of Political Science / Dr. Douglas Lemke
Research Assistant, Autonomous Political Entities Project *Sept. 2012-present*

- Assessing violent non-state political organizations for state-like characteristics (territorial control, de facto governance) in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and India
- Coding such political organizations as Autonomous Political Entities ("APEs") for years in which they operate as de facto states, if at all
- Compiling analytic summaries of these political organizations' existence, focusing on how they became de facto states and how their tactics varied with the extent of their state-like characteristics

Penn State Department of Economics / Dr. Bee Roberts
Teaching Assistant, Economics of Growth and Development ("Econ 471") *Sept. 2013-May 2014*

- Split grading of free response problem sets and exams with a Ph.D. candidate teaching assistant
- Tracked class attendance and inputted class grades

EXPERIENCE (VOLUNTEER)

Center Intermediate Unit #10 Development Center for Adults (Pleasant Gap, Pa.)
Adult Literacy Tutor *Feb. 2014-May 2014*

- Taught basic English and technological literacy skills to a mentally disabled adult student
- Wrote about experiences tutoring the student (giving him anonymity) in a case study about teaching basic literacy to adults, to be read by future adult literacy tutors in the program

Schreyer Honors College, Penn State University (University Park, Pa.)
Freshmen Orientation Leader *Aug. 2013*

- Co-led an orientation group of freshmen Schreyer Scholars; mentored them in campus life, academic options, and extracurricular opportunities
- Continued to mentor freshmen from the orientation group through their first semester at Penn State

Springfield Benefitting THON (State College, Pa.)
Fundraising Member *Aug. 2011-May 2012*

- Helped run fundraisers benefitting Penn State Dance Marathon ("THON"), which funds pediatric cancer treatment and research at Penn State Hershey Medical Center

LANGUAGES

Chinese (Mandarin): oral fluency
Chinese (Shanghai dialect): full comprehension ability